



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Kentucky students win Speech and Debate District Tournament, move on to Grand Nationals

Centre College named Communicator of the Year

Danville, KY

Kentucky's best high school speech and debate students went head to head at Centre College March 18 and 19 at the annual Kentucky District Tournament of the National Speech and Debate Association. Students competed in eight speech and four debate categories for the right to represent the Commonwealth at the Grand Nationals, the largest academic contest in the world, in Salt Lake City in June. Student competed in as many as five preliminary rounds before advancing to the finals with the top two entries in each event moving on to NSDA Nationals, a contest dating back to 1931 that features students from Maine to Guam competing for college scholarships and the national titles.

Tournament host Centre College was named the Kentucky District Communicator of the Year in support of its continued sponsorship of national and state debates for political candidates, from the Vice Presidential debates of 2000 and 2012 to debates for gubernatorial and Senate races. Accepting on behalf of Centre was Dr. Mary Gulley, who has helped coordinate the tournament with host Centre for many of the last nineteen years the tournament has run at Centre (with Congressional Debate events hosted by Danville – Bluegrass Community and Technical College). Andrew Brennen, a Dunbar High School graduate who serves as the National Field Director of Student Voice after co-founding the Pritchard Committee Student Voice Team, was awarded the District's Alumnus of the Year honor.

In the team contests, Rowan County High School took team honors in Speech with Danville High tops in Congress and duPont Manual winning debate. Beechwood High School won the District plaque for overall top performances in speech and debate. Ryle High School was the winner of the Traveling Team Trophy; Assumption High School was named the District's Chapter Achievement award winner. Murray High School's Michael Robinson was named the District Coach of the Year with Trinity High School's Jorge Rojas-Ortega named the District's Student of the Year. Zane Arnold of Danville won the Susan Moore Scholarship; Rowan County's Makda Mehari won the Harlen Hamm Scholarship.

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Advancing to Salt Lake City to represent Kentucky at Nationals in June are Grace Sheene (Danville) and Matthew Pugh (Beechwood) in Dramatic Interpretation, Nathan Sudenga (Boone County) and Corey Newsome (Rowan County) in Humorous Interpretation, Riti Pathak and Ria Jain (DuPont Manual) in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Robert Watson/Anthony Survance (DuPont Manual) and David Ma/Sahar Mohammadzaden (Dunbar) in Public Forum Debate, Hannah Draut (Danville) and Eliza Rash (Beechwood) in Program Oral Interpretation, Charles Simpson/Daniel Meritt and Molly Simpson/Makda Mehari (Rowan County) in Duo Interpretation, Leanne Hays (Boone County) and Anna Cate Brown (Murray) in Oratory, Adrianna Waters (Boone County) and Emily Falica (Sky Academy Homeschool) in United States Extemporaneous, Raegan Davis (Assumption) and Jorge Rojas-Ortega (Trinity) in International Extemporaneous, Zane Arnold (Danville) and Callie Freeman (Sacred Heart Academy) in the House of Representatives, Abigail Anderson (Danville) and Elena Cecil (LaRue County) in Informative Speaking, and Mrithunjey Suresh (Ryle) and Trent Lyons (Murray) in the Senate.

The National Speech and Debate Association (formerly National Forensic League) is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school, and collegiate students in the United States. The Association provides competitive speech and debate activities, high-quality resources, comprehensive training, scholarship opportunities, and advanced recognition to more than 130,000 students and coaches every year. For nearly 90 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has empowered more than 1.4 million members to become engaged citizens, skilled professionals, and honorable leaders in our society. Visit www.speechanddebate.org or www.kynsda.org for more information.

Contact Steve Meadows, Danville High School, Kentucky District Chair, for more information.

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Attached picture:

The Kentucky qualifiers to the national speech and debate tournament.

Photo credit to Christel Belcher, Danville High School assistant speech coach

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