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Contact:
Carly Watson
Michigan State University, ADA PR Chair
wunderl3@msu.edu

ADA National Championship hosted by Georgetown University

[Washington, DC/US] – Georgetown University hosted ADA National Championship during the weekend of March 3 to March 5, 2023. The tournament was attended by 29 teams across the novice division, 22 across the junior varsity division and 51 teams across the open division.

Debaters from across the country were asked to debate both sides of the season-long resolution about legal personhood in six preliminary debates. The full wording of the topic is “Resolved: The United States should vest legal rights and/or duties in one or more of the following: artificial intelligence, nature, nonhuman animal species.”

Students who participated at the tournament debated half of their preliminary debates in favor of the resolution and half of their preliminary debates in opposition to the resolution.

At the conclusion of the preliminary debates, the tournament seeded teams in all divisions based on their win-loss record and speaker points. Elimination debates were single elimination for the top 14 teams in the novice division, top 11 teams in the junior varsity division and the top 26 teams in the open division.

In the novice debates, teams from Boston College, Emory University, George Mason University, Indiana University, Liberty University, Monmouth University, Samford University, Trinity University, University of Houston, University of Mary Washington, Wayne State University, the Navy and New School competed.

Indiana University, George Mason University, Samford University, University of Houston, University of Mary Washington, Liberty University, the Navy and New School were victorious and advanced to the octofinals. In the octofinals, Liberty University, Samford University, University of Mary Washington, University of Houston, and George Mason University were victorious and advanced to the quarterfinals. In the quarterfinals, George Mason University, Samford University and University of Mary Washington were victorious and advanced to the semifinals. In the semifinals, Samford University and George Mason University were victorious and advanced to the finals.

In the finals, Nathan Stolzenfeld and Megan Rodak from George Mason University bested Sarah Chew and Ella Ford from Samford University.

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In the junior varsity debates, teams from Boston College, Cornell University, Emory University, George Mason University, Liberty University, Michigan State University, Missouri State University, Monmouth University, Pennsylvania State University, the Navy, Samford University, University of Houston, University of Kansas, University of Wyoming and Wayne State University competed.

University of Wyoming, Liberty University, Samford University, Michigan State University, Emory University, Cornell University, University of Houston were victorious and advanced to the octofinals. In the octofinals, Cornell University, Michigan State University, University of Houston, Liberty University and Emory University were victorious and advanced to the quarterfinals. In the quarterfinals, the University of Houston and Liberty University were victorious and advanced to the semifinals. In the semifinals, University of Houston was victorious and advanced to the finals.

In the finals, Nine Abad and Bryce Sheffield from the University of Houston bested Aaron Fernandez and Hector Doratt from the University of Houston.

In the open debates, teams from Boston College, Emory University, George Mason university, Georgetown University, Gonzaga University, Indiana University, Liberty University, Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, Missouri State University, the Navy, Northwestern University, Samford University, University of Texas at Austin, Trinity University, University of Texas at Dallas, University of Georgia, University of Houston, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, University of Mary Washington, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Wyoming and Wake Forest University competed.

Teams from University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, University of Texas at Austin, University of Wyoming, Michigan State University, George Mason University, Georgetown University, Emory University, University of Michigan, Liberty University, Wake Forest University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Minnesota, Gonzaga University and Northwestern University were victorious and advanced to doubles. In doubles, Wake Forest University, Gonzaga University, University of Kansas, Northwestern University, Georgetown University, University of Michigan, Liberty University, University of Kentucky, Michigan State University, University of Texas at Austin, Emory University and the University of Kansas were victorious and advanced to the octofinals. In the octofinals, Wake Forest University, University of Texas at Austin, Georgetown University, Emory University, University of Kentucky, University of Kansas, Northwestern University and the University of Michigan were victorious and advanced to the quarterfinals. In the quarterfinals, University of Michigan, Wake Forest University, University of Kentucky and Emory University were victorious and advanced to the semifinals. In the semifinals, Wake Forest University and University of Kentucky were victorious and advanced to the finals.

In the finals, Ana Bittner and Ari Davidson from Wake Forest University bested David Griffith and Austin Kiihn from the University of Kentucky.

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Debaters participating also receive speaker points for each of their preliminary debates. In the novice division, Ella Ford from Samford University was named top speaker and Aaron Fernandez from the University of Houston was named top speaker in the junior varsity division. In the open division, Eugenia Giampetrucci was named top speaker.

In addition to the awards related to tournament competition, the ADA presents several other awards recognizing individuals at the national tournament. John Turner from Dartmouth College received the Excellence in Coaching Award to recognize the excellent performance of a coach, whether a director, assistant or graduate assistant at an ADA school. Brandon Kelley from Georgetown University received the Outstanding New Director Award to recognize a new director who demonstrates outstanding achievement in scholarship, service, community building, or competitive success. Mikaela Malsin was given the Founders' Award for Service to recognize someone in the ADA that goes above and beyond the requirements of their job.

To recognize teams with season-long success, the Front Royal Cup is awarded to two-person teams in each division with the strongest tournament results during the invitational season. The award is named for the site of the American Debate Association's founding meeting in Front Royal, Virginia.

In Novice, Indiana University (Midithuri & Fernando) placed third, George Mason University (Stolzenfeld & Rodak) placed second, and Mary Washington University (Busch & Hungar) were awarded the Front Royal Cup. In Junior Varsity, Emory University (Sosa & Viera) placed third, Michigan State University (Scully & Zi) placed second, and Liberty University (Dellinger & Hamilton) were awarded the Front Royal Cup. In Varsity, Kentucky University (Griffith & Kihnl) placed third, Wake Forest University (Bittner & Davidson), placed second and Emory University (Giampetrucci & Kessler) were awarded the Front Royal Cup.

In a balloting process that included participants at the tournament, Nathan Stolzenfeld from George Mason University was named Novice Debater of the Year, Glen Scully from Michigan State University was named Junior Varsity Debater of the Year, Eu Giampetrucci from Emory University was named Varsity Debater of the Year, and Jeff Buntin from Northwestern University was named Judge of the Year.

The ADA also presents the Julia Burke Award annually. The Julia Burke Award recognizes the ADA debater who most closely upholds the combination of characteristics that Julia Burke displayed in her love for the activity. These qualities include excellence in and passion for debate, a commitment to helping others, love and respect for the debate community and dedication to maintaining friendships despite the pressures of competition. This year's finalists were Eu Giampetrucci, Emory University, Ethan Greer, Georgetown University, and Justice Wallenmeyer, Liberty University. Participants at the tournament voted Giampetrucci as the recipient.

The ADA National Championship was the final ADA-sanctioned tournament of the year.

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About the American Debate Association

The American Debate Association began in 1985 as an intercollegiate debate association. It uses the resolution selected by the Cross Examination Debate Association and the National Debate Tournament. Currently they have 44 member schools. The ADA's mission is increasing participation, maintaining a balance between education and competition, and ensuring an equitable and fair activity for all programs, regardless of their size or experience.

Patrick Waldinger

University of Miami
President

Mikaela Malsin

Emory University
Vice President

Carly Watson

Michigan State University
PR Chair