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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 24, 2010

(Release #2010 - 137)

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WRHS Students Win Numerous Debate Awards



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – The Warner Robins High Speech and Debate team has five students who have won top honors at region, state or district competitions in February and March.

“We have a tremendous group of students this year,” said debate and speech coach John McClellan. “And we’ve been very well-rounded in multiple speech and debate events.”

Seniors Kurtis Anderson and Robert Walker debated the merits of increased social services for persons living in poverty and saw their expertise and preparation pay off with Policy Debate championships in tournaments at Northside and Cairo. They were semifinalists at Samford University in Birmingham, Al. and quarterfinalists at the University of Florida. At the Georgia High School Association State tournament, Robert was the first-

place affirmative speaker and Kurtis was fourth. They finished as the second-place affirmative team at State. They also have qualified for All-State. This team finished in the top 16 in the nation at NCFL Nationals last May.

Kelsey Cummings, a senior, won two titles at the State Literary meet held at Northside High on March 20. Kelsey was the State champion in both Girls Essay and Girls Extemporaneous Speaking after winning both events at Region Literary. Prior to State, she won first place in Extemporaneous Speaking at Cairo and third place in Commentary at the Georgia Forensic Coaches’ Association State tournament. Extemporaneous speakers draw a current issue topic and have 30 minutes to prepare a seven minute speech. Kelsey also qualified for Nationals in International Extemporaneous Speaking at the National Forensic League District tournament.

MORE

WRHS Students Win Numerous Debate Awards / page 2 of 2

Kristin Hanlin won first place in Impromptu Speaking at Johns Creek and Northside. The senior won first place in both Impromptu and Original Oratory at Houston County, Cairo and Lee County.

Oratory is a 10-minute speech which the student writes, memorizes, and rehearses, while Impromptu involves the blind draw of a topic with just seven minutes for preparation and speaking. Kristin's oratory, "Childhood is a Short Season," won first place at the GFCA State tournament. At NFL Districts, she qualified for Nationals in Oratory and Student Congress.

Sophomore James Walker won first place honors in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, which is based on competing values and philosophies, at Cairo, Lee County and Lincoln County. At the NFL District tournament, he qualified for Nationals in Lincoln-Douglas and Student Congress.

Other senior award winners include Michael Needleman, Policy Debate at Northside and Cairo; Donnie Rench, Congress at Lee County and Lincoln; and Shayla Whitehead, Impromptu at Samford.

Only the top two competitors in each NFL District event are eligible to attend the National tournament, which will be in Kansas City, Missouri June 13-18. "We hope we can take our three qualifying students," said McClellan. "I'm very grateful for the leadership and intense preparation of all our students this year, as well as the hard work of our assistant coach, David Austin, and our dedicated parents."

Warner Robins High School is located at 401 South Davis Drive in Warner Robins. Steve Monday serves as principal. For more information, please contact John McClellan at (478) 929-7877, extension 51578, or John.McClellan@hcbe.net.

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