

*The two made it to the semifinals and each was named top debater their senior year.*

the debate season. "I suppose—short of the national tournament—it is the most coveted invitation a team receives," Patterson said. "At least, that's what other coaches tell me. It is a unique tournament held in a unique setting—out in the country at Carnahan House. All the teams are good and for the most part the judging is good."

The round robin followed immediately by the Henry Clay Debates was created in the early '70s when Patterson first took over the team from Gifford Blyton. UK was host of a tournament prior to this but it did not draw the top teams. "I was batting the idea around with one of our debaters—Jim Flegle '74 from Bardwell who's now an attorney in Houston—and came up with the idea of hosting a national round robin immediately prior to the regular tournament. The idea was to get the top teams here from the outset and then others would follow. The idea worked and the tournament continues," he said.

The round robin ends on a Thursday night and on Friday afternoon schools from all over the country start arriving for the prestigious Henry Clay Debates. "We will have in any given year about 90 percent of the top teams in the nation here," Patterson said.

At the end of the season, UK is host to a large national high school tournament. Some 80 high school teams from all parts of the country were in Lexington May 10-13 to participate in the last major invitational tournament of the year.

Planning for this tournament included talks with high school coaches to decide the best time for a national tournament. "After March there were no tournaments held for high school teams until their final rounds in June," Patterson said. "Ours falls in between."

The 1984-85 debate year was a good one for UK—one of the better years in terms of records. UK junior Ouita Papka from Lexington and senior Mike Mankins from Des Moines, Iowa, placed first at the Harvard, Dartmouth and West Georgia College tournaments, and second at Vanderbilt and the University of Virginia tournaments.



Jones-Mancuso

Mankins also was top individual speaker at several tournaments and they both were in the top ten at the national tournament in Spokane, Wash.

At various times during the season they held the top record in the nation—alternating with a team from Harvard early on and later with Claremont College in California. "A rather unusual situation arose at one point during the year in which Mankin's partner could not go to Emory and the partner of the top debater at Harvard, John Massie, could not go so the tournament director permitted them to enter as a team," Patterson said. "They won first place."

UK also was the only school this season to have two teams break into the octafinals at national. UK's second team—Paul Flowers, a sophomore from Wadsworth, Ohio, and Eric Kupferberg, a sophomore from Potomac, Md.—along with Papka and Mankins placed in the octafinals. Flowers and Kupferberg also won a tournament at Miami of Ohio.

Throughout the years, UK has produced a number of top national debaters. Dr. Donald Clapp '63, former UK vice president for academic affairs from Lexington; Dr. Deno Curris '62, former president of Murray State University and now president at Northern Iowa University; Kentucky's Lieuten-

ant Governor Steve Beshear '66; Tim Futrell '70 and Howell Hobson '50, both attorneys in Cadiz, and Lexington insurance man Joe Mainous '51—to name a few—were top debaters in their day.

The first UK team to win a number of national tournaments was Gill Skillman '77 of Kettering, Ohio, and Gerry Oberst '77 of Owensboro. Over a period of two years, they won some eight or nine major national tournaments. In 1977, during his senior year, Skillman was the top individual debater and was in the semifinals twice. He won most major honors that were to be given. He also was a top UK student—winning the top award in economics and initiated into Phi Beta Kappa.

While a student at UK and immediately following his graduation he was on the staff of Northwestern University's summer institute. He attracted a large number of young debaters who wanted to learn from him.

"I never get into the business of saying who our best debater has been, but there is no question but what Skillman would be among the top five," Patterson said. "He was an extremely dedicated person, very hard worker, high energy level, very self-disciplined. He was my assistant coach for a year following his graduation and then went on to Ann Arbor to work on a doctorate in economics and now is on the faculty at Brown University."

Patterson continued, "I meet people all the time who say that he was the top debater of the decade and even some who say that he is the best debater they ever heard."

Skillman's debate partner, Gerry Oberst, was, for Patterson, a fascinating debater. "He came to our program with no experience. He started from scratch. By his junior year, he was definitely one of the top debaters in the country—not an easy task by any means," Patterson recalled. "To this day, people say that no one does a first affirmative rebuttal as well as he."

One personal characteristic which made Oberst outstanding as a debater was that he had a habit of getting up every morning and rewriting about three