



Kentucky cowboys through in Dallas!

The Kentucky District had one of its best showings overall in recent memory this past week in Dallas at the 87th Annual National Speech and Debate Tournament, sponsored by the National Speech and Debate Association. Over six thousand entries from 1357 high schools around the world, the winners at 106 District Tournaments held from Maine to Guam, competed in eight speech and eight debate events through a week of rounds held in downtown Dallas. Additionally, students eliminated from their qualifying Main events before Thursday had opportunities to compete in seven Supplemental events. All tournament winners advancing past the preliminary rounds in Main events or the Quarterfinal rounds in Supplemental events were awarded with a culminating awards ceremony held Friday night.

Supernatural and Gilmore Girls star Jared Padalecki, a 1998 NSDA Champion in Duo Interpretation, made a guest appearance at the Duo Interpretation finals and served as a guest judge. Additionally, the Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, Dr. Thomas Freeman wowed the assembled students and coaches, with a moving and inspiring call to communications arms — no less than expected for someone who taught both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barbara Jordan — and at age 99, no less.

Danville High School was awarded a School of Excellence trophy for placing in the top 20 overall in Speech events, its second (prior in 2007). Additionally, Danville's coach, Steve Meadows, became the second Kentuckian (with J. W. Patterson of UK Debate) inducted into the NSDA Hall of Fame at a ceremony on Sunday night.

Fourteen of Kentucky's twenty-four entries into the tournament advanced past preliminary rounds in Main Events. Congratulations to Johnathan Hurley (Lafayette), Semifinals in the Senate; Joseth Warner (Danville), Quarterfinals in Dramatic Interpretation; the team of Perryman and Whittaker (Rowan County), Quarterfinals in Duo Interpretation; Cole Knight (Henry Clay), ninth round in Lincoln-Douglas Debate; Emma Merryman (Danville), Quarterfinals in Oratory; Claire Strysick (Danville), Quarterfinals in Oratory; Carli Hall (Bardstown), Quarterfinals in Program Oral Interpretation; Stefani Giles (LaRue County), Octofinals in Dramatic Interpretation; Emily Fannin (Knott County Central), Octofinals in Humorous Interpretation; Natalie Grubbs (Danville), Octofinals in Informative Speaking; the team of Cao and Raj (duPont Manual), seventh round in Public Forum Debate; the team of Smith and Sun (duPont Manual), seventh round in Public Forum Debate; Jack Neel (Bethlehem), Octofinals in Program Oral Interpretation.

Students eliminated before Thursday had opportunities to enter Supplemental events, and four Kentuckians earned honors in these events with two in the National finals. Congratulations to Stefani Giles (LaRue County), third in Poetry; Jack Neel (Bethlehem), fourth in Prose; Emma Merryman (Danville), Semifinals in Impromptu Speaking; and Natalie Grubbs (Danville), Semifinals in Prose.

2020 Nationals will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 14-19.