



COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES

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GENERAL RULES GOVERNING ALL COMPETITIONS

- To enter any of these contests, you must be a current dues-paying member of an Academy House for at least six (6) months prior to the contest you wish to enter. The treasurer (or their designated representative) of each Academy House will verify the eligibility of each contestant from his or her respective houses one week prior to each contest.
- The Academy is a drag-oriented organization. Therefore, our contests are not open to individuals who are taking hormones, who have breast implants, or who are in the process of undergoing gender reassignment. For further clarification on this topic, see Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility.
- If you would like to enter one of the judged contests that are held during the season, you can sign up at any time during the year. The list is closed one (1) week prior to the contest, in order to get the program and ballots completed. As soon as you know that you want to enter a contest, contact the Contestant Coordinator and get your name on the list. If you are competing in Mr. or Miss USA, the earlier you sign up the greater your chance is of getting the state you want. There are no reserved states for any of the contests; they are on a first come, first served basis.
- During competition contestants are permitted to use all of the stage area, including the runway.
- Make sure that you take into account the size of the stage when developing your talent. and when building any props/sets. Because of the limited staging space, all props/sets must be able to be moved by only two people. Please use common sense.
- No fire or live animals are allowed.
- If a contestant throws glitter, confetti or any like material they must make arrangements to clean it up at the end of their talent.
- If a smoke machine and/or a strobe light is to be used the Tech Crew director and the Contestant Coordinator must be informed in advance. This is to allow the Tech Crew to announce the use of such equipment before your talent or entertainment number.
- The Academy has a zero tolerance policy regarding the use of illegal substances before or during an Academy event or anytime you are representing the Academy. Absolutely no drugs or outside alcohol are allowed on the premises.
- Each contestant is allowed to have two (2) people helping in the dressing room during the competition. If there is a reason that a third person is needed to assist, one of the original helpers must leave for the period of time that the third person is required.
- Scores and judges comments from any judged contest will be available **TO THE CONTESTANT ONLY** the day after the competition. To get these scores call the Contestant Coordinator.

Please remember that these are guidelines, not rules written in stone. If changes are made, contestants for that particular contest will be notified as much in advance as possible.

TECH CREW GUIDELINES FOR CONTESTANTS

These guidelines apply to all Academy contests. For general entertainment spots and/or general shows, please refer to the guidelines for entertainers (available at www.thewashingtonacademy.com or from the Tech Crew upon request).

- Music must be submitted at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled show start time (which is 3:00pm). So all music must be turned in by 2:30pm. If you are running late call and speak to one of the Tech Crew Director(s) and provisions will be made. If music is not turned in 30 minutes prior to show time, or provisions are not made, you will not be permitted to entertain! Do not just leave a message; you must actually speak to one of the Directors.
- CDs are the required format for all music; cassette tapes can no longer be used.
- CDs must be properly labeled with your stage name, the category for which the music is to be played, the name of the number, and the track number.
- CDs not in a case or sleeve will not be accepted by the Tech Crew. This is for the protection of your music. CDs can be scratched easily and will not be able to be read by the CD player. We suggest that you also have a backup copy of your music in case something happens with your first copy.
- Any rehearsal required before a function must be scheduled with a Tech Crew Director. This is to avoid any confusion as to rehearsal times. Reservations are taken on a first-come, first served basis and will need to be scheduled around setting the stage for that day's show.
- Lighting cues and music directions must be discussed with the appropriate Tech Crew member before the show begins. Written directions are always preferred.
- Contestants will be provided with a Tech Crew directions form. This form must be filled out and returned to the tech crew with the appropriate music.
- Solo entertainment spots are limited to six (6) minutes, if you go over your allotted time your number may be terminated, at the discretion of the Tech Crew Director.
- Talent category is limited to seven (7) minutes. Your Talent number will be terminated if you go over your allotted time.
- Except for Tech Crew members, no one is permitted in the Sound Booth or on the spotlight stage before or during an Academy event. Do not interrupt the Tech Crew during the show. This is not fair to the Tech Crew or the contestant or entertainer currently performing.
- After the function, music will only be returned to the person whose name is on the CD or tape case. Please do not ask anyone else to pick up your music.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

- If you are asked to judge a category or contest, and you know that you are either in the immediate family of one or more of the contestants, or have been directly involved with a contestant's planning and preparation for the contest, please have the courtesy and integrity to decline judging for that particular contest to avoid any appearance of bias on the judging panel.
- All judges must sign their score sheet(s). This way, should the Contestant Coordinator and/or the tabulator have questions about your scoring, they will know to whom to speak for clarification.
- As a judge, you must wait until you have seen all of the contestants in the category or contest you are judging before beginning to assign scores. Watch each contestant as they are presented and take notes on each contestant. Then, once all contestants have finished, review your notes for each contestant and assign your scores. It is unfair to begin assigning scores before you have seen the entire spectrum of contestants in any category or contest.
- For all Academy contests, judges are prohibited from using the same score more than once. As a judge, you must give each contestant an individual score. For example: If you have a contest or category with three contestants, and you are instructed to assign between 1 and 10 points to each contestant, you are not permitted to give one contestant 10 points and the other two contestants 9 points each. You must give one of the contestants with the identical scores an 8 or below.
- Please try to provide as many comments for the contestants as possible. Providing both constructive criticism (in a nice way), along with praise for things done well, helps contestants prepare for future competitions. For all contests, if you give 50% or less of the total possible points available to any contestant(s), you must provide your reason(s) why you gave that score.
- During competition contestants are permitted to use all of the stage area, including the runway. Judges should watch each contestant during their entire number, even if the contestant uses the runway.
- During judging, please keep any conversation/interaction with your fellow judges to a minimum.
- For each category or contest, an attempt is made to find, whenever possible, at least one judge from each of the Academy Houses to provide fair representation from each house on the judging panel.
- Please keep in mind that a good, unbiased judge must approach each contestant's score as being perfect at the beginning of his/her presentation. From there, as a judge, you should be looking for areas that are not perfect from which to deduct points. If you find no flaws, then that contestant deserves a perfect score. If flaws are found, then points should be deducted appropriately.

MR./MISS GAYE ZODIAC DC

The Mr./Miss Gaye Zodiac DC competition is open to any current dues-paying member of the Academy (with the exception of individuals who are taking hormones, who have breast implants, or who are in the process of undergoing gender reassignment [see Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility for more information]).

MONTHLY ZODIAC CONTESTS

- Contestants in the Monthly Zodiac Contests are presented alphabetically by their Academy last name.
- Each contestant is allowed up to seven (7) minutes for Talent.
- Each contestant must supply his/her talent on acceptable format (as laid out in the Tech Crew notes) no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Each contestant must register his/her talent with the Contestant Coordinator one week prior to the Monthly Zodiac show to ensure that (s)he can do the number(s) (s)he wants. Any conflict of numbers will be resolved by the Contestant Coordinator on the basis of who registered the number first.
- Each contestant is allowed up to four (4) back-ups.* The same four people must be used throughout the number. You cannot start the number with four people and then, during the course of the number, replace them with four others.
- It is the responsibility of each contestant to inform the Tech Crew of any lighting or props which will be used during the number no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- The judges will be looking for the entertainment value of your number. The judges will look to make sure the contestant is the central figure in the number (the featured performer). If your back-ups are the focus of your number, you will lose points. The judges will look for good lip-synch from you and your back-ups. Judges will look for unison among the performers (if used). They will determine if any set adds or detracts from the number and how well the performer handles any props used.
- There are three (3) judges for the Talent category. Each judge can award from a high of twenty (20) points to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of ten (10) or less must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

*Contestants may use additional people to assist behind the scenes (for example, to work parts of a moveable set, or hand puppets, etc.) as long as no part of the person is ever seen by the judges. If a judge sees any body part from a person working behind the scenes, they are instructed to automatically deduct 5 points from the contestant's score.

ZODIAC FINALS

Self-Expression

- Contestants in the Self-Expression category are presented in the order of their Zodiac sign on the wheel (beginning with Capricorn).
- Each year at the contestants meeting, held after the last Zodiac sign is selected, the theme for the Self-Expression category is announced. Each contestant must express himself/herself as he/she wants following the theme assigned.
- There is a major limitation to this category. This is not a “prop” costume category, with large props and borderline floats. Each contestant may wear a costume, casual attire, uniform, or whatever will best demonstrate what he/she chooses to express within the theme. Any props must be hand held.
- You don’t need to be a Look-A-Like. What you wear should be consistent with what you are trying to project. The speech will be the critical element in this category. Without an effective speech to tie it all together, your whole effort could miss the mark.
- Each contestant is asked to supply his/her own music for this category, if music is to be used. If music is not provided by the contestant, none will be played.
- Each contestant is introduced individually, comes to the microphone, delivers his/her speech, walks the stage, and presents his/her costume for the judges. The contestant should remain on stage until instructed by the announcer to leave. **THERE IS NO GROUP JUDGING.**
- The judges will look for cleverness, originality, how the attire matches what is said, how the speech is delivered, does the idea fit the theme, and the general, overall presentation of the contestant.
- There are five (5) judges for the Self-Expression category. Each judge can award a high of twenty (25) points to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of twelve (12) or below must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

Talent

- Contestants draw numbers for their order in the Talent category. Contestants draw their numbers by the order of their sign on the Zodiac wheel (beginning with Capricorn).
- Each contestant is allowed up to seven (7) minutes for his/her Talent.
- Each contestant must supply his/her talent on acceptable format (as laid out in the Tech Crew notes) no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.

Each contestant must register his/her talent with the Contestant Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than one week prior to the Zodiac Finals show to ensure that (s)he can do the number(s) (s)he wants. Any conflict of talent numbers will be resolved by the Contestant Coordinator on the basis of who registered the number first.

- It is the responsibility of each contestant to inform the Tech Crew of any special lighting or props which will be used during the number no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Each contestant is allowed up to four (4) back-ups.* The same four people must be used throughout the number. You cannot start the number with four people and then, during the course of the number, replace them with four others.
- The judges will be looking for the entertainment value of your number. The judges will look to make sure the contestant is the central figure in the number (the featured performer). If your back-ups are the focus of your number, you will lose points. The judges will look for good lip-synch from you and your back-ups. Judges will look for unison among the performers (if used). They will determine if any set adds or detracts from the number and how well the performer handles any props used.
- There will be five (5) judges for the Talent Competition. Each judge can award from a high of fifty (50) to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of twenty (25) or less must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

*Contestants may use additional people to assist behind the scenes (for example, to work parts of a moveable set, or hand puppets, etc.) as long as no part of the person is ever seen by the judges. If a judge sees any body part from a person working behind the scenes, they are instructed to automatically deduct 5 points from the contestant's score.

TURNABOUT

MISS GAYE TURNABOUT DC

- If you are a male (non-drag) on the Academy list, and do not perform in drag regularly either at the Academy or in outside shows, you are eligible to enter this contest. Drag kings, real girls and full-time drags are not eligible (the final decision will be made by your House mother). See Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility for more information.
- Contestants will be presented alphabetically by male Academy last name.
- This competition covers four (4) different areas of consideration: gown, hair, make-up, and presentation. Each judge considers each area, but the most important consideration is the TOTAL LOOK.
- Gown: Judges will look at the fit of the dress, if the dress compliments the contestant, if the length is appropriate for the style of the gown, if there are loose threads hanging from the garment, if there are missing beads or sequins, and if the dress is clean and pressed.
- Hair: The judges will look to see if the hair compliments the contestant, if the contestant's own hair is showing under the wig, if the hair is neat, and if the style enhances the overall look.
- Make-up: The judges will look for neatness of make-up, proper blending and coverage, and if the contestant's beard shows. Make-up is a personal choice and preference, but remember the lighting and make adjustments accordingly. The judges will look for the total image and if the make-up looks right with the overall appearance.
- Presentation: The judges will be looking at how you present yourself to them and to the audience. This includes factors such as your walk, smile, poise, poses, etc. As in the other areas, judges will look for negatives such as obvious nervousness, stepping on your dress, walking too quickly or too slowly, etc. In judging presentation, each judge is going to see the whole image. If the first three areas of gown, hair and make-up are complete, your presentation will only enhance them.
- The judges will look for the total image. Does each piece: hair, make-up, gown and presentation, compliment the contestant and contribute to the complete picture.
- Each contestant will walk to the same music in this competition.
- Contestants are introduced individually for judging, and then all contestants are brought back for group judging (this gives the judges one final look at the contestants and gives them the chance to compare contestants side-by-side).
- There are three (3) judges for the Miss Gaye Turnabout competition. Each judge can award from a high of ten (10) to a low of one (1) point in each of the four (4) categories. Any judge giving a score of five (5) or below in any category must give the reason(s) on the score sheet.

ENTERTAINER OF TURNABOUT

- If you portray a male persona in the Academy, you are eligible to enter the Entertainer of Turnabout competition. This includes males (non-drags) on the Academy list who do not perform in drag regularly either at the Academy or in outside shows as well as drag kings (the final decision will be made by your House mother). See Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility for more information.
- Contestants will be presented alphabetically by male Academy last name.
- Each contestant is allowed up to seven (7) minutes for his/her Talent.
- Each contestant must supply his/her talent on acceptable format (as laid out in the Tech Crew notes) no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Each contestant must register his/her talent with the Contestant Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than one week prior to the Entertainer of Turnabout show to ensure that (s)he can do the number(s) (s)he wants. Any conflict of talent numbers will be resolved by the Contestant Coordinator on the basis of who registered the number first.
- It is the responsibility of each contestant to inform the Tech Crew of any special lighting or props which will be used during the number no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Judges will be looking for the entertainment value of your number. Judges will consider lip-synch, appearance (is the costume appropriate for the number?), make-up, stage presence, etc. If sets are used does the set add or detract? If using props, does the entertainer use these props to their best advantage?
- There are three (3) judges for the Entertainer of Turnabout contest. Each judge can award a high of twenty (20) points to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of ten (10) or less must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

Note: Unlike other competitions, backups are not allowed in this contest.*

*Contestants may use people to assist behind the scenes (for example, to work parts of a moveable set, or hand puppets, etc.) as long as no part of the person is ever seen by the judges. If a judge sees any body part from a person working behind the scenes, they are instructed to automatically deduct 5 points from the contestant's score.

MR./MISS GAYE USA DC

MR. GAYE USA DC

If you portray a male persona in the Academy you are eligible to enter the Mr. Gaye USA DC competition. This includes males (non-drags) on the Academy list as well as drag kings. See Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility for more information.

Contestants will be presented alphabetically by state name for both categories.

State Costume

- Each contestant may wear a costume, casual attire or uniform, whichever will best demonstrate the state the contestant is trying to portray. Any props used must be of a size that can be easily transported. All props must be carried at all times during the competition, in other words, you can't come out on stage with a prop and then set it down and walk around without it.
- The speech will be the critical element in this category. Without an effective speech to tie it all together, your whole effort could miss the mark.
- Each contestant is introduced individually, comes to the microphone, delivers his speech, walks the stage, and presents his costume for the judges. The contestant should remain on stage until instructed by the announcer to leave. **THERE IS NO GROUP JUDGING.**
- Each contestant is asked to supply his/her own music for this category, if music is to be used. If the contestant does not provide music, none will be played.
- The judges will look for cleverness, originality, how the costume matches what is said, how the speech is delivered, does the costume and speech fit the state being represented, and the general, overall presentation of the contestant.
- There are three (3) judges for the State Costume category. Each judge can award a high of twenty (20) points to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of ten (10) or below must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

Talent

- Each contestant is allowed up to seven (7) minutes for his Talent.
- Each contestant must supply his talent on acceptable format (as laid out in the Tech Crew notes) no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Each contestant must register his talent with the Contestant Coordinator as soon as possible, but no later than one week prior to the Mr. Gay USA contest to ensure that he

can do the number(s) he wants. Any conflict of talent numbers will be resolved by the Contestant Coordinator on the basis of who registered the number first.

- It is the responsibility of each contestant to inform the Tech Crew of any special lighting or props which will be used during the number no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.
- Judges will be looking for the entertainment value of your number. Judges will consider lip-synch, appearance (is the costume appropriate for the number?), make-up, stage presence, etc. If sets are used does the set add or detract? If using props, does the entertainer use these props to their best advantage?
- Each contestant is allowed up to four (4) back-ups.* The same four people must be used throughout the number. You cannot start the number with four people and then, during the course of the number, replace them with four others.
- There are three (3) judges for the talent competition. Each judge can award from a high of forty (40) points to a low of one (1) point. Any judge giving a score of twenty (20) or less must list the reason(s) on the score sheet.

*Contestants may use additional people to assist behind the scenes (for example, to work parts of a moveable set, or hand puppets, etc.) as long as no part of the person is ever seen by the judges. If a judge sees any body part from a person working behind the scenes, they are instructed to automatically deduct 5 points from the contestant's score.

NOTE: Mr. Gaye USA DC is required to entertain at the Miss Gaye Universe DC Pageant. If for any reason Mr. USA is unable to fulfill this responsibility, this privilege will be offered to his first runner-up.

MISS GAYE USA DC

If you are a drag or a real girl in the Academy you are eligible to enter the Miss Gaye USA DC competition. See Appendix A: Clarification of Contest Eligibility for more information.

Evening Gown

- Contestants will be presented alphabetically by state name.
- This competition covers four (4) different areas of consideration: gown, hair, make-up, and presentation. Each judge considers each area, but the most important consideration is the TOTAL LOOK.
- Gown: Judges will look at the fit of the dress, if the dress compliments the contestant, if the length is appropriate for the style of the gown, if there are loose threads hanging from the garment, if there are missing beads or sequins, and if the dress is clean and pressed.
- Hair: The judges will look to see if the hair compliments the contestant, if the contestant's own hair is showing under the wig, if the hair is neat, and if the style enhances the overall look.
- Make-up: The judges will look for neatness of make-up, proper blending and coverage, and if the contestant's beard shows. Make-up is a personal choice and preference, but remember the lighting and make adjustments accordingly. The judges will look for the total image and if the make-up looks right with the overall appearance.
- Presentation: The judges will be looking at how you present yourself to them and to the audience. This includes factors such as your walk, smile, poise, poses, etc. As in the other areas, judges will look for negatives such as obvious nervousness, stepping on your dress, walking too quickly or too slowly, etc. In judging presentation, each judge is going to base their scoring on the whole image. If the first three areas of gown, hair and make-up are complete, your presentation will only enhance them.
- The judges will look for the total image. Does each piece, hair, make-up, gown and presentation compliment the contestant and contribute to the complete picture.
- Each contestant will walk to the same music in this competition.
- Contestants are introduced individually for judging, and then all contestants are brought back for group judging (this gives the judges one final look at the contestants and gives them the chance to compare contestants side-by-side).
- There are three (3) judges for the Miss Gaye USA Evening Gown competition. Each judge can award from a high of ten (10) to a low of one (1) point in each of the four (4) categories. Any judge giving a score of five (5) or below in any category must give the reason(s) on the score sheet.

NOTE: Miss Gaye USA is the first official contestant for the Miss Gaye Universe DC Pageant.

GUIDELINES FOR NON-JUDGED ACADEMY AND HOUSE CONTESTS

For these contests, eligible participants register for the contest during the first act and during the show; the winner for the contest is selected by drawing a name out of a “hat.”

The non-judged contests include:

Academy: Mr. and Miss Peace, Love and Harmony

Academy: Mr. Derby and Miss Spring Bonnet

Addison Road: Mr. and Miss Fabergé

42nd Street: Cherries Jubilee and Cherries Cobbler

42nd Street: Cherries Preserves and Cherries Pitts

Eligible participants must meet the following criteria:

- To enter any of these contests, you must be a current dues-paying member of an Academy House for at least six (6) months prior to the contest you wish to enter.
- Real girls and drags (who are in drag for that event) are eligible to enter the Miss contests.
- Males and drag kings (who are in male drag for that event) are eligible to enter the Mr. contests.
- Former titleholders of the specific contest cannot enter.
- Current Academy crown holders and members of Protocol cannot enter these contests.
- Current House crown holders cannot enter these contests.
- If in doubt of your eligibility, please ask your House mother.

APPENDIX A: CLARIFICATION OF CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

The Academy is a private, social organization with a mission founded and organized to provide a venue for individuals who like to dress in “drag,” and for those who appreciate “drag” performance and entertainment. The Academy defines the term “drag” to mean a “biological man” who dresses up as a woman for the purpose of entertainment and performance. While preserving its long-term mission to “drag,” the Academy has continued to amend its rules in order to address issues sensitive to its changing membership demographic. For example, in addition to a “drag” element, the Academy’s contemporary membership includes “biological women” who dress up as men for the purpose of entertainment and performance at Academy functions; and it also includes members that have had breast implants, or have had or are going through gender reassignment and who entertain and perform at Academy functions.

In order to continue to best serve its membership and embrace its diversity, the Academy wants to clarify its contest rules. All dues paying Academy members are eligible to compete in Academy contests after being a member in good standing for six (6) or more months. However, eligibility is not an absolute entitlement to compete in a particular contest, as each contest has its own specific eligibility requirements and criteria. For example, Miss Gaye America DC; Miss Club 55; and Miss Turnabout are contests exclusively for “biological males” who portray a female persona in the Academy, and who are not taking hormones, have not had breast implants, and are not going through gender reassignment. Individuals who portray a male persona in the Academy (and are not taking hormones or going through gender reassignment) are eligible for the Entertainer of Turnabout contest. Eligibility for the Zodiac contests is open to “biological males” and “biological women” who portray either female or male personae in the Academy, and who are not taking hormones, have not had breast implants, and are not going through gender reassignment. Eligibility for the Mr. Gaye USA DC and Mr. Club 55 contests are open to both “biological males” and to “biological women” who portray a male persona in the Academy, and who are not taking hormones or going through gender reassignment. The Miss Gaye USA DC contest is for “biological males” and “biological women” who portray a female persona in the Academy, and who are not taking hormones, have not had breast implants, and are not going through gender reassignment.

For purposes of the above, the terms “biological males” and “biological women” include all individuals who have gone through gender reassignment and who have fully transitioned. The “taking hormones” rule does not apply to individuals who have successfully completed their gender reassignment.

APPENDIX B: WHO TO CALL

Contestant Coordinator: Kelly Garrett (202) 462-3994 addisonroad@gmail.com

Tech Crew Director: Veronica Blake (202) 494-5839 missveronicablake@yahoo.com

If you are unable to reach Kelly or Veronica., and they haven't responded to you within 48 hours, then contact Mame Dennis, President of the Academy of Washington, Inc. at 703-671-1617.