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## Urban Debate *NewsBlast*

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You are receiving this *NewsBlast* because you are a believer in and backer of urban debate and the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues. We thank you very much for that support. Through our *NewsBlasts*, we intend to keep you aware of the highlights of the work of the NAUDL, and of the state of urban debate in the U.S. The NAUDL upholds and advances the urban debate mission by building, institutionalizing, expanding, and connecting Urban Debate Leagues. Your support helps make it possible for us to serve thousands of urban youth across the country.

We also would welcome and look forward to your feedback. Please email us at [info@urbandebate.org](mailto:info@urbandebate.org) or call (312-427-8101) with your views.



### **The NAUDL Launches Three Year Expansion Plan with New UDLs and a National Championship Among Objectives**

Over the past several years the NAUDL has focused hard on its mission of increasing the number of urban students participating in debate programs. Its reach has effectively been restricted, however, by the organization's limited "bandwidth" – the fact that Executive Director Les Lynn, with some modest assistance from the board, part-time staff and volunteers, has essentially been working alone.

The NAUDL has embraced an ambitious Expansion Plan that seeks dramatically to expand the organization's bandwidth over the next several years. Its goals include establishing seven new Leagues in seven major cities, institutionalizing an additional four existing leagues, developing debate-related curricula, and, beginning in May 2008, hosting a National Urban Debate Championship.

These ambitious goals will require more than tripling the NAUDL's annual budget. Among other things, the Expansion Plan calls for the hiring of two new Regional UDL Program Officers who will be devoted entirely to starting new Leagues in cities already identified and to some limited extent cultivated, and who will help institutionalize existing Leagues that have not yet attained that objective. The Expansion Plan also includes a Curriculum and Instruction Officer, who will organize and refine existing Argumentation and Debate curriculum and extensively rework the application of debate into regular course instruction – an approach to teaching and learning that the NAUDL has termed Curricular Debate.

The NAUDL's fund-raising efforts for the Expansion Plan began in earnest in December 2006. Initiation of the Plan itself will formally occur at the start of the NAUDL's next

fiscal year, which is July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The bottom line is that, in the very near future, the NAUDL will have an unprecedented capacity to drive its mission.

If you are interested in helping the NAUDL bring this exciting plan to fruition, or if you know anyone who might be interested in applying to come to work for the NAUDL, please do not hesitate to contact our Deputy Director, Eric Tucker, at [erictucker@urbandebate.org](mailto:erictucker@urbandebate.org) or 312-427-0152.

## **Debate Alum and Energy Investment Executive Ken Hersh Dramatically Kicks Off Expansion Plan Funding with Major Challenge Grant**

CEO of NGP Energy Capital Management, a multi-billion dollar energy investment firm based in Dallas, Texas, Ken Hersh recently announced a six figure commitment over each of the next three years to help support the NAUDL's Expansion Plan. Ken has structured his donation as a challenge grant: He will match material commitments made to the Expansion Plan up to \$100,000 per year. The NAUDL hopes and expects that this will, therefore, become a \$300,000 grant made over three years.

According to Ken, "It almost goes without saying that high school debate was one of the most important influences on me and my life. And, I know I'm not unique in that regard, as many of my best friends in high school, college, and business school are former debaters who feel precisely the same way." Ken continued that "I am genuinely excited to help provide the same life-changing opportunity to more urban students across the country."

The NAUDL Board Co-Chair, Lenny Gail, expressed the organization's appreciation: "Ken's generosity sets a very high bar for all of us who believe in the NAUDL's mission. I hope, as he does, that his investment-backed endorsement of our Expansion Plan will spur others who understand intellectually and personally the benefits of debate to commit to helping make it available to more students in urban areas."

Please join us in thanking Ken Hersh and his family for their inspiring generosity.



## NAUDL Honorary Board Adds Nationally Prominent African-American Trial Lawyer

The NAUDL added to its already high-profile list of Honorary Board members one of the nation's most successful trial lawyers, Willie Gary. Mr. Gary has been named by *Ebony Magazine* as one of the "100 Most Influential Black Americans," and has been identified by *Forbes* as "one of the top 50 attorneys in the U.S." National media outlets from *60 Minutes* to *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, from *Oprah* to *The National Law Journal*, all have profiled Mr. Gary. Their common thread has been the length of ground Willie Gary has covered in his life – from his childhood impoverishment and struggle to the apex of the legal profession. Mr. Gary was the first black male to go to college from the small town of Indiantown where his family labored in the cane fields, living in a small shack in the Silver City settlement of Pahokee, Florida. Now, based in Stuart, Florida, Willie Gary practices law as a plaintiff's attorney in 45 states, and has tried more than 150 cases involving settlements of \$1 million or more.



Willie Gary was invited on to the NAUDL's Honorary Board by NAUDL Governing Board member Stuart Singer, who lives in Ft. Lauderdale. Says Singer, "I am proud to be working alongside one of the most accomplished lawyers in the nation in Willie Gary. I believed, and Willie agreed, that the Mission of the NAUDL was one that fits perfectly within the constellation of charitable causes that the Garys support. And as such a brilliantly successful African-American professional, Willie will stand as a Model for many of our urban debaters, in south Florida and around the country."



## “Winning Words” Brings Urban Debate to Chicago Middle Schools



As it has in Atlanta, Baltimore, New York, Seattle, and elsewhere, urban debate has extended into middle schools in Chicago. In a partnership between the University of Chicago and the Chicago Public Schools, and affiliated with and guided by the NAUDL, the program now involves ten middle schools mostly in the city's South Shore area, and serves more than 100 students. Its coordinator is former NAUDL program officer Greg

Cheyne, who works directly for the University of Chicago's Office of Special Programs – College Prep and the Division of the Humanities Civic Knowledge Project. Cheyne has marshaled 20 University of Chicago undergraduates who volunteer as assistant coaches

and judges. The program uses a version of the NAUDL's debate materials, which have been modified for middle schoolers, and other performance resources in a curriculum called "Winning Words: Orate, Debate, Enact/Verbal Arts for Democratic Practice."

According to the Civic Knowledge Project's director, Bart Schultz, "Winning Words" is being developed into a sustainable, year-round humanities after-school program for Chicago middle schools. On March 10<sup>th</sup> all ten schools competed in the final debate tournament of the season in Cobb Hall on the Hyde Park campus of the university.

## **Baltimore UDL Awarded Prestigious "Coming Up Taller" Prize**

The Baltimore Urban Debate League was one of 17 youth programs to be awarded the Coming Up Taller prize by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. BUDL's Executive Director Pam Spiliadis was at the White House in January to accept the award and the \$10,000 cash prize for her organization that comes along with it.



First Lady Laura Bush said in the ceremony that the UDL is making an "extraordinary contribution" to the city of Baltimore. "Teens find their own voices through Baltimore's Urban Debate League," Mrs. Bush said. "There, underperforming students become eager researchers, articulate speakers, and disciplined competitors. Ninety percent of them go on to college. Look for these formidable policy debaters in the courtroom and, someday, at the White House."

BUDL now encompasses 60 public schools and more than 1,000 debaters at the middle and high school levels. While students there gear up for the city championship, recently a team from City College High School advanced to the elimination rounds of the highly competitive Harvard Invitational Tournament. The NAUDL congratulates everyone in the Baltimore Urban Debate League for such outstanding, and nationally recognized, achievements.

## **Minnesota UDL Wins Newspaper Endorsement**

We're all familiar with the ritual wherein a city's major newspaper endorses one or the other candidate in a political campaign, but it is far less common for a paper's to editorially endorse an after-school or curricular program. Yet, that is precisely what the Minneapolis Star Tribune did this month, speaking out in praise of the Minnesota Urban Debate League and calling for its permanent funding.

According to the editors of the Star Tribune, "What's so wonderful about debate? Many of Minnesota's most admired leaders – lawyers and writers, teacher and politicians – can explain. Students find the enterprise so delightfully absorbing that they don't even

realize they're learning to think critically, to inquire effectively, to speak persuasively – and, ultimately, to influence the workings of the world. Research conducted at Minneapolis North High School proves the point. The findings show that the school's debaters outpace their non-debating peers on many academic measures – from reading skills to grade point average --- and rank higher in self-esteem.

“Findings like these ought to turn heads. They back up the claim of many educators that debate is among the most effective learning tools inner-city high schools can offer their students.”

The Minnesota UDL Executive Director Karon Garen used this editorial to bolster her recent testimony in front of the Minnesota State Legislature on behalf of a bill being put forward by Rep. Steve Simon calling for the state to match local funding of the UDL. It's hard to argue with the Star Tribune's endorsement, or with Director Garen's work in the public schools of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

## NAUDL Administers J. P. Morgan Chase Sponsored Urban Debate Program



International banking giant J. P. Morgan Chase began sponsoring an urban debate program using the Lincoln-Douglas debate format in New York City in the late 1980s. Chase asked the NAUDL to expand this program into Chicago and, with Chase's sponsorship, the NAUDL has expanded the Chicago UDL into four new high schools (and two schools already in the CDL) to add 120 new students to the roster of urban debaters. There have been five stand-alone

L-D tournaments in the Chicago Public Schools this year, and UDL schools have participated in another six L-D tournaments in the region. Northwestern University Law School has separately hosted six city-wide L-D seminars. And, the kicker: Thanks to a partnership with After School Matters, the nationally-renowned after-school programming provider, the urban debaters in this program are paid a \$900 yearly apprenticeship stipend for working on pre-professional communications, literacy, and critical thinking skills. According to Scott Dodsworth, Kelly High School's Head Coach of both Policy and Lincoln-Douglas debate, "L-D is just another way for the Urban Debate League to reach and serve students who are just not getting elsewhere the range of academic benefits that debating has to offer."

## **Southern California UDL Coach Named 2006 Hispanic Magazine Teacher of the Year**

Sal Tinajero, who teaches Speech and Debate and U.S. History at Fullerton Union High School in California, was named the National Teacher of the Year for 2006 by Hispanic Magazine. Tinajero was presented with the award at a ceremony in the White House.



U.S. Representative Loretta Sanchez and Santa Ana Mayor Miguel sent letters of support after Tinajero was nominated for the award by Fullerton parents. In naming Tinajero, Hispanic Magazine cited his dedicated and disciplined focus on getting his students into college, and on his effective leadership of his Southern California UDL debate team, which ranks as one of the top California programs. According to Manny Gonzales, a Fullerton parent with a son on the debate team, “There is no other person in my mind who deserves this more. He should not only be the teacher of the year, he should be the teacher of the decade.” We at the NAUDL know Sal well, and we admire him deeply. This is a well deserved honor indeed.

## **Phoenix and Philadelphia Here We Come!**



Local leadership often makes or breaks efforts to transplant into new locales businesses with a demonstrated record of success elsewhere. This axiom is no less true, and likely even more so, with non-profit organizations. Here, a local “Champion” is frequently viewed as essential to institutional acceptance and successful development efforts – not to mention effective enterprise management.

The NAUDL has enlisted the support of two remarkable individuals who have agreed to guide our efforts to develop and implement leagues, respectively, in Phoenix in Philadelphia. They will join the growing list of urban debate Champions who work in cities across the country with their UDL Advisory Boards (which they often chair) and the local urban school system to make an Urban Debate League in their city a sustainable reality.

Stay tuned for more details!

If you are interested in helping the NAUDL bring urban debate to Phoenix or Philadelphia, or if you know anyone who might be, please contact our Executive Director, Les Lynn, at [leslynn@urbandebate.org](mailto:leslynn@urbandebate.org).