

Detroit's University Prep High School debate team makes history

Michigan Chronicle reports

Two young women from University Prep High School's debate team have made history. Tamara Morrison and Tiera Colvin are the first-ever African American women's team to win the National Association of Urban Debate League's National Championship, placing first in a field of 39 teams from around the nation. The tournament was held at the City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University on April 14 to April 17.

The competition brought together the top urban debate teams in the country, including schools from Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Silicon Valley, Denver, Dallas, St. Louis, Houston, Kansas City, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Nashville, Atlanta, Baltimore, New York City and Boston as well as Detroit. Morrison and Colvin are also the first African American young women's team to receive an invitation to the association's Tournament of Champions hosted at the Uni-

versity of Kentucky at the end of April.

Representing the Detroit Urban Debate League, U Prep's Morrison and Colvin posted a 5-1 win/loss record in six preliminary debates before advancing to the elimination debates on Sunday, April 17 where they won all four elimination debates before besting Downtown Magnet HS from Los Angeles in the final debate. "At U Prep Schools our mission is to provide students with the courage to pursue a future full of opportunities, and what these two young ladies have achieved is not only courageous, but they have expanded their own horizons for the future," said Mark Ornstein, CEO of University Prep Schools and Detroit 90/90. Ornstein continued, "We are extremely proud of Tiera and Tamara and the incredible dedication of Sharon Hopkins, U Prep's debate coach. The success that we have had with the debate team is nothing short of a Disney movie, where the underdog works hard and accomplishes amazing feats."

U Prep, coached by Ms. Hopkins and U Prep alumni Rayvon Dean, won the national urban debate championship in 2014, marking this year as the second time in three years that a high school from Detroit has won this prestigious championship. The Tournament of Champions is the weekend of April 29 and the young women's final debate practice is Tuesday, April 26 at

U Prep High School. Both Morrison and Colvin have been offered scholarships to continue their debate careers in college.

Known as one of Detroit's longest-standing tuition-free and non-profit public charter school systems, University Prep Schools encompasses two districts and seven campuses serving K-12 students from all corners of the city and beyond. U Prep's campuses were built by the Thompson Educational Foundation whose initiatives are focused on creating educational opportunities for Detroit youth.

