

MILWAUKEE DEBATE LEAGUE

Newsletter • May/June 2012



From left to right: Seth Johnson (Nicolet), Maceon Downer (Bradley Tech), Samantha Srok (Nicolet), and Aliye Kidwell (Rufus King), pose for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. during the 2012 NAUDL Urban Debate National Championship.

MDL Students Compete at 2012 NAUDL Urban Debate National Championship at Georgetown University

On April 12-15, 2012, the Milwaukee Debate League's national's representatives competed at the NAUDL Urban Debate National Championship at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. as two of 35 teams vying for the title of Urban Debate National Champion.

At the tournament on Saturday and Sunday, both teams got off to a great start, winning two of their first three rounds. Ultimately, both teams nearly cleared to the octafinal round, finishing 2-3 with a round or two that could have gone either way.

As representatives, MDL students were also invited to attend other events as part of the four-day tournament. On Thursday evening, students attend-

ed the 2012 NAUDL Annual Dinner, which featured speeches by Secretary Arne Duncan and NASA administrator Arne Duncan. On Friday, students attended a public debate, sponsored by the Smithsonian Museum and called the Smithsonian Public Debate on Space Policy. Following a student debate, students participated in a panel discussion and Q&A session with members of the Smithsonian Institute.

At these events, and at the tournament itself, the students represented Milwaukee with the utmost integrity and deserve commendation for their performance. Congratulations to Aliye Kidwell (Rufus King), Maceon Downer (Bradley Tech), Seth Johnson (Nicolet) and Samantha Srok (Nicolet) for a phenomenal weekend of debate!

MDL Kicks-Off Summer with MDL Scholars Program

In July, the MDL will kick-off its summer programming with the MDL Scholars Program, which will bring MDL students to Marquette University to engage in high-level research. The program will focus on researching an entire affirmative case over the course of eight sessions, in three-hour sessions held twice a week during the month of July. This program is open to all current or incoming MDL students.

The goal of the MDL Scholars Program is this: Too often, students enter college without adequate research skills. In an age where information from the Internet comes easy, students tend to bypass the depth and quality of information that comes from their collegiate libraries. However, being able to conduct high-level research in college is essential if students are to succeed. The MDL Scholars Program aims to introduce students to doing research in the context of a university library system, and to focus research in such a way that it will simultaneously benefit their ability to debate at high levels. The program begins on July 9th and runs through August 1st.

2012 MDL Annual Reception and Awards Ceremony Honors MDL Students, Coaches, and Judges

On April 25, 2012, the 2012 MDL Annual Reception and Awards Ceremony celebrated and recognized MDL students, coaches, and judges for yearlong accomplishments in the MDL. The reception and ceremony was held in the Empire Room at the Hilton Milwaukee before nearly 75 members of the MDL community and featured a keynote speech from Vincent High School Principal, Matthew Boswell.

The awards portion of the evening was emceed by MDL board member Christine Bukowski, who presented awards for Coach of the Year, Adjudicator of the Year, Team Participation, and Novice, JV, and Varsity Debaters of the Year, among other awards. The exception to this came when David Powell, longtime coach at Vincent High School, was presented by his former assistant coach, Corey Mehlos, who drove in from Madison, WI to be at the event.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Varsity Debater of the Year, Seth Johnson of Nicolet High School, delivered his thoughts on how debate has helped his academic and social growth:



Nicolet High School's Seth Johnson accepts the Varsity Debater of the Year Award

It's this experience, of being able to go from not having any idea about what is going on, to through the guidance of judges and other debaters that make of the MDL community, winning a speaker awards, that helps people like me not only learn to succeed in this sport, but succeed in life. I have learned arguably just as much, if not more, from participating in this sport, which I learned for the very first time with the MDL, than my general high school education.

Congratulations to all of this year's award winners and to a wonderful debate season.



Members of the Veritas High School team pose for a photo with Bill Altorfer, MDL Program Director, following the 2012 Annual Reception Awards Ceremony.



Vincent High School Head Coach David Powell poses with his 2012 Coach of the Year Award.

MDL Student Recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education at 2012 NAUDL Annual Dinner

During the NAUDL Urban Debate National Championship weekend in Washington D.C., MDL students were invited to attend the NAUDL Annual Dinner recognizing UDLs across the nation. At the dinner Secretary of Education Arne Duncan delivered a powerful and fulsome case for the academic value and importance of urban debate programs. In his opening remarks, Duncan said:

“I am delighted to be here tonight because the value of debate teams is both so great and yet so under-recognized.”

In America, education is the great equalizer. And in our urban high schools, competitive debate is one of the great equalizers of educational opportunity. Urban debate leagues help ensure that teens in the inner-city get the same exposure to academic rigor as teens in wealthy suburban schools—where competitive debate teams have long been a fixture.

Urban debate teams make it cool to be smart and work hard in the inner-city. And they are a fantastic outlet for harnessing the competitive instincts of young teens—and channel

ing them into building the skills they need to succeed in a knowledge-based, global economy.

Like other competitive sports, debate teams make school more engaging and challenging. They give kids a reason to be excited about coming to school.”

And as part of his keynote address at the dinner, Secretary Duncan spent a moment recognizing the MDL’s



U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan honored MDL sophomore Samantha Srok at the 2012 NAUDL Annual Dinner

own Samantha Srok, a sophomore at Nicolet, saying:

“I love what Samantha Srok of Milwaukee wrote in her application this year to participate in the UDL National tournament here in Washington DC. Through debate, Samantha learned how to organize an effective response to her opponent’s argument in eleven minutes. Those skills helped her take notes and read assignments in class in a compressed time frame. Through debate, she learned not only how to do research on public policy issues but that she wanted to stay abreast of current events because she “wants to be connected with the rest of the world.”

Through debate, she learned to travel independently. She took a 13-hour Greyhound bus ride by herself to Nebraska, where she spent eight days and nights debating. Through debate, she learned that she was—and I quote her—’not just another ignorant teenage girl.’ Samantha, could you stand to be recognized for your accomplishments?”

Thank you to our partners at MPS, Seeds of Health, Nicolet,
West Allis Central, and Marquette University
for helping us deliver our mission!

Coming Up :

MDL Scholars Program (begins July 9th) and the Milwaukee Debate Summer Institute (August 6-10)

***** Visit us at www.debatemilwaukee.org *****