

The Jackie Foote Award of Excellence in Congressional Debate

This award has been established by the Tarheel Forensic League to honor the congressional competitor who best exemplifies what Congressional Debate stands for. The winner should be a “good person speaking well.” Any senior who competes in Congressional Debate at the TFL State Championship Tournament is eligible to win, whether the person makes it to Super Congress or not. The following are the qualities that must be exhibited in the recipient:

Above all else, the winner should demonstrate the highest ideals of character. He or she should not necessarily be the most popular competitor or the most successful, but must be held in the highest esteem of his or her fellow congresspersons. The award winner should be known for honesty in speech writing, procedural fairness, and ethical behavior both in debate and in his or her daily life. This honoree should be a suitable example for all students and coaches in North Carolina as a model citizen.

Congress is unique among all the events in that competitors can actively work to help or hurt their teammates through their actions in chamber. The winner should demonstrate leadership among his or her team. This individual should understand the dynamics of in-chamber strategy and be able to effectively keep team members voting as a single unit on procedural issues to maximize their effectiveness. An ability to negotiate conflicting interests among team members or various participants in a chamber is desirable in the honoree.

The winner should demonstrate a genuine desire to teach novices and a concern for the forensics community at-large. The student who embodies the qualities honored by this award freely shares their experiences and encouragement with any fellow competitor and behaves in a manner that welcomes new teams and students to competition.

As was the award’s namesake during her career, the student honored with this award should be exceptionally devoted to Congressional Debate. That is not to say that the award winner should be the student who has attended the most tournaments during his or her career, but rather that the award winner should be an individual who has made Congress his or her primary event and who has a substantial record demonstrating all of the above qualities.

This award is not a popularity contest. The winner should be carefully evaluated by each person casting a vote for each of the qualities named above. The Award of Excellence in Congressional Debate represents TFL’s highest honor for a student legislator and only those with the utmost integrity and ethics should be considered.