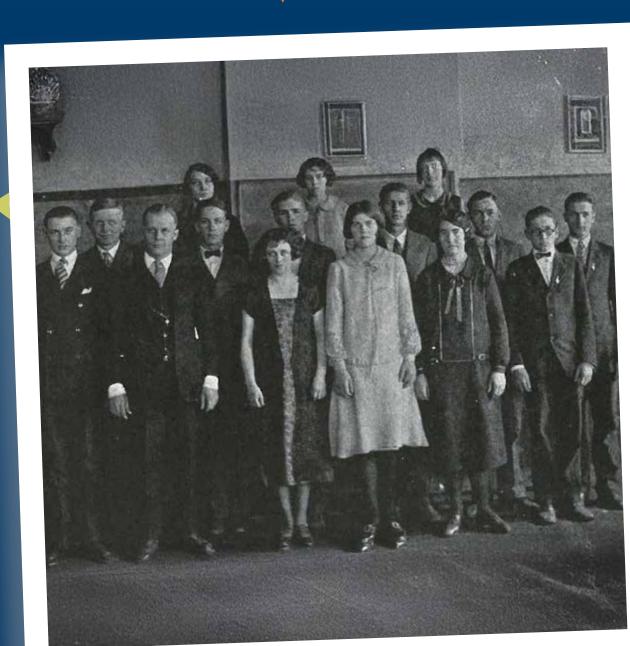
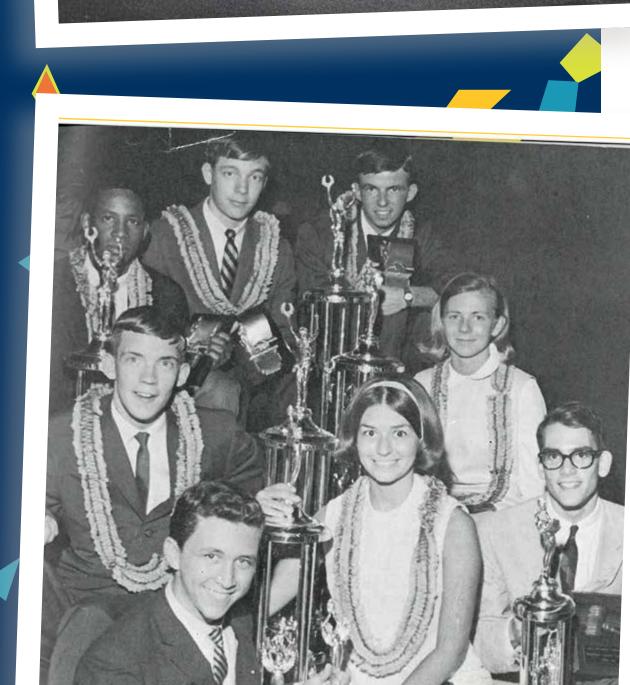
NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION

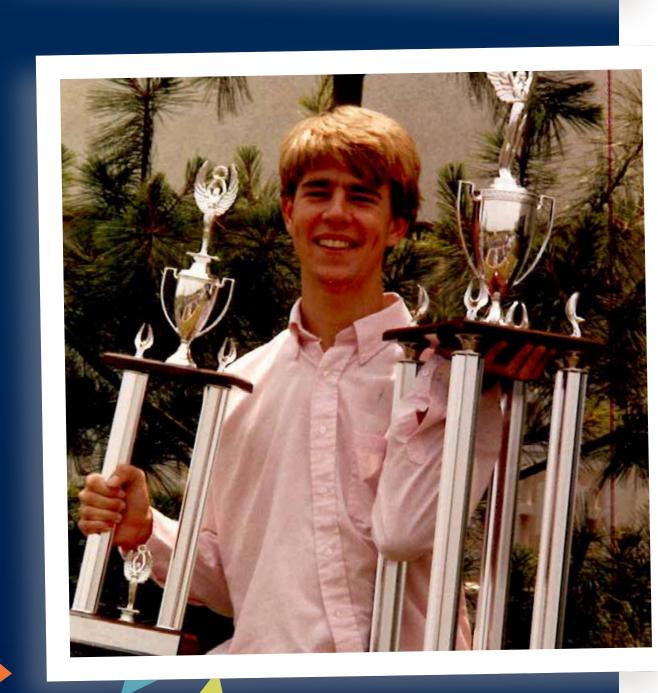


A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

TIMELINE











1925-2025

OUR HISTORY

Welcome to the National Speech & Debate Association's Centennial Timeline—a journey through a century of empowering voices, fostering critical thinking, and shaping the leaders of tomorrow. From our beginnings in 1925 as the National Forensic League, to our evolution into the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization in the United States, this timeline celebrates the milestones that have defined our legacy. As we celebrate 100 years of speech and debate, we invite you to explore the rich history that has propelled us forward.

Our history is more than a series of dates and events; it is a testament to the enduring impact of speech and debate on individuals and communities. Over the decades, we've introduced groundbreaking initiatives, world-class competitive activities, and transformative educational resources that empower students to find their voice and make a difference. These milestones reflect our commitment to expanding access, fostering inclusivity, and adapting to the evolving educational landscape.

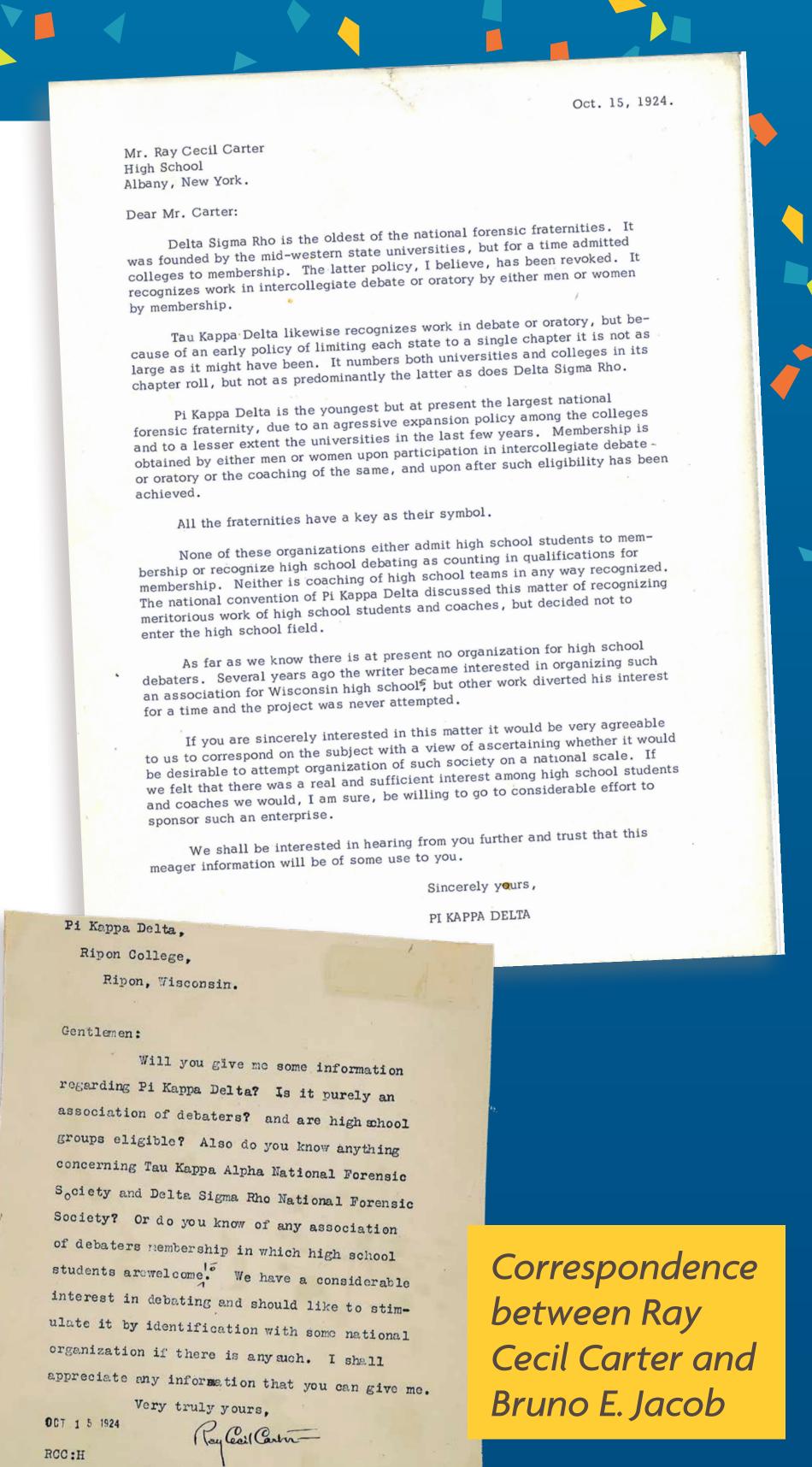
Our timeline highlights the challenges we've overcome, the innovations we've embraced, and the individuals who have shaped our path. By reflecting on our past, we gain insights into the principles of equity, integrity, respect, leadership, and service that remain at the core of our mission. As we look to the next 100 years, our history serves as both a foundation and a beacon, reminding us of the power of words and the importance of thoughtful discourse in a democratic society.

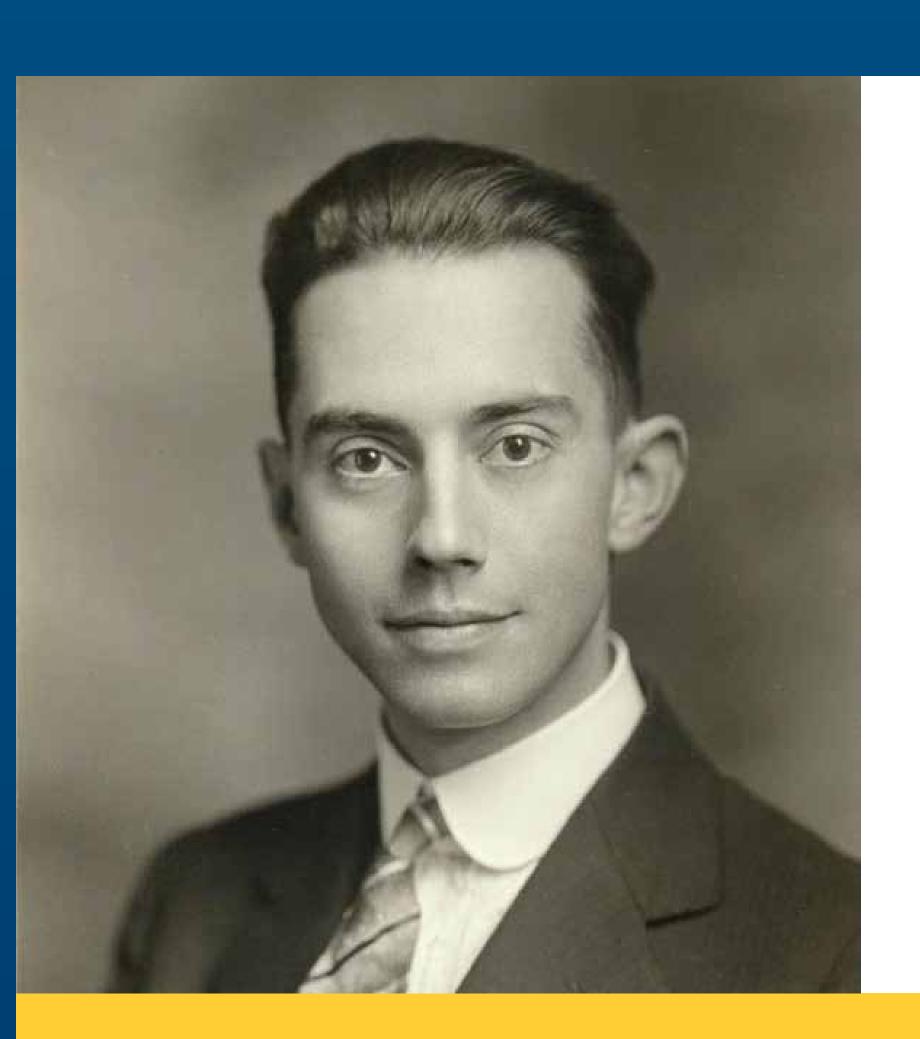
1925

BEGINNINGS

The National Forensic League, now the National Speech & Debate Association, was founded 100 years ago in 1925!

The idea was born from a letter written to Bruno E. Jacob at Pi Kappa Delta in Ripon, Wisconsin. High school debate coach Ray Carter sent the letter in October 1924, asking if high school students could become members of collegiate debate associations like Pi Kappa Delta. There were no associations at the time for high school students. Bruno E. Jacob quickly changed that.





1925

OUR FOUNDER

Bruno E. Jacob founded the National Forensic League (NFL) with a goal to motivate high school students to participate in speech and debate activities. The vision: to train youth for leadership.

Bruno E. Jacob, Founder

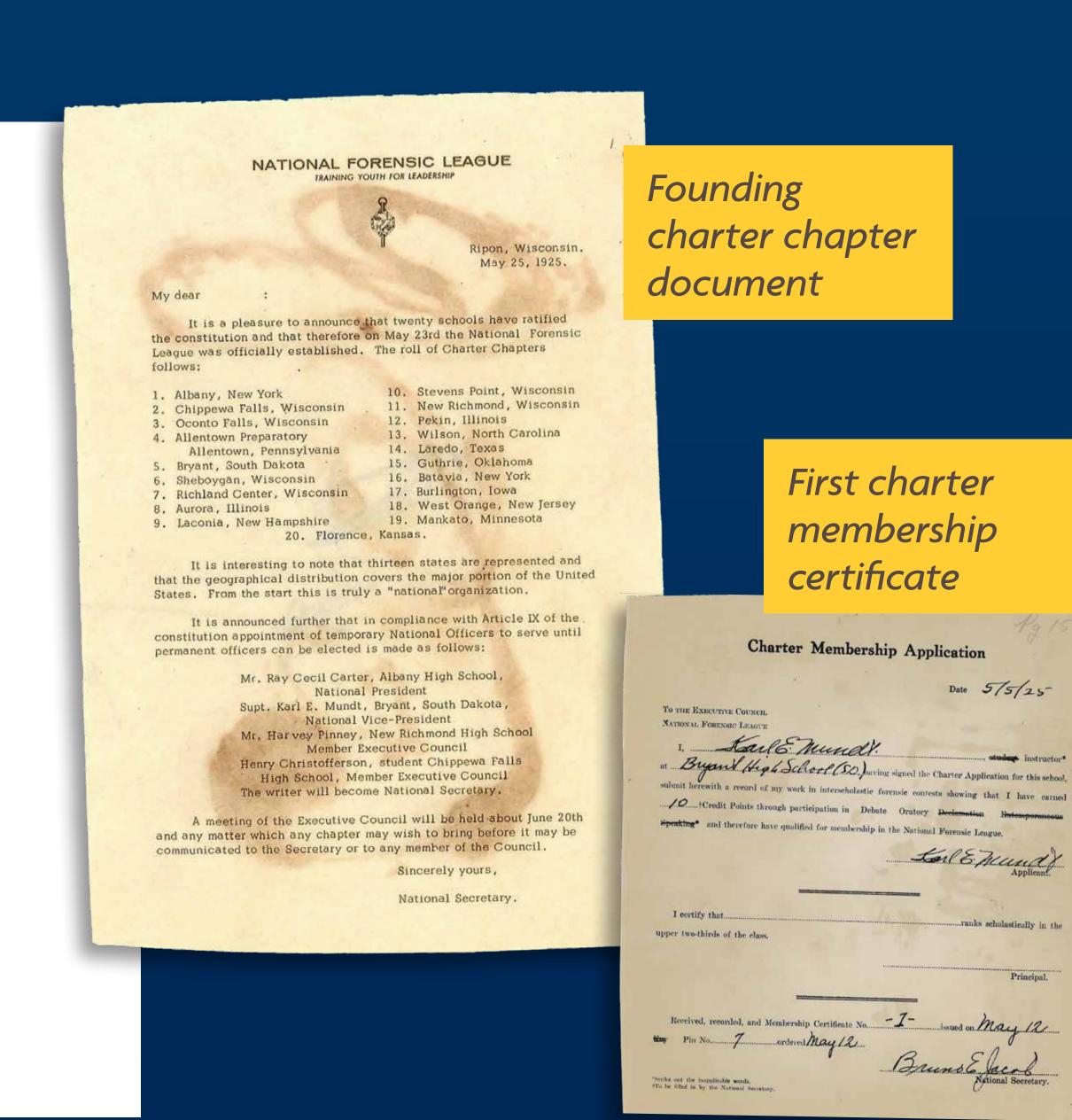
BRUNO'S FOUNDING STATEMENT:

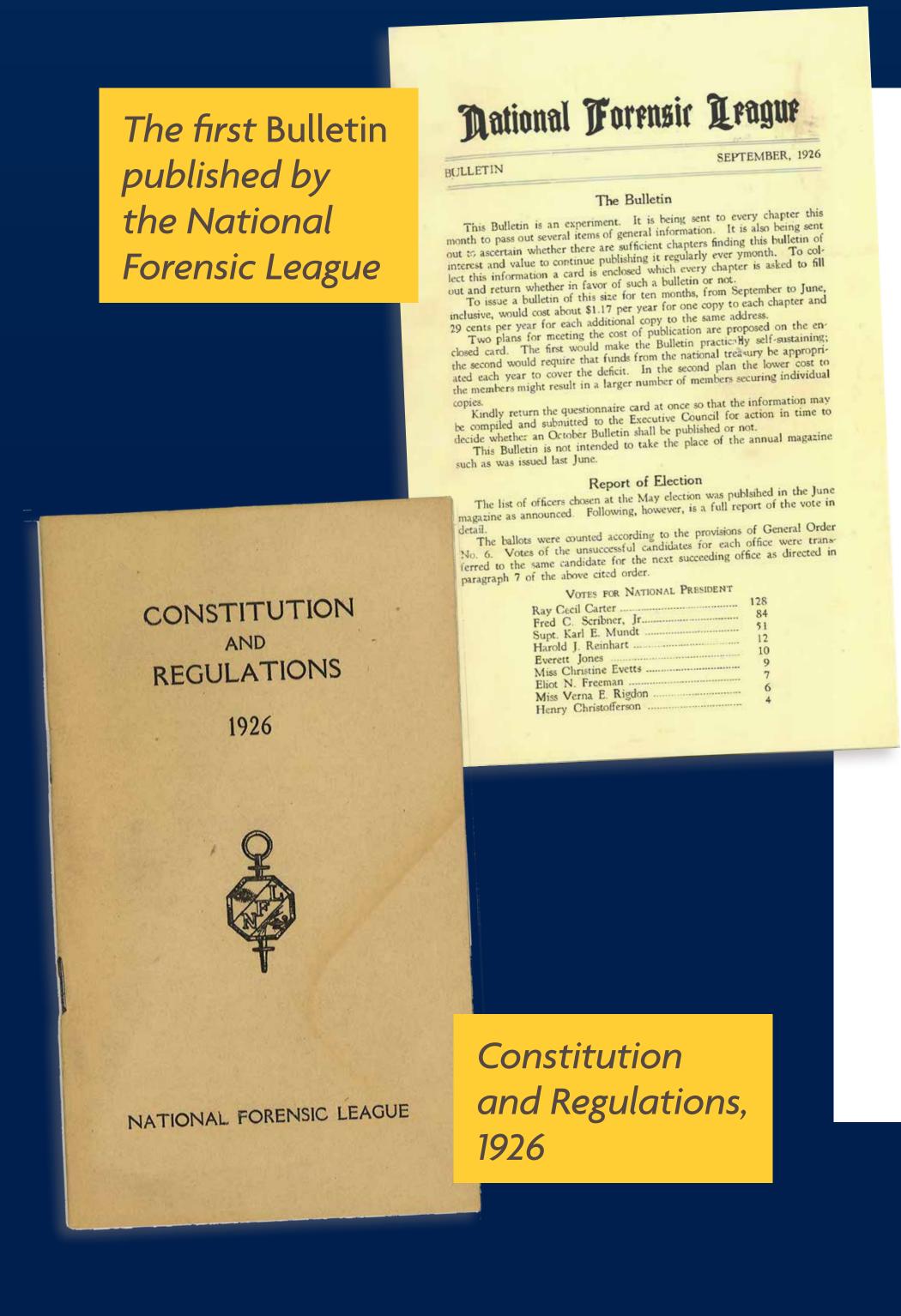
It shall be the purpose of this organization to promote the interests of interscholastic debate, oratory, and public speaking by encouraging a spirit of fellowship and by conferring upon deserving candidates a worthy badge of distinction.

1926

EARLY GROWTH

In the inaugural year, the NFL had three districts—Eastern, Central, and Western—covering 15 states and 20 schools.
By 1926, the organization expanded to five districts with 100 schools stretching across the country from Pennsylvania to California.





1926

THE BULLETIN

In September 1926, the monthly *Bulletin*, now known as *Rostrum* magazine, was created. It was mailed to all 100 charter schools sharing general NFL information. Schools were asked to vote on covering expenses for the publication, which was around 12¢ per issue, costing the NFL \$1.17 per school for an annual subscription to the monthly magazine.

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION



A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION •