

HELEN HUGHES, VICE CHAIRMAN
LORI JOHNSON
DR. RICK UNRUH

BOARD MEMBERS
MR. FRED WILSON, CHAIRMAN

DAVE CROCKETT
HOKE MORROW
BRYAN UPSHAW

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 31, 2020

(Release #2019/20 – 143)

Contact: Beth McLaughlin, Director of Community & School Affairs, 478-988-6390, ext. 0, Beth.McLaughlin@hcbe.net

★ [Facebook](#) ★ [Twitter](#) ★ [YouTube](#) ★ [Pinterest](#) ★ [LinkedIn](#) ★ [Instagram](#)

Houston County High Debate Team Wins State Championship Coach Brock named Georgia Debate Coach of the Year



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Houston County High School's debate team won several awards at the 2020 Georgia Forensic Coaches Association (GFCA) Varsity State Tournament on March 7 in Marietta, Ga. The team of Aly Watson and Justin Whilby dominated the competition, winning all nine of their Public Forum debate rounds and the state championship. Whilby (pictured left) received honors as Top Overall Speaker, and Watson was Second Overall Speaker.

Team member Ellie Kirkland was recognized as the top freshman in both the Impromptu and Dramatic Interpretation categories. She is pictured with her trophies.



In addition, their Debate Team Coach, James Brock, was named the 2020 GFCA Debate Coach of the Year. Brock is also pictured with his plaque.



This marks Houston County High School's first state championship debate since 1993. Public Forum debates involve opposing teams of two, who debate a current event topic. The winners of a coin toss choose whether to debate the pro or con side, or which speaker position they prefer (1st or 2nd). Students present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and participate in a "crossfire," similar to a cross-examination, with the opportunity to question the opposing team. Community members are often recruited to judge this

event.

MORE

Houston County High Debate Team Wins State Championship; Coach Brock named Georgia Coach of the Year / page 2 of 2

Impromptu is a public speaking event where students have seven minutes to select a topic, brainstorm their ideas, outline and deliver a speech. The speech is given without notes and uses an introduction, body and conclusion. The speech can be light-hearted or serious, and can be based upon prompts that range from nursery rhymes, current events, celebrities, organizations, etc.

Dramatic Interpretation is an event in which students utilize a play, short story or other published work to perform a selection of one or more portions of a piece up to ten minutes in length. With a spotlight on character development and depth, this event focuses on the student's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used. Performances can also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance, and state the title and the author.

Houston County High School is located at 920 Highway 96 in Warner Robins. Dr. Doug Rizer serves as principal. For more information about the debate team, Brock may be reached at James.Brock@hcbe.net. GCFA is the governing body for speech and debate programs throughout the state of Georgia. To learn more about the GFCA, visit <http://www.gaspeechanddebate.org/>.

#