Alumni News

Eighth edition: Summer 2026

Reporting on the 2025-2026 Season and Celebrating the History of Policy Debate



Gordon Stables, NDT Director

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Rob Glass, Host

Greetings from the NDT!

The 80th National Debate Tournament (NDT) was hosted in splendid fashion by the University of Houston from March 26-30, 2026.

The opening ceremonies on Thursday and rounds 1 to 3 on Friday took place at the tournament hotel, The Marriott South, Hobby. Debate rounds 4 to 8, the double-octos and the awards banquet were held on the University of Houston campus. Beginning with the octofinals and concluding with the finals, debate rounds were held at the hotel.

This issue of the *Alumni News* reports on the results from the 80th NDT, including the announcemnets of the award recipients for the coaching, service, and distinguished alumni awards for 2026. We also celebrate the lives of six prominent NDT alumni whom we lost recently.

Continuing our tradition of celebrating NDT history, we recount the events and the people who particpated in the fourth NDT in 1950, including stories about the final round, Robert Hubert and Martin Holcomb (the coaches), and the top speaker.

NDT Alumni Committte:
Adrienne Brovero, University of Kentucky
John Katsulas, Boston College
Mikaela Malsin, Emory University

Upcoming Tournaments

81st NDT--April 1-5, 2027
Hosted by Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Alumni Reunion on Saturday, April 3, 2027

82nd NDT--March 23-27, 2028
Hosted by The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Contacting the NDT

Information about the NDT, including back issues of *Alumni News*, can be found on our website: https://nationaldebatetournament.org/

The Alumni News is also available on the American Forensic Association's website: https://www.americanforensicsassoc.org/ndt-alumni-newsletters/

Facebook users are encouraged to follow the NDT: https://www.facebook.com/National-Debate-Tournament NDT-162782223799263/

Alumni are invited to register their information to receive a copy of the newsletter.

Please submit your information using this Google document: https://forms.gle/hw7SCJsCm9i4TpZq5

Ideas for future stories for the alumni newsletter can be emailed to John Katsulas at: katsulas@bc.edu

Emory wins the NDT!

Daniel Gallager & Ike Song defeat Long Beach in a 3-2 decison

The Emory University team of Daniel Gallagher ’27 and Ike Song ’28 defeated California State University, Long Beach to win the 80th annual National Debate Tournament hosted by The University of Houston in Houston, Texas during March 27 to March 30, 2026.

During the preliminary rounds, Gallagher & Song were 8-0 with 23 ballots. Emory defeated Wake Forest DE, George Mason DE, UTD RP, NYU MS, Georgetown AC, Kansas WO, Dartmouth CG, and Long Beach OM. The only round where they lost a ballot was during round 6 versus Kansas WO. As the only undefeated team, Emory earned the top seed.

To reach the final round, Gallagher & Song did not have to debate until the quarterfinals. As the top seed, they received a bye in the double-octos and walked over another Emory team (Coralynn Yang & Lucas Lobo) in the octofinals. In the quarterfinals, Emory (on the negative) defeated Berkeley (Emilio Menotti & Riley Reichel) in a 5-0 and in the semifinals, Emory (on the affirmative) defeated Michigan (Conner Shih & Avi Shah) in a 5-0.

The other finalist team, Curtis Ortega ’26 & Daniel Medina ‘28 of Long Beach, were the second seed with a record of 7-1 with 19 ballots. Their only loss came in round 8 versus Gallagher & Song.

Like Emory, Long Beach received a bye in the double-octos. Ortega & Medina defeated four teams to reach the finals: Kansas (Zach Willingham & Owen Owings) in the octofinals (4-1 decision), Michigan (Eleanor Barrett & Jiyoon Park) in the quarterfinals (5-0 decision), and Georgetown (Connelly Cowan & Arnav Aggarwal) in the semifinals (3-2 decision).

In the final round, Emory was locked negative, as they had defeated Long Beach in round 8 on the affirmative. The first affirmative speaker, Curtis Ortega, began his speech by advocating a “vulgar strike” as a form of Black nihilism to counteract anti-black racism in debate.

In response, the first negative from Emory, Ike Song, presented three off-case arguments: topicality (the affirmative did not advocate the USFG should strengthen collective bargaining), a psychoanalysis bad kritik (neg claimed the affirmative relied on it), and an “art of failure” kritik.

In the last negative rebuttal, Daniel Gallagher extended topicality and the psychoanalysis kritik. In a 3-2 decision, the judges voted for Emory.

Gallagher & Song became just the fourth team to win the NDT, the Copeland award, and the NDT top speaker in the same year. Dartmouth College (1984), Baylor University (1987), and Northwestern University (1999) previously accomplished this feat.

Congratulations to the entire Emory debate squad and their coaches, Dr. Mikaela Malsin (Director), Viveth Karthikeyan (Associate Director), and Gabriel Morbeck (Assistant Director).



Emory NDT Champions
L to R: Ike Song & Daniel Gallagher holding
the Larmon trophy with Director Malsin standing to the far right



L to R: Long Beach, NDT second place
Daniel Medina & Curtis Ortega holding
the Walker Trophy

80th National Debate Tournament

First-Round At-Large Recipients

There are three ways to qualify for the NDT. At the end of the "regular season," the National Committee extends an invitation to the top sixteen teams. Another forty-six teams are selected through district qualifying tournaments. To fill out the field, sixteen teams that have not qualified received "second-round" bids. The teams receiving the first-rounds for the 2026 NDT included:

1. Emory University (Daniel Gallagher & Ike Song)
2. University of Kansas (Luna Schultz & Rose Larson)
   University of Michigan (Eleanor Barrett & Jiyoon Park)
4. Georgetown University (Arnav Aggarwal & Connelly Cowan)
5. California State, Long Beach (Curtis Ortega & Daniel Medina)
6. Northwestern University (Mike Li & Veronica Rubin)
7. University of Michigan (Avi Shah & Conner Shih)
8. Michigan State (Joanna Gusis & Stephen Lewis)
9. University of Iowa (Spencer Anderson McElligott & Grey Parfenoff)
10. Binghamton University (Jeremiah Cohn & Ashley King)
11. University of Kansas (Zach Willingham & Owen Owings)
12. University of California, Berkeley (Emilio Menotti & Riley Reichel)
13. Emory University (Lucas Lobo & Coralynn Yang)
14. Northwestern University (Jack Pacconi & Antonio Souchet)
15. Dartmouth College (Nora Cai & Leah Goldberg)
16. University of Kentucky (Ariel Gabay & Regan Slish)

Rex Copeland Award

About the Copeland Award

The Rex Copeland Award is presented to the top ranked team in the first-round at-large balloting. Rex Copeland, an outstanding debater at Huffman High School and Samford, was murdered in 1989.



L to R: Dan Gallagher & Ike Song

The 2025-26 Copeland Award winner is Daniel Gallagher and Ike Song of Emory. The vote by the NDT Committee was unanimous.

During the year, Gallagher & Song competed in 8 tournaments and won 3 of them: the University of Kentucky, the Texas Open, and the Dartmouth Round Robin. They also finished second twice (Wake, Kentucky RR) and reached the semifinals twice (Gonzaga & Northwestern). The only hiccup they had was losing on topicality in the double-octos at Georgetown.

Not only did they win the most tournaments, but they had the best elimination record (18-4, 81.8%), the best total record (72-10, 87.8%) the best Round Robin record (13-1, 92.9%) and the best record against the first-round applicant pool (39-8, 83.0%). However, Emory was slightly bested in their preliminary record (41-4) by Schultz & Larson of Kansas (42-3) who won one more debate.

For the first time in NDT history, there was a tie between Kansas (Luna Schultz & Rose Larson) and Michigan (Eleanor Barrett & Jiyoon Park) for second place. Schultz & Larson had a better preliminary and total won-loss record than Michigan. However, Michigan won two tournaments (Northwestern & Gonzaga) versus one for Kansas (Wake). Michigan also advanced to two final rounds (Kentucky & Texas) versus Kansas making two semifinal appearances (Kentucky & Gonzaga) with no final rounds. The head-to-head record provided no clarity as it was a tie: 4 wins for Michigan and 4 wins for Kansas.

Gallagher & Song became the fifth team from Emory to win the Copeland Award. Previous winners from Emory include George Kouros & Anjan Sahni (1998), Ovais Inamullah & Stephen Weil (2010), Ovais Inamullah & Stephen Weil (2011), and Grace Kessler & Shreyas Rajagopal (2024).

80th National Debate Tournament

District Qualifiers and Second-Rounds

Baylor University (Benton & Keeler)
Baylor University (Darwish & Lassen)
Cornell University (Dye & Vorontsova)
Dartmouth College (Jones & Rao)
Emory University (Kim & Shirts)
George Mason University (Davis & Esteves)
George Mason University (Witkov & Wright)
Georgetown University (Lastelick & Nanji)
Gonzaga University (Weinhardt & Wellman)
Harvard University (Aoki & Bodet)
Harvard University (Deshpande & Sridharan)
Indiana University (Truemper & Fish)
James Madison University (Kardos & Pinto)
James Madison University (Oehler & Matzen)
Kansas State University (Draeger & Spurlock)
Kansas State University (Robertson & Day)
Liberty University (Cunningham & Layton)
Liberty University (Spencer & Soares)
Macalester College (Kochel & Harrison)
Michigan State University (Foster & Martin)
Michigan State University (Gearring & Shehzad)
Missouri State University (DeAngelis & Neal)
Missouri State University (Neal & Siever)
Northwestern University (Arney & Tahirkheli)
New York University (Jain & Theiding)
New York University (Makinde & Saigal)
Samford University (Alexander & Setzler)
Towson University (Darden & Persaud)
Trinity University (Patterson & King)
University of California, Berkeley (Urfalian& Boguslavsky)
University of Central Oklahoma (Walker & Eckard)
University of Georgia (Chapman & Kaidar-Heafetz)
University of Georgia (Cannon & Pack)
University of Houston (Ibarra & Fernandez)
University of Houston (Macasaet & Hendrix)
University of Iowa (Eltyeb & Weimar)
University of Kansas (Hato & Persinger)
University of Kentucky (Schedler & Rimpson)
University of Massachusetts, Amherst (Levitan & Moussavou)
University of Michigan (Esmailzadeh & Shetty)
University of Minnesota (Haber-Fawcett & Usenov)
University of North Texas (Vargas & Bowman)
University of Northern Iowa (Chapman & Doyle)
University of Oklahoma (Fulkerson & Duncan)
University of Southern California (Martin & Bradley)
University of Southern California (Rahman & Bhadani)
University of Southern California (Troup & Mills)
University of Texas, Austin (Feinstein & Low)
University of Texas, Austin (Gade & Stevenson)
University of Texas, Dallas (D'Antuono & Dickey)
University of Texas, Dallas (Karthik & Hale)
University of Texas, Dallas (Ravi & Penumetcha)
University of Texas, San Antonio (Carrillo & Garza)
University of West Georgia (Kennon & Missell)
University of Wyoming (Campbell & Hawley)
United States Military Academy (Opron & Song)
United States Naval Academy (Lawrence & Satterfield)
Wake Forest University (Dingley & Elliott)
Wake Forest University (Leverett & Wolfe)
Western Kentucky University (Fournier & Ney)
Western Kentucky University (Schintgen & StPeter)
Wichita State University (Molina Chavez & Griffith)

Note: In round 7, Dartmouth (Ben-Abdallah & Carpenter) replaced Southern California (Mills & Troup)



L to R: Walker & Larmon Trophies



Linda Listrom, Keynote Speaker
Houston, Urban Debate League

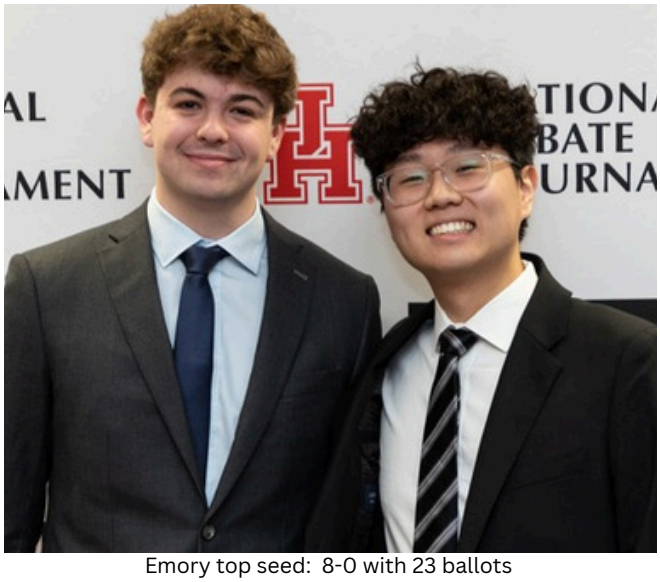


NDT participant mugs

80th National Debate Tournament

Elimination Round Seeding

1.	Emory (Gallagher & Song)	8-0	23 ballots
2.	Long Beach (Oretega & Medina)	7-1	19 ballots
3.	Georgetown (Aggarwal & Cowan)	7-1	18 ballots
4.	Michigan (Shah & Shih)	7-1	16 ballots
5.	Michigan State (Gusis & Lewis)	6-2	19 ballots
6.	Binghamton (Cohn & King)	6-2	19 ballots
7.	Emory (Kim & Shirts)	6-2	19 ballots
8.	Berkeley (Menotti & Reichel)	6-2	17 ballots
9.	Northwestern (Li & Rubin)	6-2	17 ballots
10.	Michigan (Barrett & Park)	6-2	16 ballots
11.	Michigan (Esmailzadeh & Shetty)	6-2	16 ballots
12.	Dartmouth (Cai & Goldberg)	6-2	16 ballots
13.	Kansas (Shultz & Larson)	5-3	17 ballots
14.	Kansas (Hato & Persinger)	5-3	17 ballots
15.	Iowa (Anderson McElligott & Parfenoff)	5-3	17 ballots
16.	New York University (Makinde & Saigal)	5-3	15 ballots
17.	Emory (Lobo & Yang)	5-3	15 ballots
18.	Kansas (Willingham & Owens)	5-3	15 ballots
19.	Macalester (Kochel & Harrison)	5-3	15 ballots
20.	Texas, Dallas (Ravi & Penumetcha)	5-3	15 ballots
21.	Berkeley (Urfalian & Boguslavsky)	5-3	15 ballots
22.	Texas, Austin (Feinstein & Low)	5-3	15 ballots
23.	George Mason (Witkov & Wright)	5-3	15 ballots
24.	Liberty (Cunningham & Layton)	5-3	14 ballots
25.	Kentucky (Gabay & Slish)	5-3	14 ballots
26.	Northwestern (Pacconi & Souchet)	5-3	14 ballots
27.	Northwestern (Arney & Tahirkheli)	5-3	13 ballots
28.	Harvard (Deshpande & Sridharan)	5-3	12 ballots
29.	Kentucky (Schedler & Rimpson)	5-3	12 ballots



Emory top seed: 8-0 with 23 ballots
L to R: Dan Gallagher & Ike Song

Speaker Awards

1. Daniel Gallagher
2. Curtis Ortega
3. Rose Larson
4. Jiyoon Park
5. Connelly Cowan
6. Ike Song
7. Luna Schultz
8. Joanna Gusis
9. Eleanor Barrett
10. Spencer Anderson McElligott
11. Connor Shih
12. Jeremiah Cohn
13. Stephen Lewis
14. Veronica Rubin
15. Ariel Gabay
16. Will Kochel
17. Jayden Cunningham
18. Daniel Medina
19. Nora Cai
20. Brooklyn Hato
21. Riley Reichel
22. Antonio Souchet
23. Ashley King
24. Cyrus Esmailzadeh
25. AJ Persinger



L to R: Dan Gallagher with his top speaker award & Ike Song with his sixth place speaker award

Ross K. Smith Top Speaker Award

Daniel Gallagher wins top speaker

Daniel Gallagher, a junior from Emory University, was named the top individual speaker at the 80th NDT. He received two perfect scores of 30 speaker points. Curtis Ortega from Long Beach earned second place honors.

He became the fifth NDT top speaker from Emory, joining Grace Kessler (2024), two-time top speaker Eugenia Giampetruzzi (2022, 2023) and Stephen Weil (2010).

Going into the NDT, Gallagher would have been the favorite in any predictions market to win the top speaker award. Last year, he won second place speaker at the NDT.

Curtis Ortega also would have been strong contender as he won top speaker at the last two major tournaments (University of Texas & ADA Nationals) prior to the NDT.

Rose Larson from the University of Kansas, who won third place speaker at the NDT, won top speaker honors at the Georgetown tournament.

During the 2025-26 season, Gallagher won four top speaker awards (University of Kentucky, Wake Forest University, Gonzaga, and the Dartmouth Round Robin) and earned four top ten speaker awards (Kentucky Round Robin, 4th; University of Texas, 5th; Georgetown, 6th; and ADA Nationals, 10th).

Gallagher is a philosophy, politics and law major and a native of Baltimore, Maryland. He is a Woodruff Debate Scholar at Emory. Gallagher founded the debate program at his high school, the Gilmore School. He also volunteered with the Baltimore Urban Debate League.

After graduating from Emory, Gallagher plans to attend law school.



Dan Gallagher, top speaker
Emory University



Curtis Oretga, second speaker
Long Beach



Rose Larson, third speaker
University of Kansas

Richard Cherwitz receives the Tribe Distinguished Alumni Award for 2026

The 2026 recipient of the Laurence H. Tribe Distinguished Alumni Award is Richard Cherwitz, who is currently the Ernest A. Sharpe Centennial Professor Emeritus for the Communication Department at the University of Texas (Austin).

Joanna Gusis, the student representative to the NDT Board of Trustees from Michigan State, made the presentation speech. Gusis praised Cherwitz for leveraging his debate skills into achieving an impressive academic career spanning 41 years.

Richard Cherwitz debated for the University of Iowa and qualified for the NDT during his junior year (1972-1973). Debating with Rich Updegraff, Gusis indicated that they participated in the elimination rounds at every major national tournament and concluded with a strong performance at the NDT held at the Naval Academy.

After earning his PHD in 1978 from the University of Iowa, Cherwitz began his academic career as an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas (Austin). For over four decades, Cherwitz achieved a remarkable record of excellence in scholarship and teaching. Gusis noted that Cherwitz has published two books and over one hundred journal articles, chapters, and book reviews. She also observed that he has published over 150 opinion pieces and editorials in newspapers pertaining to politics, academic engagement, and public scholarship.

In his nomination letter for Cherwitz, Dr. David Hingstman, the former Director of Debate at Iowa, commented that like Professor Tribes' s appearances on national television, Dr. Cherwitz's op-ed's have made a great impact in our public sphere. Hingstman wrote, "Dr. Cherwitz has engaged in extensive public argument that takes advantage of a variety of media to help people understand the political and policy consequences of rhetorical choices made by public figures in this country and elsewhere."

One of Cherwitz's greatest innovations was founding and directing the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium (IE). Gusis explained that the IE is a cross-disciplinary initiative which educates and train students how to apply what they learn in the classroom to producing real change in their communities such as tackling problems like overcrowded emergency rooms. Cherwitz has raised over a million dollars in grant funding to support the IE. Over his tenure, the IE has enrolled over 10, 000 students.

In recognition of his scholarship and teaching, Cherwitz is the recipient of numerous awards. For instance, he has won four prestigious awards from the National Communication Association, including the Karl Wallace Memorial Award, the Douglas Ehninger Distinguished Rhetorical Scholar Award, the Wallace Bacon Lifetime Teaching Excellence Award, and the Donald H. Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teacher.

Other honors earned by Cherowitz include receiving the Michael Osbourne Scholar Teaching Award from the Southern States Communication Association, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Innovation Award, the National Speakers Association Outstanding Professor Award, and the University of Texas AMOCO Foundation Outstanding Teacher Award.



Laurence H. Tribe

Laurence H. Tribe Distinguished Alumni Award

The Board of Trustees established the Laurence H. Tribe Distinguished Alumni Award to honor NDT alumni who have achieved extraordinary career accomplishments and named the award after Professor Laurence Tribe, who was the first recipient.



Richard Cherwitz

Previous winners of the Tribe Award

2019 Laurence Tribe, Harvard Law School
2020 Ouita Michel, award winning chef and restaurateur
2021 Erwin Chemerinsky, University of California at Berkeley School of Law
2022 David Sutherland, International Care Ministries
2023 John D. Graham, Indiana University professor of risk analysis
2024 John Patrick Dolan, Trial Lawyer & Law Dean
2025 Kelli Sager, First Amendment lawyer

Phillip Samuels receives the George W. Ziegelmueller Award for 2026

Dr. Phillip Samuels, the Director of Debate and Assistant Professor of Communication at Wichita State, is the 2026 recipient of the Ziegelmueller award.

Dr. Karla Leeper, Vice Chancellor for Strategic Communications and Marketing at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and a member of the NDT Board of Trustees, delivered the presentation speech. Leeper noted that the Ziegelmueller award recognizes individuals who have distinguished themselves in a commitment to excellence in research, coaching, and teaching.

Leeper began her remarks by acknowledging Samuels' commitment to academic excellence. She quoted one nominator as observing that Samuels "demonstrates an unwavering commitment to academic excellence through a distinguished scholarly record that bridges race, rhetoric and media studies."

Samuels' current research explores how the rhetoric of miscegenation and the embrace of racial ambiguity promotes racial violence and militarism. In 2024 article in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* Samuels examined how the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 promoted racial and colonial violence against Guam. Samuels wrote his dissertation on the function of ideographs on our perception on Black masculinity.

Excellence in coaching is the second requirement for the Ziegelmueller award. Samuels has clearly demonstrated that as a Director of Debate at Wichita and as a debate coach at the University of Texas (Dallas). As the Director of Debate at Wichita, Samuels has qualified a team to the NDT in every year since he took over in 2021. This includes advancing teams to the elimination rounds of the NDT in 2023 (double-octos) and 2024 (octofinals).

As the debate coach at the University of Texas (Dallas) from 2013 to 2021, Samuels qualified seven teams to the NDT, including advancing teams to the octofinals in four consecutive years (2014 to 2016).

Teaching excellence is the third qualification for the Ziegelmueller award. Leeper read numerous testimonials to demonstrate Samuels excellence as a teacher. Many of his supporters spoke of his ability to teach in way that reaches all students. And, they commended Samuels for his ability to communicate debate and argumentation strategies in a way that feels manageable and achievable for students.

Finally, Leeper expressed her belief that Dr. Ziegelmueller would be pleased about the remarkable commitment of this year's nominee to the personal lives of his students. She indicated that Samuels is beloved by his students because he cares deeply about their lives outside of debate.

PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE GEORGE ZIEGELMUELLER AWARD

1999 George Ziegelmueller, Wayne State University
2000 Allan Louden, Wake Forest University
2001 Chester Gibson, University of West Georgia & Ken Strange Dartmouth College
2002 Herb James Dartmouth & Karla Leeper, Baylor University
2003 Donn Parson, University of Kansas & Tuna Snider, University of Vermont
2004 Cate Palczewski, University of Northern Iowa
2005 William Southworth, University of Redlands
2006 Scott Harris, University of Kansas
2007 Scott Deatherage, Northwestern University
2008 Sarah T. Partlow, Idaho State University
2009 Ross Smith, Wake Forest University
2010 Tim O'Donnell, University of Mary Washington
2011 Gordon Stables, University of Southern California
2012 Glen Frappier, Gonzaga University
2013 Ryan Galloway, Samford University
2014 Mike Davis, James Madison University
2015 Jarrod Atchison, Wake Forest University
2016 William Mosley Jensen, Trinity University
2017 Michael Hester, University of West Georgia
2018 Jacob Thompson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2019 Joe Schatz, Binghamton University
2020 Allision Harper, Emory University
2021 Eric Morris, Missouri State University
2022 Amber Kelsie, Wake Forest University
2023 Brett Bricker, University of Kansas
2024 Edward Panetta, University of Georgia
2025 David Cram Helwich, University of Minnesota

George W. Ziegelmueller Award

Wayne State alumni established The George W. Ziegelmueller Award in 1999 to honor their beloved and immensely successful Director of Debate (1957 to 2006), who made countless contributions to the forensics community, including serving as AFA president and the editor of the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* (now called *Argumentation & Advocacy).*

Recipients of the award must demonstrate excellence in teaching, scholarship, and coaching debate.



George W. Ziegelmueller



L to R: Phillip Samuels and Karla Leeper

John Rains receives the Lucy M. Keele Service Award for 2026

John Rains IV, a United States Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, is the 2026 recipient of the Lucy M. Keele Award for Service. Dr. Cate Palczewski, a professor at the University of Northern Iowa and a member of the NDT Board of Trustees, gave the presentation speech. She praised Rains for his service to the NDT tabroom staff and for his participation as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Palczewski began her remarks by recounting how John Rains became involved with working in the NDT tabroom. Parson, she said, when Emory was hosting the 2003 NDT, the tournament director, asked Melissa Wade (Emory's Director of Debate) for a solution to the tabroom being located far away from the buildings where the debates were taking place. Wade told Parson not to worry and promised to provide her favorite person to assist the tabroom. That person was John Rains, who was an MA divinity student at the time.

Parson and the tabroom staff, Palczewski said, were delighted with Rains' contributions. He was efficient and melded well with what Palczewski described as "a cantankerous and persnickety collection of personalities." Parson enjoyed talking with Rains about religion, politics, and tournament administration. The Head Jayhawk (Parson) she said described Rains as an "ethicist with a fantastic sense of humor." Parson invited Rains back to work at the 2004 NDT, which would be Parson's last as director.

When John Fritch became NDT Director in 2005, he invited Rains to work in his tabroom. Palczewski quoted Fritch as saying he wanted Rains because, he "was extremely conscientious about the impacts of decisions on the students and the integrity of the tournament."

Palczewski praised Rains for suggesting how to improve the efficiency of the tabroom. Prior to electronic ballot entry, she said the tabroom manually entered the debate results on two computers. To check for mistakes, they would print out the results sheets from the two computers and compare them for discrepancies by overlaying the two sets of sheets on a projector. Rains asked why it was not possible for the two computers to compare the data. This suggestion resulted in Rich Edwards writing up the code for doing just that.

As a member of the Board of Trustees, Palczewski commended Rains for soliciting donations to support holding the NDT. In 2024 when Emory again hosted the NDT, Rains was instrumental in obtaining donations from alumni and from his own law firm (Bondurant Mixson & Elmore) to subsidize the tournament. This allowed the NDT to keep participant and team fees to a reasonable amount.

PREVIOUS WINNER OF THE LUCY M. KEELE SERVICE AWARD

1996 Donn Parson, University of Kansas
1997 Brett O'Donnell, Liberty University
1998 Melissa Wade, Emory University & Bill Newnam, Emory University
1999 George Ziegelmueller, Wayne State University
2000 Bill Balthrop, University of North Carolina
2001 Rich Edwards, Baylor University
2002 Pat Ganer, Cypress College
2003 Frank Harrison, Trinity University
2004 Will Baker, New York University
2005 Allan Louden, Wake Forest University
2006 David Zarefsky, Northwestern University
2007 Stefan Bauschard, Lakeland Schools, NY
2008 Bill Southworth, University of Redlands
2009 Jon Bruschke, California State University, Fullerton
2010 Jim Hanson & Aaron Hardy, Whitman College
2011 Dallas Perkins, Harvard University
2012 Gary Larson, Wheaton College
2013 Tim O'Donnell, University of Mary Washington
2014 Sarah Partlow Lefevre, Idaho State University
2015 John Fritch, Missouri State University
2016 David Hingstman, University of Iowa
2017 Michael Davis, James Madison University
2018 Arnie Madsen & Cate Palczewski, University of Northern Iowa
2019 Adrienne Brovero, University of Mary Washington
2020 John Katsulas, Boston College
2021 Matthew Vega, University of Missouri, Kansas City
2022 David Cram Helwich, University of Minnesota
2023 Danielle O'Gorman, U.S. Naval Academy
2024 Sherry Hall, University of Houston
2025 Brendon Bankey, University of Texas

Lucy M. Keele Service Award

The NDT Board of Trustees established the Lucy M. Keele Service Award in 1996 to honor the former Director of Debate at CSU Fullerton who was a longstanding member of the Board. The award recognizes an individual who has provided outstanding service to the debate community.



Lucy M. Keele



Hon. John Rains, IV

Ross K. Smith Coach of the Year Award for 2026

This year's recipient of the Ross K. Smith Coaching Award is Dr. Brett Bricker, Head Coach and Associate Director of Debate at the University of Kansas. Aaron Kall, Board of Trustees member, Director of Debate at The University of Michigan, and recipient of this Coach of the Year Award in 2023, made the presentation speech.

In his remarks, Kall explained that the Coach of the Year Award recipients must embody four characteristics: 1) a consistent record of fielding nationally competitive teams, 2) a demonstrated record as a top judge, 3) contributions to the evolution of the debate field, and 4) the intangible of taking debate outside itself.

As for competitive success, Kall noted that Bricker's Kansas teams have an astounding record of competitive success. In the past 13 seasons Bricker has coached teams that won the NDT (2018), finished 2nd at the NDT three times, (2016, 2024, 2025), had a team reach the Final Four of the NDT in seven of the past ten NDTs (2016, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2025), and had a top five ranked team the year Covid cancelled the NDT.

Since 2012 Bricker has coached 21 NDT first-round at-large teams and had 25 teams reach the elimination rounds at the NDT. He has coached two Copeland winners (2018, 2025), three NDT top speakers (2019, 2021, 2025), and the debater of the decade (Quaram Robinson) for the 2010-2020 decade.

Next, Kall commended Bricker for being one of the best debate judges. In the last "Best of the Decade survey" for 2010-2019, Kall noted that Bricker was selected as one of the ten best judges of the decade. In 2018 and 2026, the debaters at The American Debate Association Tournament voted him as the judge of the year.

Kall then summarized the contributions that Bricker has made to the evolution of debate. He mentioned that Bricker has served as the Chair of the CEDA/NDT topic committee and has authored numerous topic papers for the college and high school debate communities.

Scott Harris (The Head Jay Hawk), who wrote one of the nominating letters, pointed out how Bricker has applied theories of argument to issues in the public sphere with research, publications, public presentations, and media engagement on issues of public concern. Specifically, Harris noted that Bricker's analysis of arguments on vaccine hesitancy have been cited by numerous media outlets. And, Bricker serves as a consultant for the Kansas Leadership Center Vaccine Messaging Team to improve public argument addressing vaccine hesitancy.

The fourth attribute for the Smith Award is how the nominee has encouraged debate to think about itself differently. Bricker has demonstrated this by his commitment to promoting diversity in debate. At Kansas, Bricker oversees a debate program that supports diverse students making diverse arguments. He has recruited diverse students to attend Kansas. He has coached the first black woman to be in the final round of the NDT (Quaram Robinson, 2016) and the first black woman to be the top speaker at the NDT (Aja Buter, 2021).

Bricker encourages his students to run the kind of arguments they find empowering and strives to provide them with the coaching resources to enable them to be successful. This commitment to a big tent approach means Kansas teams, at any given tournament, will be making arguments about racial politics, trans politics, class politics, Latinx politics, continental philosophy, as well as traditional politics.

Ross K. Smith Coach of the Year Award

Emory presented the first Coach of the Year Award in 1967, followed by the University of South Carolina, and eventually Wake. The NDT assumed responsibility for the award in 2011 and named it after Ross K. Smith.

As the coach of Wake, Smith's teams won the NDT in 1997 and 2008. He also promoted many debate innovations, such as lengthening the rebuttal speeches to six minutes.



Ross K. Smith



L to R: Aaron Kall & Brett Bricker



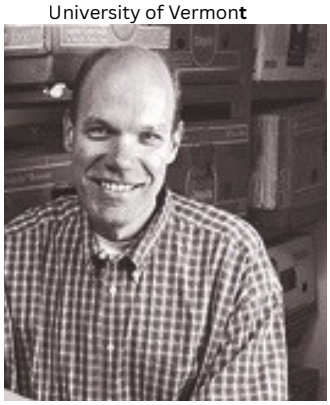
Donn W. Parson
University of Kansas



Ken Strange
Dartmouth College



Alfred “Tuna” Snider
University of Vermont



Scott Deatherage
Northwestern University

Previous winners of the Ross K. Smith Coach of the Year Award

1967 Annabel Hagood, University of Alabama
1968 Herbert James, Dartmouth College
1969 George Zieglemueller, Wayne State University
1970 John Lynch, Saint Anselm’s College
1971 James Unger, Georgetown University
1972 David Zarefsky, Northwestern University
1973 Thomas Kane, University of Pittsburgh
1974 Daniel Bozik, Augustana College (Illinois)
1975 Chester Gibson, College of West Georgia
1976 Bill Henderson, University of Northern Iowa
1977 Cully Clark, University of Alabama
1978 No award
1979 Tim Browning, University of Arizona
1980 Donn Parson, University of Kansas
1981 J.W. Patterson, University of Kentucky
1982 Ken Strange, Dartmouth College
1983 Tim Hynes, University of Louisville
1984 Walter Ulrich, Vanderbilt University
1985 William Balthrop, University of North Carolina
1986 Robin Rowland, Baylor University & David Hingstman, Baylor University
1987 Jeff Bile, Southern Illinois University
1988 Allan Louden, Wake Forest University
1989 Daryl Scott, Gonzaga University
1990 Dallas Perkins, Jr., Harvard University
1991 Melissa Wade, Emory University
1992 Glen Strickland, Emporia State University
1993 Alfred Snider, University of Vermont
1994 David Berube, University of South Carolina
1995 Todd Graham, Northwestern State
1996 Doug Duke, University of Central Oklahoma
1997 Ross Smith, Wake Forest University
1998 Bill Newman, Emory University
1999 Carrie Crenshaw, University of Alabama
2000 Will Repko, Michigan State University
2001 Joel Rollins, University of Texas, Austin
2002 Scott Deatherage, Northwestern University
2003 Jim Hanson, Whitman College
2004 Jon Bruschke, California State University, Fullerton
2005 Sherry Hall, Harvard University
2006 Scott Harris, University of Kansas
2007 Edward Panetta, University of Georgia
2008 Eric Morris, Missouri State University
2009 Dave Arnett, University of California, Berkeley
2010 Roger Solt, University of Kentucky
2011 Adrienne Brovero, University of Mary Washington
2012 Daniel Fitzmier, Northwestern University
2013 Sam Maurer, Emporia State University
2014 David Heidt, University of Michigan
2015 Ed Lee, Emory University
2016 Jonathan Paul, Georgetown University
2017 Michael Hester, University of West Georgia
2018 David Cram Helwich, University of Minnesota
2019 No award
2020 No award
2021 Jacob Thompson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2022 John Turner, Dartmouth College
2023 Aaron Kall, University of Michigan
2024 Deven Cooper, California State, Long Beach
2025 Mikaela Malsin, Emory University

The 4th National Debate Tournament (1950)

The 4th National Debate Tournament (NDT) took place during April 27 to 29, 1950. The eight preliminary debates were held over two days with four rounds each day on Thursday, April 27 and on Friday, April 28 followed by four elimination rounds held on Saturday, April 29.

The NDT used the same method for selecting the debate teams as the prior three NDTs. Thirty-two of the participants were invited by a committee or they qualified based upon their performance at a district tournament. In 1950, only District VII and District VIII held qualifying tournaments. The other districts selected teams by the vote of a district nominating committee. West Point, as the host, and the prior year's NDT winner, Alabama, received automatic invitations, making a field of thirty-four debate teams.

Just prior to the NDT, the untimely death of a family member of one of the St. Peter's debaters (Gabriel Mulcahey) caused them to withdraw and Pennsylvania State, as the alternate from District VII, replaced them.

The first two rounds were randomly paired under the proviso that no team would be paired against another opponent within 500 miles. Rounds 3 to 8 were power-matched. However, throughout the tournament, no team was allowed to be paired against another team from their own district.

For the 1950 NDT, the West Point Council used three-judge panels during the preliminary rounds. The 1950 post-NDT tournament booklet reported that 53 percent of all decisions in the preliminary rounds were split decisions.

Believe it or not, the NDT did not use the number of ballots as the tie breaker for teams with the same number of wins. Instead, total speaker points were the tie-breaker. In fact, the total ballot count for teams was not reported in the results or used as the tie breaker until 1953.

Unlike the 3rd NDT which had debated an entirely new topic from the national resolution, the West Point Council returned to the norm of debating the national topic for the 4th NDT but with a twist. Instead of debating the national topic in every debate, the West Point Council created three sub-topic wordings.

And so, for the eight preliminary rounds, the sequence of topics debated followed this order:

*In rounds 1 and 2, the national topic was debated, "Resolved: The United States should nationalize the basic non-agricultural industries."

*In rounds 3 and 4, the topic wording changed to, "Resolved: That in order to control the business cycle, the U.S. should nationalize the basic non-agricultural industries."

*In rounds 5 and 6, the topic wording became, "Resolved: That in the interests of national security, the United States should nationalize the basic non- agricultural industries."

*In rounds 7 & 8, the topic narrowed to, "Resolved: The United States should nationalize the steel industry."

For the elimination rounds, the NDT reversed the order of the topics debated, with the octofinals debating the steel industry topic, the quarterfinals debating the national security interest topic, the semifinals debating the business cycle topic, and the final round debating the national topic.



Arkansas
L to R: Phil Carroll & Bill Arnold holding their trophy from the Mid-South debating tournament



West Point
L to R: Lt. Col. Chester L. Johnson (coach) & Walter C. McSherry



Purdue
Charles Gunther, standing & Donald Sutherland prepping for the BU tournament

While the participants at the 4th NDT were predominately white males, some significant gender advancements were made. The number of women who qualified to the NDT increased to four, which doubled the previous mark of two females in 1947 and 1949. Moreover, for the first time, Myrtle Chitty and Toni Rausch from Washington State became the first all-female team to qualify to the NDT.

Female debaters also shattered the record books by achieving new benchmarks for tournament success. The 4th NDT is the first time that two females advanced to the elimination rounds (Patricia Swineford from Bowling Green and Dorothy Ann Koch from Augustana). And, Dorothy Ann Koch became the first female to advance to the final round of the NDT.

In 1950, three schools qualified to the NDT for the first and only time: Roanoke, the University of Arkansas, and Luther College. For Harvard and Redlands, the 4th NDT would be their first of what would become decades of superlative results competing at the NDT.

Finally, the 1950 NDT was marred by a tabulation error. In round 8, the tab room misrecorded the results of a debate between Northwestern and the University of Tennessee (Knoxville). The tab room mistakenly awarded the decision to Northwestern. Absent this error, Buford Rhea & Lee Levitt of Tennessee would have qualified for the elimination rounds with a 5-3 record.

This error caused havoc with the elimination bracket. By incorrectly assuming Northwestern had won six debates, they were awarded the fourth seed. With a 5-3 record, Northwestern should have been given the seventh seed, below Redlands with six wins and below the University of Kansas with five wins but having higher total speaker points, given that the Kansas debaters were the fifth and twelfth speakers. As the third and nineteenth speakers, the Northwestern debaters likely had lower total speaker points than Kansas.

By excluding the 5-3 Tennessee team, the tab room incorrectly allowed the 4-4 team from the University of Pennsylvania (Specter & Katz) to be the 16th seed. This was unfortunate for the top seed team from Southern Methodist (Reiff & Wilke) who were upset in the octofinals by Specter & Katz.

The Preliminary Rounds

At the 4th National Debate Tournament (NDT), the University of Vermont defeated Augustana, Illinois to become the NDT champion of 1950. The University of Vermont team of Thomas B. Hayes & Richard T. O'Connell, were both seniors.

Vermont had high expectations entering the 1950 NDT given that Thomas Hayes had reached the semifinals at the 1949 NDT (debating with John B. Harrington). For Richard O'Connell, this was his first time competing at the NDT.

During the 1949-50 debate season, Hayes & O'Connell's most impressive performance was a second-place finish at the Boston University Tournament held during February 10-11, 1950. The BU tournament had a strong field of 26 teams, including many who would qualify for the NDT. Vermont defeated Purdue in the semifinals and was defeated in a 4-3 decision in the finals by Notre Dame (Carey & Dempsey).

Hayes & O'Connell won the New England Forensic Conference tournament held at Dartmouth College on April 1, 1950. This was a relatively weak regional tournament with only 12 teams. In the final round, they defeated a Tufts team that failed to qualify for the NDT.

Vermont qualified for the NDT by placing third out of nineteen teams competing at the district tournament hosted by Wesleyan, CT during March 24-25, 1950. At the district tournament, Hayes & O'Connell were 3-1, defeating MIT, Dartmouth, and New York University. They lost to Utica. Harvard was the top seed, winning all of their debates.



Washington State: First all-female NDT debate team
L to R: Toni Rausch & Myrtle Chitty

During the preliminary rounds of the 1950 NDT, Hayes & O'Connell earned a 5-3 record. They defeated Notre Dame (5-3), Washington State (3-5), University of Pennsylvania (4-4), Luther (4-4), and Whitman (3-5). Their three losses were to Wisconsin Eau Claire (5-3), Northwestern (5-3), and Southern California (3-5). With a 5-3 record, Vermont was the 11th seed.

The Augustana (Illinois) team who advanced to the final round, Dorothy Ann Koch & Charles D. Lindbergh, were both seniors. This was the first NDT for both of them.

Amazingly, the NDT was the first tournament where they debated together. Coach Martin Holcomb formed this partnership by selecting his strongest debater from the men and women squads.

During the 1949-50 debate season, Koch debated exclusively with Lucille Foley in all-women tournaments. Koch & Foley were the most successful female debate team in the United States. They achieved a record of 40-3, along with winning five tournaments (The Great Lakes Tournament at Bowling Green, Northwest Debate Tournament at St. Paul, The Northwestern Tournament in Evanston, Illinois Normal Tournament at Bloomington, and Illinois State Tournament at Rock Island).

Charles Lindberg debated with David Loring. They earned a 39-11 record. Lindberg & Loring won two tournaments (The Great Lakes tournament at Bowling Green and the Illinois State Tournament at Rock Island). They also finished second in the Grand Western Debate Tournament at Northwestern and placed third in the Lincoln Memorial debate tournament held at Knox College.

Augustana qualified to the NDT by being ranked as the second-best debate program in District V. Northwestern received the first-place ranking.

In a 2009 issue of the *Augustana Magazine*, Dorothy Ann Koch Bjornson recalled that she encountered many obstacles while debating at NDT. On the bus ride from New York to West Point, she experienced a gallbladder attack. Lindberg, her partner, was so concerned that he asked professor Holcomb to look for a replacement. Fortunately, she recovered by the next morning. Then, as the tournament progressed, Koch said, she started to lose her voice. Before speaking, she asked the judges to sit in the front row so they could hear her. When she was not debating, she spent all of her time gargling and breathing steam.

Despite these near disasters, Koch & Lindberg succeeded during the preliminary rounds. They won five debates by defeating South Carolina (0-8), Utica (3-5), Wesleyan (3-5), Alabama (4-4), and Arizona (4-4). Their three losses were to Southern California (3-5), Arkansas (5-3), and Baylor (7-1). With a 5-3 record, Augustana earned the 10th seed.

Augustana and Florida were the only two teams debating in the elimination rounds that never defeated a team who advanced to the octofinals.

Road to the Finals: The elimination rounds

To reach the final round of the 1950 NDT, Vermont defeated the 6th seed from Kansas in the octofinals, the 13th seed from Montana in the quarterfinals, and the 15th seed from Florida in the semifinals. Vermont was fortunate that the top two teams in their bracket, Baylor (the 2nd seed) and Northwestern (the 4th seed), were upset in the first elimination round.



Augustana: Illinois State Champs
L to R: Dorothy Ann Koch, Lucille Foley, Charles Lindbergh & David Loring



Coaching the Augustana female champs
L to R: Dr. Martin Holcomb (coach), Lucille Foley & Dorothy Ann Koch



Final coaching before the NDT
L to R: Dorothy Ann Koch, Dr. Martin Holcomb (coach) & Charles Lindbergh

Elimination Rounds (continued)

In the octofinals, Vermont debated against the University of Kansas team of Edward Stollenwerck & Kent Shearer. The Jayhawks were the strongest team and highest seed that Vermont would encounter in the elimination rounds.

Kansas was a formidable opponent because it had Edward Stollenwerck, the most accomplished debater competing in the 1950 NDT. He was the only three-time qualifier to the NDT; he won top ten speaker awards in every appearance (5th speaker in 1950, 2nd speaker in 1949, and 9th speaker in 1948); and he advanced to the semifinals in 1948 and the quarterfinals in 1949.

During the 1949-50 season, Stollenwerck debated with Kent Shearer, who was a junior. They earned a 3rd place at the Northwestern tournament in February 1950. Shearer was also a talented debater. In December 1949, Shearer won the University of Texas tournament and won top speaker honors (debating with J. Steve Mills).

Stollenwerck & Shearer qualified for the NDT by being voted as the top team from District IV. Debating at the NDT, they validated that rating by winning five debates. They were victorious over Navy, Tennessee, Notre Dame, Florida, and Montana. That was an impressive feat as they defeated three teams who made the elimination rounds (Notre Dame, Florida, and Montana), along with Tennessee who should have qualified but for the tabulation error.

By upsetting Kansas in the octofinals, Hayes & O'Connell were well on their way to reaching the final round. And, this became evident after Montana and Florida scored major upsets of their own.

In the quarterfinals, Vermont met the 13th seed from Montana, who upset the 4th seed from Northwestern in the octofinals. Northwestern was voted by the District V committee as the top team in a strong debating region. Many coaches perceived Northwestern as a favorite to win the NDT. However, their quest to win the NDT was stopped by the Bobcats of Montana State.

The Montana team of M. Dean Jellison & James P. Lucas debated exclusively in small regional tournaments in the Northwest. Jellison & Lucas won four tournaments: the Linfield College tournament in Oregon (March 1950), the Montana-Intercollegiate tournament at Butte (April 1950), the Montana State intercollege tournament held at the School of Mines (April 1950), and the Triangle debate tournament at Washington State (December 1949).

Montana State was voted by the nominating committee as the best team in District II. However, Jellison & Lucas were outclassed by Vermont, who defeated them handily in the quarterfinals.

Vermont next faced the University of Florida in the semifinals. The Florida team of Walter A. Apfelbaum & Jack Plisco were the 15th seed after going 4-4. Their wins came against four teams—Purdue, Pepperdine, Whitman, Washington State—all with losing records.

Despite their unimpressive performance during the preliminary rounds, Florida heated up during the elimination rounds. In the octofinals, Apfelbaum & Plisco upset the 2nd seed from Baylor. James Thornton & David Heinlein of Baylor were both seniors who had won two tournaments that year at Oklahoma at ADA (December 1949) and the University of Texas (April 1950).

At the NDT, Baylor won seven debates including defeating four teams (Eu Claire, Bowling Green, Augustana, and Redlands) who reached the elimination rounds. So, Florida defeating Baylor was a huge upset.

In the quarterfinals, Florida staged another big upset by defeating Southeastern Oklahoma. Jack Carter & Collin Bowen of Southeastern were voted by the nominating committee as the top team from District III, which had the most competitive teams. District III was the only district to have all four teams advance to the elimination rounds of the 1950 NDT.



Montana State
Front row, L to R: Dean Jellison (first) and James Lucas (third)
Second Row: in center, Ralph Y. McGinnis (coach)



University of Florida
L to R: Walter Apfelbaum & Jack Plisco



Baylor University
David Heinlein

Elimination Rounds (continued)

During the 1949-50 season, Carter & Bowen won four tournaments (North Texas Tournament, November 1949; University of Nebraska Tournament, Feb 1950; Savage Forensic Tournament, March 1950; and the Lower Mississippi Pi Kappa Delta tournament at Texas Christian University, April 1950).

In a quarterfinals debate that featured four seniors, the Florida Gators prevailed over the Bisons of Southeastern Oklahoma and ended the debate careers of Carter & Bowen.

Despite their mediocre 4-4 record during the preliminary debates, Apfelbaum & Plisco were excellent speakers. In fact, Florida was the only school to have both of their debaters rank among the top ten speakers at the NDT with Plisco taking 4th place honors and Apfelbaum capturing 6th place.

Advancing to the semifinals of the NDT represented the best tournament performance for Apfelbaum & Plisco. That debate year, Florida won only one small regional tournament. In December 1949, Florida won the Old Dominion Tournament held in Richmond. But Apfelbaum & Plisco, who were tied for the best affirmative record, were only 3-3. Florida won the tournament on the basis of a 6-0 record by their negative team.

A more impressive showing for Florida occurred at the Georgetown Invitational Cherry Blossom tournament held during March 23-25, 1950. This was a much larger tournament with twenty-five teams. Florida placed second at the Georgetown tournament, losing to a young Army team. The top West Point team of Gard & McSherry did not compete at that tournament.

In the semifinal debate, Florida came close to scoring another upset. But, Vermont defeated Apfelbaum & Plisco in a 4-3 decision, which earned Vermont their first appearance in the NDT finals.

In the other half of the bracket, Augustana reached the final round by defeating the 7th seed from Wisconsin Eau Claire in the octofinals, the 16th seed from the University of Pennsylvania in the quarterfinals, and the 3rd seed from West Point in the semifinals.

As the 10th seed, Augustana met the 7th seed from Wisconsin Eau Claire in the octofinals. Richard Donaldson & Cletus Howard of Eau Claire were rated as the third best team from District IV. Donaldson was the only freshmen debating at the NDT; Howard was a senior.

During the preliminary rounds, Donaldson & Howard were 5-3, defeating Vermont, South Carolina, Arizona, Wesleyan, and Florida. Their three losses were to Southeastern, Baylor, and Notre Dame (all teams who cleared). Having conquered the NDT winner (Vermont) and one of the semifinalists (Florida) demonstrated that the Eau Claire team stood as a legitimate threat to advance far on the elimination day. However, Augustana upset the 7th seed and advanced to the quarterfinals to face the University of Pennsylvania.

Arlen Specter and Marvin Katz were both juniors. Specter reached the quarterfinals of the 1949 NDT debating with Saul Krononet. This was the first NDT for Katz. Specter & Katz were undefeated at the District VII tournament. They won rounds over Temple, Washington College, Washington & Jefferson, Mount St. Mary, Pennsylvania State, and Roanoke.

In the 1950 NDT, Specter & Katz were 4-4 and the 16th seed. If not for the tabulation error denying Tennessee their fifth win, Specter & Katz would not have made the elimination rounds. Even though they were 4-4, Specter & Katz handed Baylor their only loss and three of their defeats were to outstanding teams from Redlands, Northwestern, and Vermont. In the octofinals, Specter & Katz took down the top seed from Southern Methodist.

In the quarterfinals, another upset was not in the cards, as Augustana easily defeated the feisty team from the University of Pennsylvania. That set up a final round debate with the Black Knights from the United States Military Academy.

The West Point team of Robert G. Gard and Walter C. McSherry were both seniors. The majority of their debate experience during the 1949-50 debate season involved debating against individual colleges rather than competing in tournaments. For example, during a two-week period in March 1950, Walter McSherry and George Vlisides were sent on a debate tour to compete against colleges in California, New Mexico, and Texas. Their trip included a debate against the Redlands NDT team of Holt Spicer and James Wilson.



Wisconsin (Eau Claire)
L to R: Richard Donaldson, Grace Walsh (coach) & Cletus Howard



Redlands Sophomores
L to R: James Wilson & Holt Spicer



West Point
L to R: George Vlisides & Walter McSherry
Debating against Redlands in a public debate

Elimination Rounds (continued)

This was the first NDT for Gard & McSherry. They had an excellent performance during the preliminary rounds defeating Northwestern, Whitman, Montana, Luther, Kansas, and Navy. Their two losses were to Bowling Green and Redlands. To reach the semifinals, Gard & McSherry defeated Arkansas in the octofinals and avenged their earlier loss to Bowling Green by defeating them in the quarterfinals.

In the semifinals debate, Augustana walloped West Point in a 5-0 decision, which earned Koch & Lindberg an opportunity to win a national championship against the University of Vermont.



West Point
Robert Gard



University of Pennsylvania
Marvin Katz



Southeastern Oklahoma
L to R: Collin Bowen, T.A. Houston (coach) & Jack Carter



Bowling Green
L to R: Patricia Swineford &
M. Harold Mikle (coach)

The 1950 NDT Final Round:
Augustana vs. Vermont

In the final round of the 1950 NDT, Augustana debated on the affirmative. The first affirmative speaker was Dorothy Ann Koch, and the second affirmative speaker was David Lindbergh. Vermont debated on the negative with Thomas Hayes doing the first negative and Richard O'Connell as the second negative.

For the final round, the NDT used the national topic which was, "Resolved, The United States should nationalize the basic non-agricultural industries." In her first speech, Koch defined these industries to include coal, steel, oil, chemicals, public utilities, railroads, and communications.

Next, Koch outlined how the affirmative plan would work. She advocated for Congress to establish a government corporation, staffed by economic experts, who would set prices for industries and would operate them as a public service.

The harm to private industries operating under a profit-driven system, Koch argued, had led to the growth of oligopolies. She cited statistics indicating that AT & T controlled 90% of the phone lines. The large railroads, she claimed, controlled 90% of the tracks, and three large steel companies produced 75% of the steel output.

Koch argued that oligopolies were harmful for four reasons. First, she argued that oligopolies were generating excessive profits which enabled them to pay exorbitant dividends to their shareholders. Second, she pointed out the existence of price-fixing where industries would never lower prices even if their production costs declined. Third, she claimed that big and powerful industries exercised undue political influence with politicians. Fourth, she contended that oligopolies were engaging in international cartel agreements to control the production and trade of vital materials like synthetic rubber and tungsten carbide.

In his first negative speech, Thomas Hayes directly refuted each of Augustana's points. He presented four major arguments. First, with respect to the growth of oligopolies, Hayes claimed that there was less concentration in the basic industries than in the non-basic industries. He also pointed out that profits in the basic industries were lower, citing statistics that the average profits in baking were 21.8%, dairy industry profits were 18.9%, and printing industry profits were 17.9%. In comparison, Hayes stated, the profits for iron and steel never exceeded 4% over a long period of years.

Second, Hayes argued there were economic benefits to oligopolies, citing evidence from the Temporary National Economic Committee (TNEC). This report identified several benefits, including lower production costs, avoiding competitive over-expansion, and reducing research and patent filing costs.

Third, he dismissed the political influence argument as naïve. Hayes pointed out that lobbying was undertaken by all industries. For instance, he pointed out that the farm lobby had extensive influence in Congress. In fact, he argued it was undemocratic to disallow industries to have access to their representatives.

Fourth, the concern over cartel agreements, Hayes argued, was invalid. He stated most of the cartel agreements occurred years ago, and that if these agreements were harmful, Congress could prevent them via regulation. Finally, Hayes claimed the price of tungsten carbide was not a problem as it never exceeded $25 dollars per pound, and that the price was justified to allow General Electric to recoup their high development costs.



Augustana returning from the NDT:
L to R: Martin Holcomb (coach), Dorothy Ann Koch & David Lindbergh

1950 NDT Final Round (continued)

In his second affirmative speech, Charles Lindbergh refuted Hayes' arguments by extending statistics from the first affirmative which went unrefuted. Lindbergh reiterated that the negative had not refuted their evidence about the existence of oligopolies. He pointed out that 1.2% of the utilities controlled 80% of the workable assets. Three steel companies (Bethlehem, Republic & U.S. Steel), he said, controlled 85% of the steel production. AT & T, he reminded the judges, owned 90% of the communication lines. All of this, he concluded, proved that oligopolies were more extensive in basic industries.

Next, Lindbergh dismissed the negative's arguments that non-basic industries had higher profits. First, he pointed out that this was irrelevant as to disproving the harm to higher profits in basic industries. Second, he claimed that basic industries were earning higher profits, citing a 16.9% profit in oil and a 19.5% profit in electrical equipment. As for the steel industry, he said that iron and steel generated a 12.6% profit when the base year comparison was 1926. Lindbergh also pointed out that their price-fixing arguments were not refuted.

Lindbergh then presented additional evidence to corroborate the existence and harm to international cartels. He quoted from the TNEC Report which found that cartel agreements between U.S. and foreign companies had driven up the cost of war materials purchased by the government. He again quoted Wendell Burge (whose qualifications were never given) to support the existence of cartels in the chemical and steel industries.

Finally, Lindbergh rejected the negative's argument that regulation would solve. In most cases, he said regulation would come too late after the damage to the economy had already occurred. He pointed out that antitrust cases had been filed against numerous industries but had dragged on for years without any successful resolution.

In his second negative speech, Richard O'Connell presented arguments for why government ownership of basic industries would be undesirable. First, he argued that government ownership would result in poor purchasing policy. He quoted from a report by Herbert Hoover which indicated it took twenty-four processes to make a government purchase. This increased the cost for purchasing a ten-dollar item to twenty dollars.

Second, O'Connell argued that government ownership would lead to poor budgeting and accounting. He cited evidence that The Maritime Commission and the Inland Waterway Corporation were incapable of maintaining accurate records. The books were so deplorable, he said, that it was impossible to do any effective audit of the accounts.

Third, he contended that government ownership would result in poor planning. O'Connell gave several examples of poor planning. He indicated that the government built the Alaska Railroad to transport coal to the mainland of the United States. However, after they built the railroad, they discovered the coal was commercially useless. Another example he cited was the Army building a new hospital in Honolulu for $37 million when the existing Naval hospital was more than adequate to accommodate all the needs for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Fourth, O'Connell claimed that government ownership would be politicized. The Hoover report found that due to political pressure and lobbying, the Post Office Department prevented implementing efficiency measures to save taxpayers money. Political pressure, he argued, also kept incompetent employees working for the Alaska Railroad. Finally, he pointed out that the cotton lobby prevented using rayon in tires instead of cotton, even though rayon would produce superior tires.

Fifth, government ownership, O'Connell concluded, would result in a high rate of business failures. The Hoover Commission found that of the active government corporations who were engaged in industrial activity, all five ran large deficits. Examples included the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) with a $10 million deficit in 1948 and The Virgin Island Company which ran a deficit in every year of its existence, except for two years. The Inland Waterways had to be abolished because it ran an $8 million annual deficit.



Vermont receiving its own car
Edwin W. Lawrence presenting the keys to a car to Thomas Hayes with Acting President Elias Lyman looking on



Vermont awaiting for the start of the NDT final round
L to R: Thomas B. Hayes, Richard T. O'Connell & Robert Huber (coach)

1950 NDT Final Round (continued)

Thomas Hayes, in his first negative rebuttal, made three major points. First, he restated that profits were not excessive in coal, chemicals, and oil. As for the steel industry, if high prices existed, Hayes claimed government regulation could solve.

Second, he argued that government ownership would not solve for high prices. He cited the poor record of government ownership of corporations. To support his argument, he observed that government ownership resulted in higher operating costs, poorer technological development, and higher prices.

Third, Hayes disputed the affirmative's cartel harm by pointing out that their own source, Thurmond Arnold, advocated for antitrust enforcement and not for nationalization of industries. He then quoted evidence from Professor Thomas Kiecoffer of the University of Wisconsin stating that stricter enforcement of the Sherman Act would solve for any problems with oligopolies.

In her first affirmative rebuttal, Dorothy Ann Koch devoted the majority of her speech refuting the negative's arguments that government corporations were inefficiently operated with a high failure rate. She pointed out that the TVA was now earning high profits. The Inland Water Corporation, she argued, was taken over by the government because private industry was incapable of operating it for twenty-three years. The Virgin Island Corporation, she stated, was a service project and not designed to generate a profit.

Koch then disputed the negative's characterization of the Hoover Commission as supporting the failure of government corporations. She noted that the Hoover Commission recommended implementing better business practices in how government corporations were operated, and, she claimed, over half of these reforms had already been adopted.

She next pushed back against the negative's claim that private enterprises almost never failed. In the first negative, Hayes claimed that only one percent of private companies went bankrupt. To refute this, she quoted a study by Dunn & Bradstreet which found that from 1925 to 1945 more than half of U.S. corporations were unprofitable.

Finally, Koch reestablished the need for the affirmative plan. She argued that it was undeniably true that oligopolies existed in the basic industries. And, she dismissed the ability of government regulation to combat the problem. In most cases, she said, great damage had occurred before government regulation had been attempted.

In his second negative rebuttal, Richard O'Connell highlighted three major arguments. First, he disputed the existence of high prices and profits in basic industries. He rattled off statistics documenting low profits earned in steel and iron, chemicals, non-ferrous metals, and transportation. He also contested that price-fixing existed by referencing a chart that he read from in his constructive showing prices fluctuated in basic industries.

Second, he maintained that the affirmative had no recent evidence to prove the existence of international cartels. He claimed the affirmative's evidence assumed international agreements made during World War One. He further noted that, if cartels existed or emerged, government regulation would be a more effective solution than nationalization.

Third, O'Connell extended his arguments for why government ownership of basic industries would be counter-productive. Government corporations, he reiterated, had an abysmal record in planning, budgeting, and generating profits. He rejected Koch's argument that the Hoover Commission recommendations would alleviate any of these problems.



Fire engine ride to the Waterman Building
L to R: Robert Huber (coach), Thomas Hayes & Richard O'Connell



Waterman Building ceremonies
L to R: Mayor John Moran, Mrs. Harold Arthur (wife of Governor), Robert Huber (coach), Richard O'Connell & Thomas Hayes

1950 NDT Final Round (continued)

In his second affirmative rebuttal, Charles Lindbergh began by reestablishing the affirmative's harms regarding oligopolies earning high profits and causing higher prices. He asserted that the low profit statistics cited by the negative were invalid because they were based on profit quotations on sales and not on general investments. He then repeated the affirmative statistics indicating an average profit of 18.7% in manufacturing industries. He pointed out that the negative had conceded the existence of oligopolies.

Lindbergh next addressed the issue of international cartel agreements. He disputed the negative's claim that their evidence was based on one source that assumed World War One. Then he extended four sources confirming the existence and harms from cartels. Lindbergh also dismissed the ability of regulation to alleviate these harms.

In his closing remarks, Lindbergh attempted to defend the efficiency of government ownership of basic industries. He repeated the statistic that half of all private companies had failed. He reiterated Koch's argument that the adoption of the Hoover Commission recommendations would solve for the past failures of government ownership of companies.

In a 5-4 decision, the judges declared the negative team from Vermont as the winner. This would be the only NDT won by Vermont.

This was obviously a very close debate. In his critique of the 1950 NDT final round debate published in *Championship Debating,* Herbert James, the legendary Dartmouth College debate coach, acknowledged that neither team won the issues by more than a narrow margin. However, James indicated that if he had been one of the judges, he would have awarded the decision to the affirmative.

In his assessment of the debate arguments, James thought the affirmative won the international cartels harm. He rightly pointed out that the affirmative had presented several sources supporting this harm. James also believed that the reforms implemented by the Hoover Commission mitigated the harms to government ownership of basic industries.

The five judges voting for the negative were probably not persuaded by the argument that the Hoover reforms solved for the problems with government ownership.

In her 2009 interview in the *Augustana Magazine,* Dorothy Ann Koch Bjornson indicated that both she and Charles Lindbergh were convinced that they "nailed the debate." They were stunned when Vermont was announced as the winner of the debate.

Upon returning to Vermont, Hayes, O'Connell, and "Doc" Huber were greeted by a caravan of cars, the University of Vermont band, a fire engine, and a police escort. They were removed from their car and placed upon the fire engine, along with the Sigurd S. Larmon trophy. Riding on the fire engine, they were paraded throughout Burlington. The ceremony took place in front of the Waterman Building, a large brick building with Vermont-marble columns, which served as the main administration building for the university.

During the ceremonies, Mayor John Moran presented the keys to the city to Professor Huber. Mrs. Harold Arthur, the wife of the governor of Vermont, gave a speech praising the accomplishments of the debaters.



L to R: Thomas Hayes, Robert Huber (coach, clutching the Larmon trophy) & Richard O'Connell



Admiring the Larmon Cup
L to R: Richard O'Connell & Thomas Hayes

1950 National Debate Tournament Results

Teams qualifying for elimination rounds

1.	7-1	Southern Methodist	Lee H. Reiff & Dick B. Wilke	Norma J. Ballard
2.	7-1	Baylor	James Thornton & David Heinlein	Glenn R. Capp
3.	6-2	West Point	Robert G. Gard & Walter C. McSherry	Lt. Col. Chester L. Johnson
4.	6-2	Northwestern	Gordon Sinkon & Richard Markus	James H. McBath
5.	6-2	Redlands	James Q. Wilson & Holt V. Spicer	E.R. Nichols
6.	5-3	Kansas	Edward Stollenwerck & Kent Shearer	E.C. Buehler
7.	5-3	Wisconsin (Eau Claire)	Richard Donaldson & Cletus Howard	Grace M. Walsh
8.	5-3	Notre Dame	William T. Carey & William Dempsey	Leonard F. Sommer
9.	5-3	Southeastern State (OK)	Jack Carter & Collin Bowen	T.A. Houston
10.	5-3	Augustana (IL)	Dorothy Ann Koch & Charles D. Lindbergh	Martin J. Holcomb
11.	5-3	Vermont	Richard T. O'Connell & Thomas B. Hayes	Robert B. Huber
12.	5-3	Bowling Green	Louis Fernandez & Patricia Swineford	M. Harold Mikle
13.	5-3	Montana State	M. Dean Jellison & James P. Lucas	Ralph Y. McGinnis
14.	5-3	Arkansas	Bill Arnold & Phil Carroll	U.L. Baker
15.	4-4	Florida	Walter A. Apfelbaum & Jack Plisco	Dean C. Barnlund
16.	4-4	Pennsylvania	Arlen Specter & Marvin Katz	Cecil J. Burnett

Non-Advancing Teams in alphabetical order with their record in parenthesis

Alabama (4-4)	James Brice & Al Holmes	Annabel Dunham
Arizona (4-4)	Henry A. Kiker & Jack H. Stewart	W. Arthur Cable
Harvard (3-5)	William Becker & Richard Hulbert	F.C. Packard, Jr.
Navy (3-5)	John Hemenway & Clyde Middleton	H.O. Werner
Luther (4-4)	Milton Hauge & Bill Jensen	Mary M. Roberts
Penn. State (1-7)	Richard Schweiker & Peter Giesey	Joseph F. O'Brien
Pepperdine (3-5)	Ronald F. Reid & Raymond Ford	Emmett T. Long
Purdue (2-6)	Charles E. Gunther & Donald G. Sutherland	N.B. Beck
Roanoke (1-7)	William Linkous & William Branscom	Julius F. Prufer
South Carolina (0-8)	Laverne G. Funderburk & Harvey Golden	Merle G. Christopherson
Southern California (3-5)	Edward Stegman & Dale Drum	Alan Nichols
St. Thomas (4-4)	Thomas Kennelly & Thomas J. Rooney	Richard F. Krueger
Tennessee (Knoxville) (5-3)	Buford Rhea & Lee Levitt	Robert L. Hickey
Utica (3-5)	John Flager & Frank Gualtieri	Dora Newman
Wake Forest (3-5)	T. Lamar Caudle & Robert P. Crouch	Franklin R. Shirley
Washington State (3-5)	Myrtle Chitty & Toni Rausch	William H. Veatch
Wesleyan (CT) (3-5)	Robert J. Buckley & Sherwin Montell	John Crawford
Whitman (3-5)	Gordon Jaynes & Ernest Miller	Lloyd R. Newcomer

1950 NDT Top Speaker:

William Thomas Carey

1929 to October 7, 2020

William T. Carey, a Notre Dame debater, won top speaker honors at the 1950 NDT. He earned 1001 speaker points, which was 8 points more than the second-place speaker, Lee Reiffe, from Southern Methodist.

Bill Carey become the first top speaker of the NDT to advance to the elimination rounds. In 1950, debating with William Dempsey, Carey won five debates and lost in the octofinals to Southeastern Oklahoma.

In the 1949 NDT, Carey received 7th place speaker honors and reached the quarterfinals debating with Frank Finn. He was a three-time NDT qualifier. He qualified as a freshmen in 1948 with Finn but won only one debate. Carey did not debate during his senior year.

Carey was born in Chicago and became a child actor on stations WCFL in Chicago and KDKA in Pittsburgh. During the "Golden Age of Radio," he regularly appeared on radio from 1936 to 1947 in many programs, including Tom Mix.

In 1951, Carey graduated Magna Cum Laude and was a recipient of the prestigious Dome Award. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. From 1951 to 1955, Carey served aboard the cruiser USS Columbus as a Lieutenant in the Korean War.

In 1954, he married his college girlfriend, Helen and he relocated to Chicago where he worked for the University of Notre Dame Foundation. He enrolled in law school at DePaul and received his JD degree in 1960.

Instead of practicing law, Carey joined the family baking business, the Delicious Cookie Company. Under his leadership, the company expanded beyond Chicago and he earned a substantial fortune.

In the late 1970s, Carey and his wife turned to real estate. They invested their profits from the cookie business into buying numerous apartment buildings. Thereafter, property ownership and management became their full-time business for the rest of their lives.



1950 NDT top speaker
Bill Carey, Notre Dame



1950 NDT Notre Dame Team
L to R: William Dempsey, Leonard Sommers (coach)
& Bill Carey

1950 NDT Final Round Coach

Robert B. Huber

June 12, 1909 to May 2, 1996

Robert Huber was born in Indiana and graduated from Manchester College in 1930. He received his MA from the University of Michigan in 1934 and his PHD from the University of Wisconsin in 1942.

During World War II, Huber served as a naval aviator, flying missions to the South Pacific. As a civilian, he obtained a pilot license and rented planes to fly his family to Indiana and other locations.

In 1946, Huber was hired by Vermont to establish a communication department. He served as the Chair of Communication from 1946 until 1966. He came to Vermont from the University of Oregon, where he was an assistant professor of speech.

For his first few years at Vermont, Huber served as the co-Director of Debate with Nicholas Cripe. But, it was Huber who traveled with the Vermont teams to the NDT.

From 1947 until 1966, Huber achieved fabulous success as a debate coach. He qualified teams to the NDT in 16 years and advanced teams to the elimination rounds in 11 of those years. Along with winning the NDT in 1950, Huber coached teams to the semifinals twice (1949 and 1953), to the quarter finals three times (1948, 1954, and 1964), and to the octofinals five times (1947, 1957, 1961, 1965, and 1966).

Huber held leadership positions in prominent forensic organizations. He served as the President of what is now known as the Eastern Communication Association (1951 to 1952), President of the New England Speech Association (1950), President of the Vermont Speech Association (1957-1959), and President of the American Forensic Association (1963 to 1965).

In 1963, Huber authored an influential debate textbook, *Influencing Through Argument*. He also co-authored the textbook, *Persuasion in the Courtroom,* in 1979.



Robert B. Huber, April 18,1950 photo from the *Barre Daily* announcing his election as Eastern Communication President



"Doc" Huber, office photo from 1950

1950 Final Round Coach

Martin J. Holcomb

April 27, 1895 to January 22, 1988

Martin J. Holcomb was born in Clay Center, Kansas. He received his undergraduate degree from Bethany College and a MA degree from Northwestern. He also did graduate work at the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa.

From 1918 to 1919, Holcomb served in the United States Navy.

After teaching English for 12 years at Bethany, Holcomb was hired by Augustana in 1932 to be the Chair of its Communication Department. He served as Chair until 1966.

Holcomb introduced the first course in speech correction therapy. In 1933. he founded the Speech and Hearing center, and served as its Director from 1942 until his retirement in 1969. Holcomb was devoted to this center and became an expert on speech correction and a sought-after lecturer on the subject.

From 1932 to 1968, Holcomb served as the debate coach at Augustana, where he achieved a remarkable record of excellence. From 1947 to 1961, he qualified teams to the NDT for 15 consecutive years. From 1947 to 1968, he advanced teams to the elimination rounds fifteen times.

In 1957, Holcomb's team of Norman Lefstein and Phillip Hubbart won the National Debate Tournament. Along with reaching the final round in 1950, other successful NDT appearances included a semifinal in 1956 and five quarterfinal results (1948, 1953, 1958, 1960, and 1961).

Holcomb also coached two top speakers to the NDT: Robert Anderson in 1953 and Phillip Hubbart in 1956.

Near the end of Holcomb's coaching career, his son, John Holcomb debated for him at Augustana. John Holcomb reached the octofinals of the NDT in 1966 and 1967 and won second place speaker honors at the 1966 NDT.

Holcomb served leadership positions in numerous forensic and speech organizations. He served as the President of the Central States Association (1952-1953) and President of the Pi Kappa Delta National Forensic Honorary Society (1942 to 1947). In 2022, Pi Kappa Delta inducted Holcomb into its Hall of Fame.

Upon this death, his students endowed a scholarship in his name to be awarded to speech pathology majors and debaters.



Martin J. Holcomb:
legendary Augustana coach



L to R: Holcomb, Dorothy Ann Koch & Charles Lindberg

1950 NDT Final Round Debater

Thomas Lawlor Hayes

May 30, 1926 to May 5, 1987

Thomas L. Hayes was born in Fair Haven, Vermont and graduated from Bellows Falls High School.

From 1944 to 1946, Hayes served in the Army as an Infantry and Signal Noncommissioned Officer with the rank of T/5 in the Pacific Theater.

After graduating from Vermont in 1950, Hayes joined the staff of Winston Prouty, a U.S. Congress member from Vermont (1951 to 1959). During the evenings, he enrolled in law school at Georgetown and earned his JD in 1955. When Prouty won his U.S. Senate seat, Hayes continued working in his office and became his Administrative Assistant.

In 1966, Hayes joined a law firm in Middlebury, Vermont. After he ran an unsuccessful campaign in 1966 as a Republican to be Governor of Vermont, Hayes was elected as the Lieutenant Governor of Vermont in 1968. He served for one term from 1969 to 1971.

As the Lieutenant Governor, Hayes had constant disagreements with the Republican Governor, Deane Davis. While serving as acting Governor, Hayes ordered the flags to be flown at half-staff after the killing of four students at Kent State. Dean, who was away at a conference, returned immediately and countermanded the order.

In 1970, Hayes ran an unsuccessful campaign in the Republican primary for Governor against Davis. In 1972, he switched his party affiliation to become a Democrat.

Hayes served as Legal Counsel to Governor Thomas P. Salmon (a former Boston College debater). Salmon then appointed him as chairman of the Vermont State Board of Education. In 1976, Salmon named him to be a judge of the Superior Court.

In 1985, Governor Madeleine Kunin appointed Hayes to be a justice on the Vermont Supreme Court. His tenure was short-lived, and he died from complications of lung cancer in 1987.



Thomas L. Hayes
Lieutenant Governor and Supreme Court Justice,
Vermont

1950 NDT Final Round Debater

Richard T. O'Connell

February 15, 1928 to July 13, 1999

Richard O'Connell was born in Newark, New York. Before going to college at Vermont, O'Connell served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After graduating from Vermont in 1950, O'Connell enrolled in law school at the University of Miami, Florida. He received his JD in 1954.

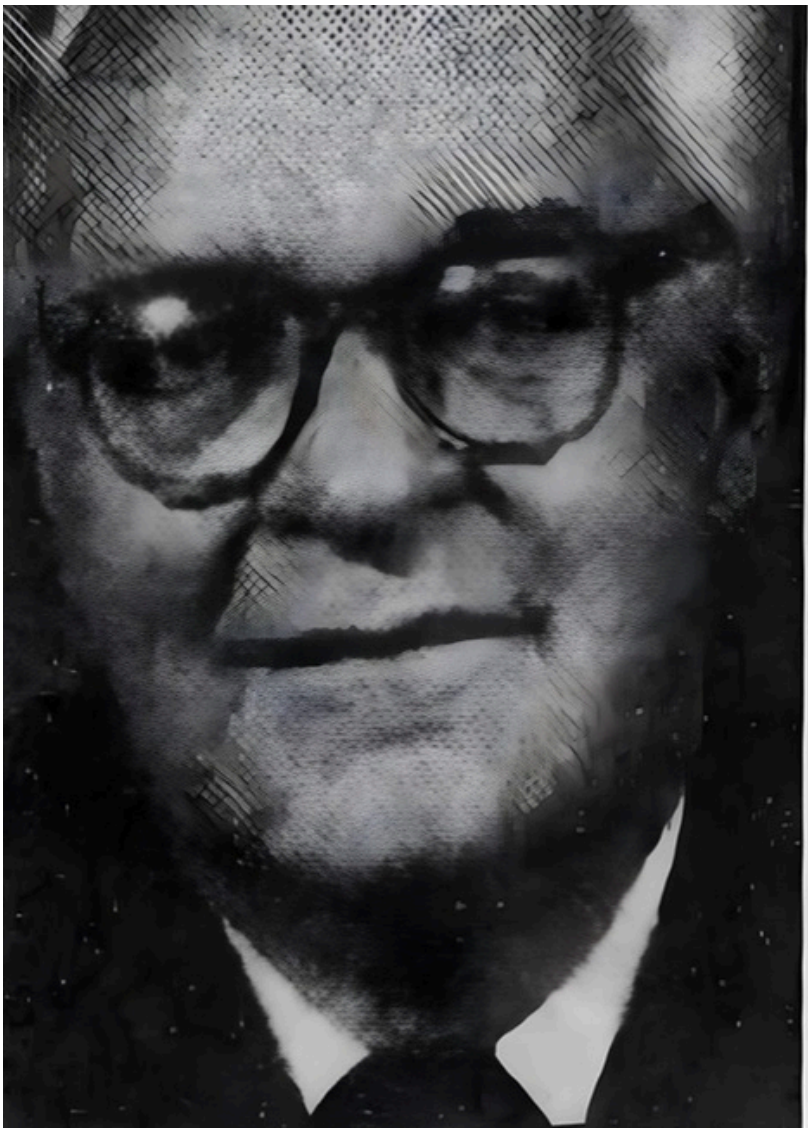
For many years, O'Connell practiced law in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. He served as the Town Counsel for Old Saybrook. He was also elected as the Vice-Chair of the Old Saybrook Board of Education.

In 1966, he formed a law firm with Walter Budney. The firm specialized in civil, criminal, and commercial litigation. Clients included real estate developers of condominiums, shopping centers, and marinas.

In 1985, Governor William O'Neill appointed O'Connell to be a Superior Court Judge. At the time, O'Connell was a senior partner in the firm O'Connell, Cloutier, and Domnarski and an Associate Director of the Connecticut Bank and Trust Company.

As a Superior Court judge in Connecticut, O'Connell served in several counties, including Norwich, New London, and Middlesex.

O'Connell lived in Old Saybrook for 50 years. He died at his summer home on Block Island, Rhode Island.



Richard O'Connell
Superior Court Judge, Connecticut

1950 NDT Final Round Debater

Dorothy Ann Koch Bjornson

October 26, 1928 to October 10, 2004

Dorothy Ann Koch was born in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1946, she graduated from Rock Island High School, and then enrolled at Augustana College, where she majored in speech education.

After graduation, she taught at John Deere Junior High School in Moline, Illinois from 1950 to 1952. On July 12, 1952, she married Marion C. Bjornson who also graduated from Augustana in 1950. For thirty years, he worked for the materials division of John Deere Harvester Works.

In 1961, Koch Bjornson became a part-time instructor in the Augustana Speech Department. From 1960 to 1962, she served as the President of the Augustana Alumni Association.

Koch Bjornson was named the registrar of the College in 1971. She retired as the Registrar in 1979 but continued teaching until 1985.

Koch Bjornson was very active in her congregation, St. John's Lutheran Church, Rock Island. This included teaching Sunday school, serving on the congregation council, and leadership within the Illinois Lutheran Church Women, and later in the Women of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

She also held leadership positions with the Boy Scouts of America, the Augustana Endowment Society, the American Scandinavian Association, and the Augustana Historical Society.



Dorothy Ann Koch Bjornson
enjoying retirement (undated photo)



1960 photo of D.A. Koch Bjornson
President of the Augustana Alumni Association

1950 NDT Final Round Debater

Charles D. Lindberg

September 11, 1928 to July 20, 2013

Charles Lindberg was born in Illinois and graduated from Springfield High School, where he was a starting lineman on their 1945 undefeated football team.

After graduating from Augustana in 1950, he enrolled in Yale law school and earned his JD in 1953. He scored the highest grade on the Ohio Bar Exam, 88.6, of those taking it in 1954..

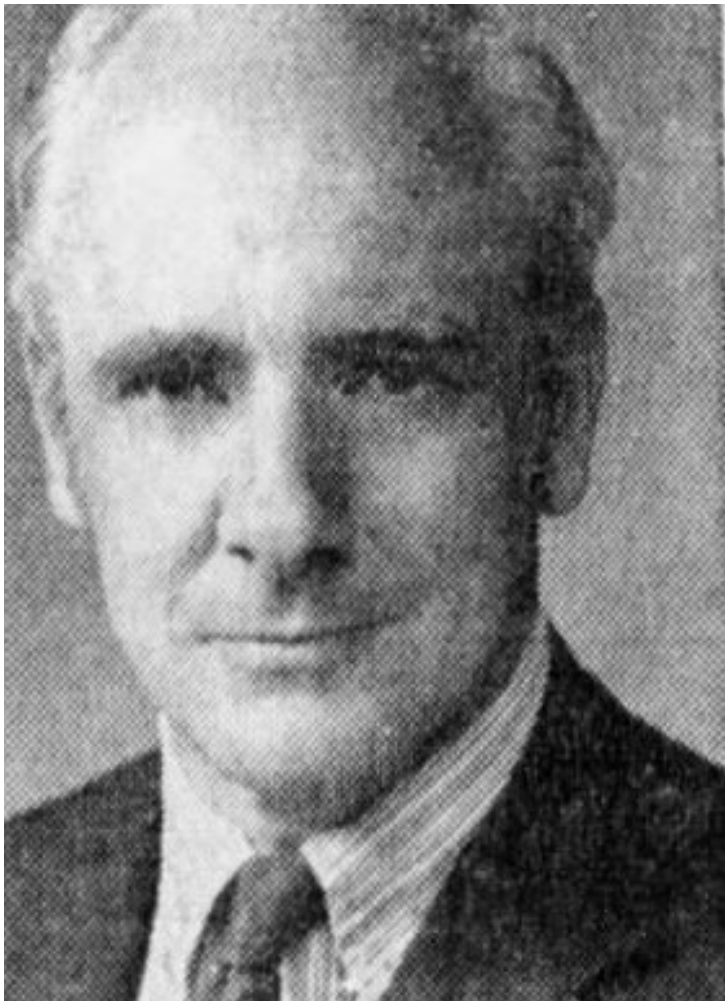
Lindberg joined the prestigious law firm of Taft Stettinius & Hollister, and he remained with the firm for the rest of his life. He became the managing partner from 1985-98. As an attorney, Lindberg practiced corporate law. He was named to The Best Lawyers in America for more than 25 consecutive years.

He served on numerous corporate boards of directors, including the Cincinnati Bengals, the Cincinnati Reds, Taft Broadcasting, Dayton Walther, Gibson Greetings, and Knowlton Construction. He was a minority owner of the Bengals.

Lindberg was also heavily involved in the civic life of Cincinnati, assuming leadership positions with The Cincinnati Board of Education (member and President), The Public Library of Cincinnati (board member and President), The Austin E. Knowlton Foundation (Chair and member), The Hamilton County Republican Party (Chair and member), and The Tyler Davidson Fountain Committee (Chair).

For 29 years, Lindberg served as a trustee for Augustana College, where he provided financial support and helped plan the construction of their outdoor athletic complex. They named the stadium after him to enshrine his enduring legacy.

Lindberg also supported Yale Law School by serving on the executive committee of their Alumni Association.



David Lindberg, President, Cincinnati School Board (1973 photo)



David Lindberg, Augustana Commencement speaker, 2000

Photos from the 4th NDT (1950)



Pepperdine
L to R: Ronald F. Reid & Ray Ford



Pennsylvania State
Peter Giesey, Joseph F. O'Brien (coach) & Richard Schweiker (first, third, and fifth from the left)



Northwestern
L to R: James McBath (coach) & Richard Marcus



Future Redlands NDT champions
L to R: Holt Spicer & James Wilson



South Carolina
L to R: Harvey Golden, Laverne G. Funderburk
& Merle G. Christopherson (coach)

Photos from the 4th NDT (1950)



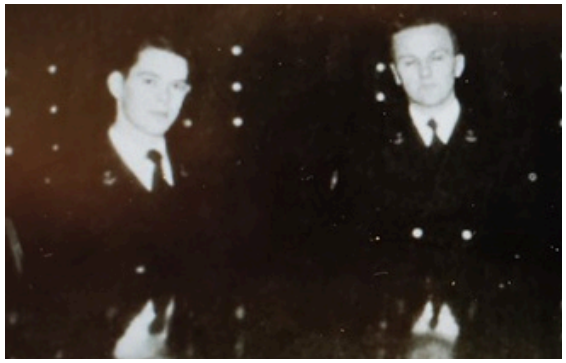
Southern California
Dale Drum



Tennessee
Top to Bottom: Buford Rhea & Lee Levitt



Southern California
Edward Stegman



U.S. Naval Academy
L to R: Clyde Middleton & John Hemenway

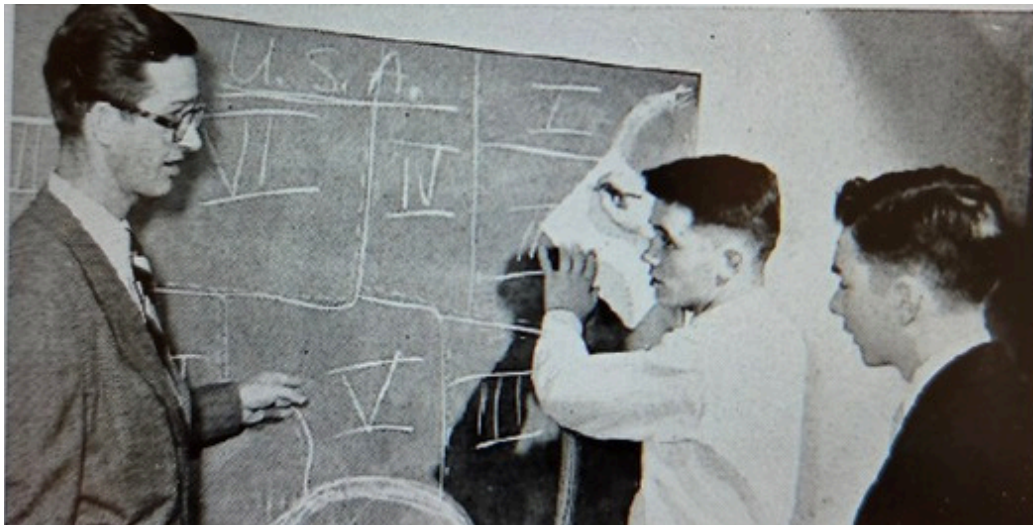
Photos from the 4th NDT (1950)



Whitman
L to R: Gordon Jaynes & Ernest Miller



Wake Forest
front row: Robert P. Crouch & Franklin R. Shirley (coach)
second row: T. Lamar Caudle, second from left



St. Thomas
L to R: Richard Kruger (coach), Jim Rooney & Tom Kennelly



Northwestern
Gordon Mills (Director)



Wisconisn Eau Claire
Grace Walsh (Director)



Baylor
Glenn Capp (Director)

Photos from the 4th NDT (1950)



Southern Methodist
Lee Reiff



Southern Methodist
Dick Wilke



Roanoke
L to R: William Linkous & William Branscomt



Baylor
L to R: James Thornton & David Heinlein

In Memoriam



John Knox Boaz

June 7, 1938 to December 20, 2025

John Knox Boaz, longtime debate coach and administrator at Illinois State, died December 20, 2025, in Rancho Bernardo, CA, at the age of 87.

Born in Enid, Oklahoma and raised in Kansas, Boaz debated at Northwestern where he received his BS degree in 1960.

While pursuing his MA and PHD at Wayne State from 1960-65, he was an assistant debate coach. He helped coach several outstanding Wayne State teams, including teams advancing to the octofinals in 1962 and 1963.

In 1965, Boaz was hired by Illinois State as the Director of Forensics. He coached the debate team until 1969.

After completing his PHD in 1969, Boaz retired from debate coaching and taught in the communication department as a professor.

While retired from active coaching, Boaz remained involved and supported the activity in other roles. From 1970-72, Boaz served as the President of the American Forensic Association. He also chaired the Forensics Division of the Speech Communication Association from 1970-71.

For many years, he served as the NDT editor for the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* when the journal published transcripts of the NDT final round. This involved transcribing the debate speeches and locating the citations for the evidence read in the final round.

While still teaching, Boaz assumed important administrative roles. From 1980 to 1983, he was appointed Assistant Vice President of administrative services and from 1983-90, he served as the Associate Vice President of Illinois State.

Boaz's professional publications included books on persuasion, championship debates and speeches, and the first twenty-five years of Bloomington-Normal's Adlai E. Stevenson Memorial Lecture Series.



Erik W. Doxtader

March 9, 1966 – June 22, 2025

Erik Doxtader, an NDT double-octofinalist and professor of rhetoric, passed away from advanced melanoma at the age of 59.

Doxtader debated at the University of Kansas. During his senior year in 1988 (debating with Andrea Richard), he achieved a 5-3 record with 16 ballots earning the 15th seed.

He earned both his MA and PHD from Northwestern, where as a graduate assistant he coached the debate teams.

For many years, he worked in the NDT tabroom to ensure the smooth running of the tournament.

Since 2007, Doxtader has been a professor of rhetoric and critical theory in the Department of English at the University of South Carolina and the editor of *Philosophy & Rhetoric*.

Doxtader was a prolific scholar. He wrote or co-wrote ten books, authored 19 book chapters, published 38 journal articles, and delivered a plethora of papers at academic conferences.

With a grant from the MacArthur Foundation, Doxtader produced groundbreaking research on the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa. In 2009, he published his book, *Faith in the Works of Words: The Beginnings of Reconciliation in South Africa, 1985-1995,* for which he was awarded the 2010 Rhetoric Society of America Annual Book Award.

The National Communication Association (NCA) also awarded him two Golden Anniversary Monograph Awards in 2022 and 2004 for his research on South African reconciliation.

Prior to working at South Carolina, he held appointments at Berkeley, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was also a former Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town.



Edward Grinder, O.S.B.

December 8, 1944 to July 9, 2025

Brother Edward V. Grinder, O.S.B., a debate coach at St. Vincent College and a monk of Saint Vincent Archabbey, died on July 9, 2025 at the age of 80.

Grinder received a BA in economics in 1966 from Saint Vincent College, and a Master of Divinity degree from Saint Vincent Seminary in 1973. He earned an MA in economics from Kent State in 1975. He completed additional graduate studies at Boston College and earned an MA in Business Administration from the University of Pittsburgh in 1995.

From 1980 to 1992, Grinder served as the director of debate at St. Vincent's. He was a founder of the American Debate Association, and he served for six years on the NDT Committee, including a term as Chair.

For many debaters, he was an intimidating presence as a judge. He would floss his teeth during debates and crack jokes. He once asked the diminutive debater from Dartmouth, Kenny Agran, to stand while he was speaking. Of course, he was already standing.

While Grinder never qualified a team to the NDT, one of his former students, Garrett Haines, did. Grinder encouraged Haines to transfer to Trinity and debate for his friend, Frank Harrison. In 1993, Haines advanced to the octofinals of the NDT.

Grinder held many positions at St. Vincent's. From 1983 to 1992, he was Chairman of the Economics Department. He also served as Director of the Saint Vincent Cemetery from 1998 to 2011, and was Benefits Manager and Plans Administrator for the Abbey Health Care Programs (2003-25).

In Latrobe, Grinder served the local community in many capacities. He was on the Board of Director, President (1989-91) and Treasurer of Wimmer Corporation, a Catholic non-profit.

He was a member of the Latrobe Area Chamber of Commerce (1980-84). He served on the Unity Township Municipal Authority (1986-2008), as its Vice Chairman (1991-2008) and as its representative to the Latrobe Municipal Authority (1997-2002).

In Memorium (continued)



Kevin James Keogh

December 24, 1941 to December 11, 2025

Kevin James Keogh, a two-time NDT qualifer and lawyer, passed away on December 11, 2025 at the age of 83.

Keogh graduated as class valedictorian of his high School and attended Holy Cross in Worcester, MA.

Debating with Daniel Kolb, he achieved spectacular success. In 1962, Keogh & Kolb were 6-2 with 17 ballots. They were the second seed and advanced to the semifinals. Kolb received a seventh-place speaker award.

The next year in 1963, Keogh & Kolb were 7-1 with 20 ballots and were the top seed. In the octofinals, they were upset by North Texas in a 2-1 decision. Kolb received third-place speaker honors.

Keogh graduated as the valedictoran of his class and enrolled in Harvard Law School. He received his JD in 1963.

Prior to starting his law career, Keogh joined the Peace Corps and spent three years in Costa Rica building agricultural and community development cooperatives.

After returning from Costa Rica, Keogh began his career in corporate law at Breed, Abbott & Morgan in New York City, where he went on to become a partner. In 1988, he moved to White & Case as a partner, rising to senior partner until he retired in 2012.

Keogh's law practice specialized in Mergers & Acquisitions, Financial Markets, and Services, Securities & Investment Fraud.

From a young boy teaching sailing at Larchmont Yacht Club, Keogh was passionate about sailing. He was a member of American Yacht Club in Rye, NY for 50 years, where he served as Commodore beginning in 1984 and later as the head of the Race Committee.

In 2017, Koegh received the President's Award for special contributions to the sport and partnership with US Sailing.

From 2011 to 2017 Keogh was the Chair of the US Sailing Legal Committee and played a significant role in revising the Conduct and Championship Regulations for US Sailing National Championships.

As Commodore of the American Yacht Club, Keogh spearheaded a bylaw change that allowed women to have equal member rights with men and to both continue as members in the case of a divorce.



R. Keith Parks

October 23, 1927 to August 27, 2025

R. Keith Parks, an NDT Champion from North Texas and a Baptist preacher, passed away at the age of 97.

In 1948, Parks, debating with David Cotton, defeated Florida (Alan Westin & Gerald Gordon) to win the second NDT.

After graduating from North Texas in 1948, Parks enrolled in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, receiving his MA in 1951 and his PHD in Theology in 1955.

From 1950 to 1954, Parks served as a pastor at the Red Springs Baptist Church. His influence as an evangelist would soon go global.

Parks and his wife Helen departed for Indonesia as missionaries working for the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. During their 14 years in Indonesia, Keith served as a pastor, seminary professor, and eventually President of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Indonesia.

In 1968, Parks returned to the U.S. to work as an administrator for the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Virginia. He served as the Area Director for South East Asia (1968 to 1975), and as the Director for Division Mission support (1975 to 1979).

From 1980 to 1992, Parks served as the President of the Foreign Missions Board. Parks supervised a worldwide corps of 5,000 missionaries located in 22 countries. With an annual budget of $185 million, the Foreign Missions Board stood as the largest church network in the world.

Parks resigned as President in 1992 citing conflicts with Biblical fundamentalists who insisted on imposing their rigid beliefs on Indigenous Peoples. From 1993 to 1999, Parks became the first coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Global Missions in Atlanta, Georgia.

In retirement, Parks taught as a visiting professor at Baylor and Truett Seminary. In 2000, he and his wife joined the First Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas, where they taught an international Bible class.

When Parks was six, he contracted rheumatic fever, and his doctors told his parents that he would not live past the age of 13. He defied those odds and lived to the age of 97.



Frank T. Read

July 16, 1938 to April 7, 2025

Frank Thompson (Tom) Read, an NDT qualifier from Brigham Young University and a Law School Dean, passed away at the age of 86.

Read was born in Ogden, Utah and attended Brigham Young where he excelled on the debate team.

In 1960, Read and his partner, Craig Christensen, won the Harvard and Air Force college tournaments. They also placed first in the regional qualifying tournament for the NDT.

While Read did not make the elimination rounds, he won fifteenth-place speaker honors at the 1960 NDT.

Read received his JD from Duke Law School, which he attended on a full-ride academic scholarship. In 1968, he began teaching law at Duke and then became an Assistant Dean.

In 1974, Read was appointed Dean of the University of Tulsa Law School while only in his mid-30s. As Dean, he established the National Energy Law and Policy Institute and vastly expanded the size of the law library's collection.

He would later serve as law school dean at Indiana University in Indianapolis, University of California-Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, and the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Read's final position was as President and Dean of the South Texas College of Law in Houston.

In the pantheon of law school Deans, Read established a DiMaggio-type record of serving as a Law Dean at five law schools.

Read authored numerous books but his most prominent was, *Let Them Be Judged: The Judicial Integration of the Deep South*. This book, which he co-authored with Lucy McGough and published in 1978, is the definitive account of the Fifth Circuit response to *Brown v. Board of Education.*

He also held important leadership positions, such as being the President of the Law School Admissions Council from 1984 to 1986.

Read traveled extensively abroad to speak and teach, including many years of annual travel to Turkey where he worked at Bahcesehir University Graduate School of Law in Istanbul.