

## Plano Senior High School Debate Team Takes Second in Global Tournament

**Dallas, Texas... April 21, 2009** – The Plano Senior High School debate team has distinguished itself as among the best. The Plano debaters captured second place in the Bickel & Brewer/New York University National Public Policy Forum (NPPF) finals in New York City. The team was awarded \$3,500 at a special banquet on April 18, following a full-day of competition on the New York University campus.

“The Plano students did an incredible job in the finals,” says William A. Brewer III, partner at Bickel & Brewer and founder of the NPPF. “We expect Plano will return to the competition next year, and once again distinguish itself as among the elite debate teams in this global contest. These students should be proud of a job remarkably well done.”

The NPPF is the only contest that gives high school students the opportunity to participate in written and oral debates on issues of public policy. The 2008–2009 competition began in October when more than 100 public and private high schools – representing 32 states and 14 foreign countries – submitted essays on the topic, “*Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives in the United States.*” After five months of hard work and three rounds of written debate competition, the field was narrowed to just four teams. Those teams received an all-expense paid trip to the finals competition in New York City.

The finals competition is always a unique test of research and oral advocacy skills. On Saturday afternoon, students presented their positions before a panel of judges that included some of the world’s foremost experts in law, business and debate. Along with Brewer, judges for the finals weekend include John Sexton, president of New York University; Scott Wunn, secretary, National Forensic League; Melissa Maxcy-Wade, director of forensics, Emory University; Scott Deatherage, executive director, National Association for Urban Debate Leagues; Elaine McArdle, journalist; and Mark Oppenheimer, editor, *The New Haven Review*.

Plano Senior High School defeated Deer Park High School from Deer Park, Texas, in the semi-final round, but was later bested by the reigning champion – Bellaire High School from Bellaire, Texas. This year marked the second year that the Bellaire team has taken home the \$10,000 grand prize and the “Bickel & Brewer Cup,” a traveling trophy that resides annually with the winning school.

Video of the finals competition will soon be available for viewing at [www.nppf.net](http://www.nppf.net).

The NPPF was founded by the Bickel & Brewer Foundation in 2001, and is now jointly administered with New York University. The program is available for free to all high schools. Since its inception, the Bickel & Brewer Foundation has awarded more than \$800,000 in support of forensic activities at the secondary school and collegiate levels. The NPPF is endorsed by

leading forensic agencies such as the National Forensic League, National Association for Urban Debate Leagues, and the International Debate Education Association.

The Bickel & Brewer Foundation is a private, non-profit organization funded by companies, individuals and the national litigation firm of Bickel & Brewer. With offices in Dallas and New York, the Foundation has achieved widespread recognition for its efforts to create, fund and manage a variety of educational outreach programs. Visit the NPPF at [www.nppf.net](http://www.nppf.net).

Photos courtesy of Annemarie Poyo.

(l-r): Bickel & Brewer Partner John Bickel, Former ACLU President and Keynote Speaker Nadine Strossen, Coach Cheryl Potts, Crystal Xia, Gursimran Singh, Javed Laljani, NYU President John Sexton and Bickel & Brewer Partner William Brewer.

Second photo (l-r): Gurismran Singh, Crystal Xia, and Javed Laljani.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Thanks,

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