

Arguing in style

Highland High tournament showcases young debaters' quick-tongued skills

BY TABATHA DEANS
Close-Up Staff

Nearly 200 students from 30 Utah schools recently participated in the annual Young Lawyers Debate Tournament held at Highland High School.

One of Highland's teams took top honors in the Policy Debate part of the competition.

Tyler Bettilyon and Dayton Thorpe alternated between debating for and against this year's topic: Whether or not the federal government should establish policies mandating national service such as the Peace Corps and the Senior Corps.

Policy Debate is the tournament's premier event, and according to senior Bettilyon, it involves dozens of hours of research and practice.

"We did a lot of research on objectivists — authors who are against national service. Then we practiced our arguments," said Bettilyon, who has debated all four years of his high school career.

"The tournament was interesting, with a different atmosphere. It gave us the chance to see outside the box," he said.

Highland High has a strong history of debate success, and Bettilyon and Thorpe took first place last year at the Catholic Debate Tournament.

Dave Smith is a history teacher at Highland, as well as the debate coach. He's been coaching debate for more than 30 years, and said his students excelled at the tournament.

"We had about 18 students who participated in three categories: Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum. We beat Rowland Hall for first place in Policy Debate," said Smith.

While Policy Debate teams are assigned one topic to be debated all year, debaters in the Lincoln Douglas division

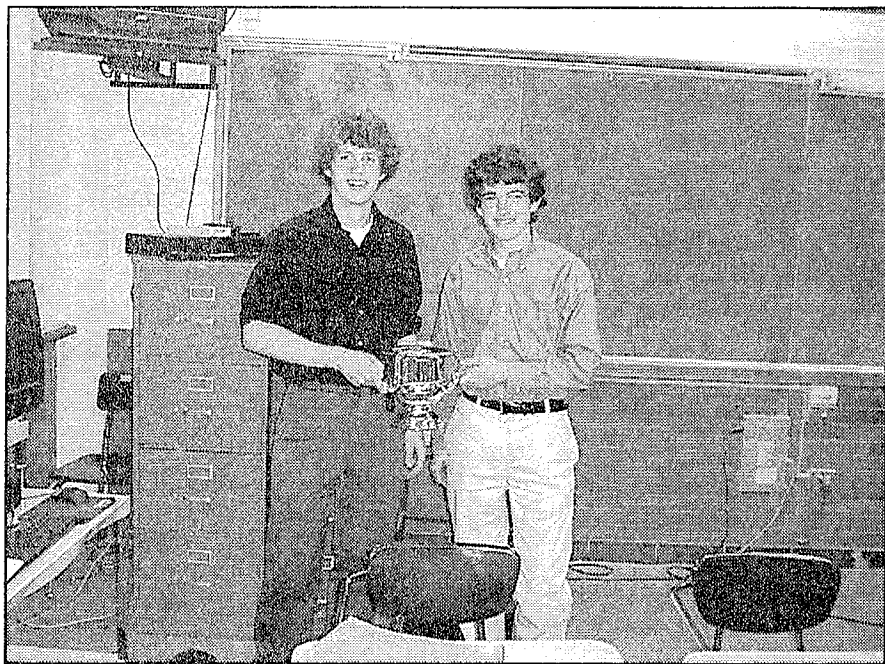


PHOTO COURTESY OF CHAD DERUM

Tyler Bettilyon and Dayton Thorpe, both Highland High seniors, recently took first place in the Policy Debate competition during the annual Young Lawyers Debate Tournament held at Highland High. Two hundred debaters from Utah participated in the event, which was sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division and the Litigation Section of the Utah State Bar.

compete one-on-one, arguing philosophy on topics that change with each tournament. The Public Forum competition involves debating current events with topics assigned quarterly.

It wasn't only Smith's current students who attended the competition. Chad Derum, a lawyer with Manning Curtis Bradshaw and Bednar, attended Highland High and debated under the direction of Smith.

After graduating and pursuing a career in law, Derum returned to Highland this year as a judge. He also worked closely with Smith to help create the annual tournament.

The tournament was sponsored by

the Young Lawyer's Division of the Utah State Bar and the Litigation Section of the Utah State Bar. Five practicing lawyers — all former debaters — volunteered their time at the two-day competition as judges.

According to Derum, the tournament helps support the bar's involvement in the community, and high school debaters often pursue a career in law.

"Introducing students to the bar just as their career paths are beginning to take shape creates a positive point of first contact, and fosters important connection between the bar, our schools and the community," Derum said.

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