



## ◆ *ConocoPhillips Urban Debate League*

# Thank You ConocoPhillips!

## Exciting NFL Tournament

by  
Jay Stubbs

March 10-11, 2006 several Houston area schools participated in the ConocoPhillips Urban Debate League tournament. ConocoPhillips and the National Forensic League entered into an agreement that gives economically disadvantaged students an opportunity to compete in a tournament for experience and scholarships. For many schools in the tournament it represents the first competitive tournament exposure their students have had.

The tournament featured Public Forum debates on a topic created especially for the tournament. The schools participating in the program included Jesse H Jones HS, G.C. Scarborough HS, Challenge Early College HS, Jack Yates HS, Westfield HS, Ball HS, Aldine HS, Eastwood Academy, and Pasadena HS. The topic was announced to coaches in January. A workshop offering topic analysis and information on the Public Forum debate was held for coaches and students. After spending time researching the topic the students were given the opportunity to check their progress by

participating in practice rounds. Each team had the chance to try out their pro and con cases as well as getting experience in choosing first or last speaking positions. Post round critiques were offered to allow students to make additional improvements prior to the final tournament.



Bellaire Students Tabulating

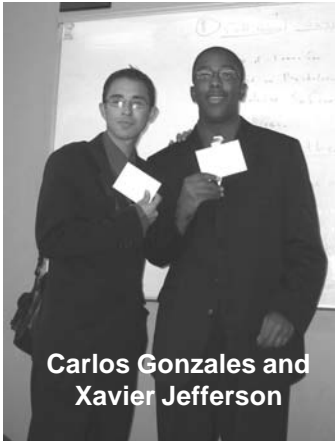
The tournament was held at Bellaire High School and ran very smoothly because of the hard work and time volunteered by members of the Bellaire debate squad. Bellaire debaters were in charge of all key portions of tournament operations including tabulation. A part of the



ConocoPhillips grant provided a dinner for all debaters, coaches and judges between the preliminary rounds. A grill was set up in the courtyard of the school where cheeseburgers, hotdogs, fish and ribs were barbequed. The aroma of the freshly cooked food attracted debaters to the courtyard between rounds. These students, who expected to pay for their meal, were very pleased to learn that this hospitality is one of the benefits of participating in the ConocoPhillips Urban Debate League. 120 cheeseburgers, 80 hotdogs, ribs, 30 pieces of fish as well as chips and drinks for all were consumed during the tournament.

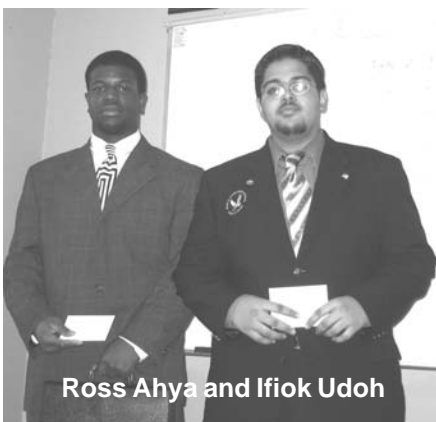


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**Carlos Gonzales and  
Xavier Jefferson**

Mayes from Aldine High School won third place and each debater received a \$500 scholarship. After a close final round Toby Mathew and Amy Yim coached by



**Ross Ahya and Ifiok Udoh**

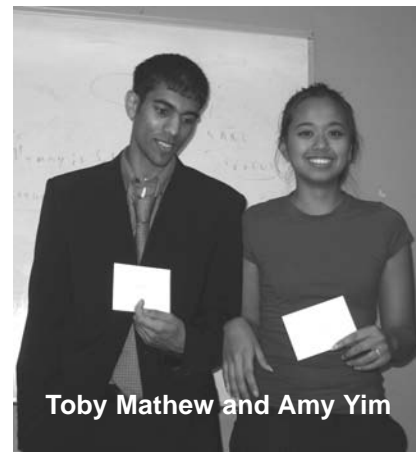
Six schools had teams that cleared to the quarterfinal round that would be held on Saturday morning. After the rounds on Saturday it was time to announce the scholarship winners. Carlos Gonzales and Xavier Jefferson coached by Shauna

Mayes from Aldine High School won third place and each debater received a \$500 scholarship. After a close final round Toby Mathew and Amy Yim coached by

Kaye Magill from Westfield High School won second place with each receiving a \$750 scholarship. The champions of the 2006 ConocoPhillips Urban Debate League are Ross Ahya and Ifiok Udoh of Jesse H. Jones High School coached by Shera

Carter. The champions each received \$1,000 scholarships. In addition to the generous scholarships and meals that were provided to the students, ConocoPhillips also paid for affiliate dues for any school not currently a member of the National Forensic League as well as paying individual NFL memberships for any students who earned enough points to become NFL members during the tournament. Coaches also received a stipend for helping prepare students for their participation in the program.

The ConocoPhillips Urban Debate League has become a very important part of the lives of many Houston area students. The tournament provided an atmosphere of fellowship, cooperation, and participation as well as the financial rewards for the winning students. The students of the Bellaire debate squad are proud to be able to help run a tournament that provides such a great service for so many students in the Houston community. On behalf of all of the students and coaches who participated in this year's tournament we offer thanks to ConocoPhillips and the National Forensic League for making this program possible with hopes that the program will continue to serve our area's students for many years to come.



**Toby Mathew and Amy Yim**