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THE SOUTH END

FEBRUARY 16, 1978

staff photo/dan kohn

## Forensic team: rhetoric spells success

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The most successful team on campus is not the football, basketball, baseball, or fencing team but probably the least known; the WSU debating team or Forensic Union.

Actually the Forensic Union is an umbrella term that includes students who compete in either team debate or individual competition.

When one thinks of a debating team one usually conjures up be-speckled Harvard types, sitting on stage, legs together, ready to spring-up, finger in the air, to destroy the opposition all within the dictates of superior logic and oratory skills.

Students wishing to prove or disprove this stereotype are invited to attend the annual WSU Debate Tournament to be held Feb. 17 to 19 and presented at Manoogian Building by the Department of Speech Communications and Theater and the Forensic Union.

"No one knows that WSU has a debate team or what forensics is. At a Forensics Union Bake sale some people asked if forensics are

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Just some of the Forensics teams' trophies.

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for the criminally insane," said pre-law student Sara Allen.

The debate format has two person teams debating a topic used the entire season by all participating teams. This year's topic deals with the investigation and prosecution of felony crimes.

The WSU debating team can boast of victories at Northwestern, Wooster, Kings and the Naval Academy, so far this year, which, when coupled with past history, puts them with the top 40 or 50 schools in the nation.

The two divisions of debate are varsity, which is designed for experienced debaters, and junior varsity, which is for first and second year debaters.

The Forensic Union has about 35 members who will compete against more than 100 schools and will travel to over 20 states.

They have won over 20 major events in the last 10 years and have qualified for the nationals about 17 of the last 19 years.

"The purpose of the debating team is on three levels", said director of novice debate Jack Kay. "It provides training in speech and oral argument and gives the student a better understanding of issues and arguments on the social level, because WSU is commuter college and there's not much to do on campus, students can develop closer friendships with each other and also with the faculty.

"The personal level is perhaps hardest to explain because it (oratory skill) transfers to the students' individual lives. Organizing thoughts for speech

and debate helps students transfer these skills to both personal and a career decisions. It provides objectivity that students should have."

Kay said he found that success in debate correlates with success in life. Former WSU debaters include successful lawyers, doctors and legislatures, Kay said.

Records indicate that over 70 percent of the students in the program are non-speech majors and pre-law, education, and liberal arts majors predominate.

"Being in debate helps in classes especially those where you have to write papers, because debate helps you organize your thoughts quickly and clearly. It helps also when you have to meet people, because you get experience dealing with people in debate and individual events," Speech and journalism major Robin Myers said.

"I thought that speaking skills are necessary for an attorney," said Sofia Babar, who is working on her political science major with intentions of going into law.