Celebrating 25 Years of Liberty Debate

The 2005-06 season marks the twenty-fifth year of Liberty Debate. In the fall of 1980, Cecil Kramer along with a few dedicated students started what has become one of the most successful programs in the history of intercollegiate policy debate. Liberty's fifteen national championships are the most of any school in intercollegiate debate and two more national debate championships than Northwestern University's thirteen. More than winning national championships, though, Liberty Debate has had a profound impact on the lives of the hundreds of students who have participated on the team. Many of your career paths, educational choices, and personal lives were dramatically affected by Liberty Debate. As we commemorate our twenty-fifth year of debate at Liberty during the coming year we want to celebrate the accomplishments of the past and propel our program into the future. The kick-off celebration for our twenty-fifth year will occur over Liberty's Homecoming Weekend, September 30-October 1. We are planning special alumni events over Friday and Saturday (see the enclosed insert). I hope you will come to Lynchburg and celebrate our twenty-fifth year of debate. It will be a chance for you to catch up with old friends and for us to share with you our vision for the future of Liberty Debate. Dr. Falwell and a very special guest will join us for the Friday night reception. Keep checking our website for an announcement concerning this special guest.

This past season, the 2005 team carried forward the Liberty Debate tradition of excellence by winning the program's fifteenth national championships. Liberty won the American Debate Association Grand Sweepstakes as well as the novice and junior varsity sweepstakes titles. The ADA championship was Liberty's eighth, surpassing George Mason University for the most ADA grand sweepstakes titles. The team also conducted a demonstration debate on poverty as part of a local community series of events. Michael Hall, Assistant Director of Debate, taught again at the Arizona College Debate Institute. Our graduating seniors will be attending either law or graduate school at Florida State, Georgetown, Illinois, Iowa, and William and Mary. The program has continued its relationship with home school debate and is hosting a summer camp for home school debaters in addition to our regular summer debate institute. This past summer and fall I had the opportunity to work with the President of the United States as I was appointed special advisor to the President and to the Bush-Cheney Campaign to work on presidential debate preparation and speech-writing. This experience is opening incredible opportunities for our program and our students to experience high-level political activity. Our team has also been very spiritually active through work in local ministries. We give all of the glory and credit to God for his continued blessings on our team. Follow the team at our website www.liberty.edu/debate.

I hope to see you in Lynchburg September 30-October 1 to kick-off our twenty-fifth anniversary celebration.

--Brett O'Donnell, Director of Debate
Congratulations!
To our graduating seniors Jon Day, Josh Autry, and Ruth Jackson, thanks for all your hard work and dedication! We will miss you!
Daisy Verney, adjunct assistant debate coach, is graduating from American Law School in Washington DC. Congratulations and thanks for all your help! You were awesome!

Alumni who are practicing attorneys and are interested in having a Liberty University Law student serve as an intern should contact Dean Jim Helfrich at 434-592-5300 or email law@liberty.edu

In the Community
On March 31, the team participated in Poverty Awareness week by presenting a public debate discussing the question "Is the government responsible for addressing poverty?" The debate was part of the Ron and Mary Jane Dolan Peace and Justice Series entitled Moving from Charity to Justice: Addressing Poverty in Our Community. We were one of five local universities and numerous community organizations who sponsored the event. Seniors Josh Autry and John Day and Juniors Melissa Hurter and Lindsay Hoban presented a modified debate that spurred an enthusiastic question and answer period and was followed by a reception in the Grand Lobby of DeMoss Hall.
The Liberty Debate Team hosted the 92nd Annual Virginia High School League State Debate Championship April 15-16. This tournament is the oldest public school competition in the state and we were proud to host it a seventh time. We hope this will help encourage high school debate participation to grow even stronger in Virginia.

HELP!
We have lost contact with a number of our alumni and we need your help to find them. Please encourage any alumni you know to contact us, including those who were only on the team a year! We are working on strengthening our alumni community including offering job/career services, message boards, and more frequent team updates. Visit liberty.edu/debate for more information.

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If you would like to be included in Backfiles, e-mail bodonnell@liberty.edu or call 434-582-2080

Liberty High School Debate Institutes!
Summer Camp is Coming!
To learn about this year's institute (June 19th-July 9th) or to order the 2004 evidence or videos visit www.liberty.edu/debate or call 434-582-2080.
The Backfiles

Jill (Keeler) Mehren (EDUC ’95) is married to Scott Mehren and has two beautiful daughters, Madeleine who is 4 and Gabrielle who is 1 1/2. They live in Rocklin, CA where Jill works at home as a full time mom at having taught high school English and Speech, and Scott is a financial planner/tax preparer. Jill and Scott are very active in their church running the sound for the services and singing on the Worship Team. Feel free to email Jill at jlmehren@surewest.net

Steve Trask (GOVT ’03) is attending law school at William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, MN and has been teaching and coaching debate at Minnehaha Christian Academy. He recently participated in the Blackstone Fellowship in Summer 2005 with the Alliance Defense Fund. This summer, Steve will be clerking for a local district court judge and working as a research assistant to Professor Robert Delahunty, a prominent Christian law professor at the University of St. Thomas Law School.

Shanna (Twigg) Slovinsky (HIST’ 01) and husband Marty are the proud parents of Molly Jean born on April 7th, 2005. She weighed 6 lbs 11 oz and was 19 inches long.

RJ (COMS ’97) and Amy (Palermo) Snell (ENGL ’97) are the proud parents of Grace Mildred born January 9th, 2005.

Jessica Surratt (COMS ’04) and Jon Day (GOVT/PHIL ’05) are getting married July 16th in Lynchburg, VA. They will live in Iowa City, IA where Jon will be working towards his doctorate in Political Science at the University of Iowa.
Alumni Update and Membership Form: If you have not recently updated your information with us, please fill out this form and mail or e-mail it to hhhall@liberty.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

Name ___________________________ Year of Graduation ____________
Street ___________________________ Apartment ____________________
City __________________ State ___________ Zip _______
Telephone number ____________ E-mail address __________________
Spouse __________________ Children __________________________
Post Graduate Work _______ School ___________________________
Current Occupation __________________________

___ Yes, you may update other alumni in the next alumni newsletter about me.
___ Yes, I would like to receive the alumni newsletter electronically at this e-mail.

___ Yes, I want to join the Liberty Debate Alumni Association

____ Honorary Director (Free Team T-shirt) $100 (T-shirt size _____)
____ Honorary Coach $75
____ Varsity Member $50
____ Regular Member $25

I am unable to join now, but please keep in touch with me.

Make Checks payable and mail to: Liberty University Debate 1971 University Blvd. Lynchburg, VA 24502

Prayer Requests

- For a rejuvenating and productive summer break for both the debaters and coaching staff.
- For team devotions on Sundays at tournaments.
- For wisdom for the coaching staff as they guide the team spiritually, strategically, and emotionally.
- For the people on the debate circuit that they will be open to the love of God.
- For the entire team and coaching staff that they will be full of God's boldness and grace as they interact with the debate community.

Spiritual Life

Each Wednesday at 9:30PM, many of the debaters actively participate in our team Bible study. Debaters take turns leading. Over the year, the team has studied The Servant Leader by Ken Blanchard, The Green Letters by Mr. Miles J. Stanford, and the books of 1 Peter and Ruth. Debaters have also been actively ministering to the local Lynchburg community. This year, they volunteered at the Daily Bread, a local soup kitchen, preparing and serving food for the needy. They raked leaves for a local elderly woman, and visited and sang hymns at a local nursing home.

The 2005 NDT was held on Easter Sunday this year for the first time in the history of the organization. However, it turned into a blessing as we were able to participate in a worship service with fellow Christians from other schools and the body of Christ in the Debate community was strengthened.

Due to the wonderful response of debaters and coaches from other schools, the team has committed this next year to rent a meeting room whenever possible to accommodate more intra-squad Sunday morning services.