

Broncos talk their way to national title

They surprised even themselves. The members of the small debate and speech team from the remote state of Idaho weren't supposed to come to St. Louis and walk away with the national championship — that honor supposedly belonged to Southwest Baptist University of Missouri, which had earned it six times in a row.

Despite five consecutive top-five finishes, Boise State had never risen above third place and was hardly considered a real threat.

But that was before the BSU debaters started talking ... and talking and talking.

They talked about Internet dating and deaf people using the telephone. They discussed the cost of textbooks.

They exchanged views on Turkey's relationship with the European Union. They debated political advertising, uranium in Iran and AIDS in Africa.

When they were finally done talking, their opponents were speechless.

Not only did the Talkin'

Broncos earn the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament championship, they also captured 22 individual awards, including first in debate, second in speech, an individual national championship in broadcast journalism (John Petti) and two All American awards (Lacey Rammell-O'Brien and Nancy Henke).

With more than 470 competitors from 72 schools, there were a lot of reasons for the Talkin' Broncos to think they might get aced out. Despite that, their win was not a gift, team members say. It was something they all worked and fought hard for.

A great deal of credit can be attributed to the team's coach, Marty Most. Since taking over the reins of the debate and speech team in 1988, Most, an assistant professor of communication, has led the Talkin' Broncos to 30 invitational tournament championships and more than 100 individual national awards.

"You can build a pretty good debate team in a few years, but the best teams,



Communication professor Marty Most (back row, third from left) guided the Talkin' Broncos to the national championship.

those that remain nationally competitive year after year, are built over time," Most says.

Finding students who are willing to buy into a culture of hard work and attention to detail can be difficult, he adds, especially when you add on a summer preparation program and ask them to give up weekends and holidays and juggle part-time jobs, family and school with forensics. "And they do it all with practically no scholarship support," he adds ("No debate both teams are great," *FOCUS*, Spring 2005).

This year's debaters are quick to point out that they owe much of their success to the mentoring they've received from previous team

members. Just when you figure out how to be successful, they say, it's time to move on. But passing on what you know helps those who come after.

"You realize by the time you're a senior that there is a formula [for success]," says team member Annah Merkley. "Boise State has always been lucky that we've had the help of alums who travel with us and help us."

Most team members say they want to do the same for those who come after them. As Henke says, "I'm really proud to be at Boise State, where we're not just a team but a tradition of success. I wanted to do whatever I could to uphold that."

— Kathleen Craven

'Idaho Review' article listed among top short stories

The *Idaho Review*, Boise State's literary journal, has had plenty of acclaimed authors grace its pages. But a short story by Joy Williams, author of *The Quick and the Dead*, was a standout. Williams' *Idaho Review* entry, "The Girls," was chosen for the *Best American Short Stories 2005*.

The *Best American Short Stories* is one of the oldest and most presti-

gious prize anthologies in the United States. The 2005 edition was edited by Michael Chabon, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*.

"This is one of the most sought-



after honors in literary publishing," says Mitch Wieland, founding editor of the journal and a creative writing professor at Boise State. "Considering *The Idaho Review* was competing with the most famous literary magazines in the country — like *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Esquire* — this level of recognition is really amazing."