

Evelyn Grandfield Bio

Evelyn is a senior at Nevada Union and has been passionate about policy debate since discovering the junior high debate program at Seven Hills many years ago. As a novice debater freshman year, she defined her future in policy debate by “breaking” to the elimination rounds at her very first tournament, and going on to win the Western Nationals later that year. By her junior year, she was teaching the debate class at NU while participating in every debate tournament possible, winning two tournaments that year and earning one “bid” to the Tournament of Champions (ToC).

The pinnacle of her high school debating career was making it to the ToC in 2021 with her partner, Jackson Witt. Evelyn was the first female debater from NU to attend this prestigious tournament, and she and Jackson went further in the ToC than any other team in the history of the NU debate program. This was an amazing accomplishment, especially since their coaches are volunteers who split their time among four public high schools, while all of their opponents enjoy full-time debate coaches at their private prep schools and academies.

Evelyn taught the policy debate class at NU again her senior year, in partnership with Jackson. About teaching, Evelyn said, “I absolutely love teaching younger debaters because I learned so much from the seniors in the program when I was a novice. More than anything else, I hope our achievements will inspire others to join the debate team, especially other women, because we are underrepresented at highly competitive levels.”

In May of 2021 Evelyn was named #1 Valedictorian and top of her class at NU, with a stellar academic record. The same month, she was named Captain of the NU Varsity Water Polo Team, which was the highlight of her water polo career after eight years playing the sport. While at NU, Evelyn also swam on the swim team, dove for the diving team, ran for the track team, and danced in performances for the NU dance program. She is passionate about social justice and volunteering for those in need, and recently completed Crisis Intervention Training for victims of domestic abuse by Nevada County’s non-profit organization Community Beyond Violence. During her time at NU she also was active on Site Council and in the Social Justice Club.

Evelyn was thrilled to be accepted to Wesleyan University, where she plans to study Government and Environmental Sciences. She says, “I originally got into debate because I was argumentative, but I had no idea what an impact it would have on me as a person. Defending infinitely different aspects of government policy and philosophical theories has iteratively shaped my political beliefs, and years of research has inspired me to become a lobbyist for indigenous environmental groups.”

Debate accomplishments

With Jackson Witt:

Tournament of Champions	2021	4-3
UNLV Golden Desert	2021	Semifinalist
Cal Invitational UC Berkeley	2021	Double Octofinalist
Gonzaga University Conway Classic	2021	Octofinalist
Alta Silver and Black Invitational	2020	Quarterfinalist
Sacramento NCFL Qualifier	2020	Winner

With other partners:

Lakeland Westchester Classic	2021	Octofinalist
Damien Memorial Invitational	2020	Winner
Cal Invitational UC Berkeley	2020	Triple Octofinalist
SCU Dempsey Cronin Invitational	2019	Winner
Cal Invitational UC Berkeley	2019	Double Octofinalist
Western Championship	2018	Winner
SCU Dempsey Cronin Invitational	2017	Quarterfinalist
Jack Howe Memorial	2017	Quarterfinalist

Jackson Witt Bio

Jackson is a junior at Nevada Union High School. He has been involved in policy debate since the 5th grade. He currently teaches the high school elective at Nevada Union with his partner Evelyn. He is also instructor and director for the middle school debate program. His goal is to keep the debate program strong in Nevada County. His debate accomplishments include two-time NCFL qualification for the national tournament, semifinalist at the UNLV tournament, quarter finalist at the Alta tournament, and bid qualifier for the prestigious, coveted Tournament of Champions. Through his qualification for the Tournament of Champions, he and his partner Evelyn have placed higher than any other Nevada Union team in the twenty-plus year history of the program. The team competes against the top private schools in the nation, many of which have fulltime coaches and speech writers. Nevada Union shares volunteer coaches who split their time between four public schools.

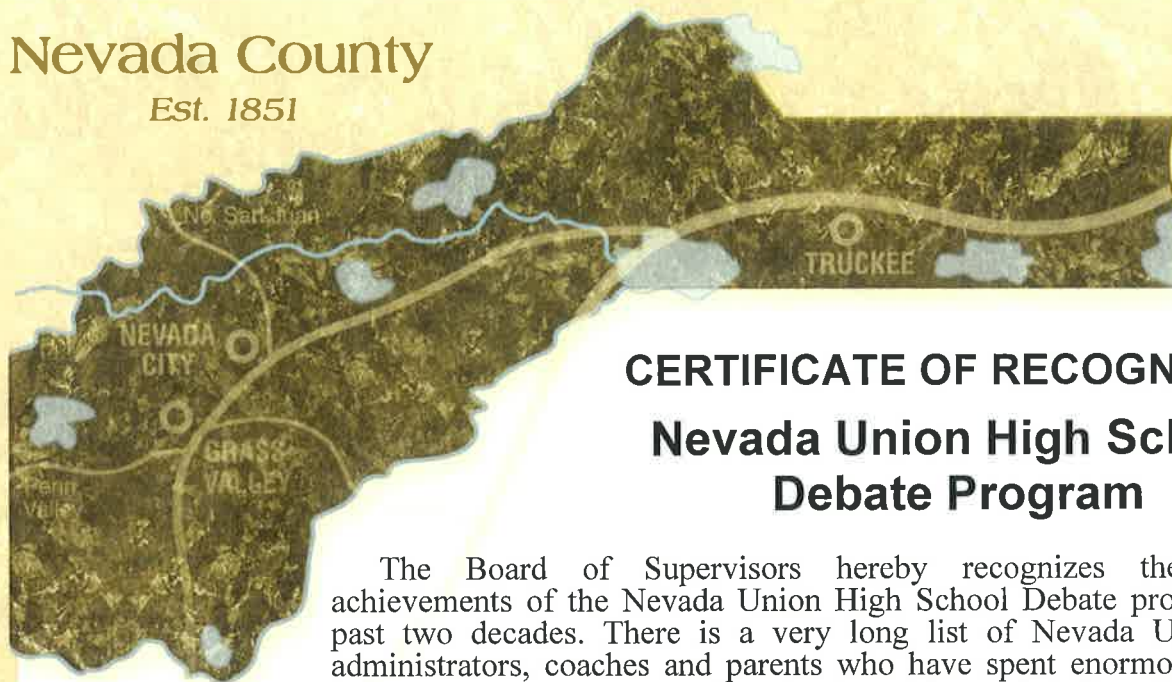
Jackson has a love of history and government. He founded the NU History Club at his school of which he is a two-term president. He holds a leadership position in the local Youth and Government chapter, where he is a vice-president, and advocated for a bill as a delegate at the state convention. Jackson enjoys competing in academic contests where he has placed two years in a row in the Nevada County Bar Association Law Day essay contest earning 2nd and 3rd place. He also placed 3rd place in the Rotary Speech Contest with the topic focused on community service.

Jackson is also a three-year Varsity letter earner on the Water Polo and Swim teams. He competed in the Junior Olympics Water Polo tournament with his club team Sac Polo, and this year joined the tennis team. Jackson has a passion for music, and plays four instruments including guitar, bass, saxophone, and piano. He has played with the Nevada County Concert Band; Nevada Union's symphonic, jazz, and combo bands; as well as a local youth rock band program. He served as NU Band Council's Vice President.

Jackson has given back to the community through volunteer work with Hospitality House and the Food Bank. For his final year of high school, he will serve as the student representative for Nevada County Indian Education Parent Council.

Nevada County

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CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

Nevada Union High School Debate Program

The Board of Supervisors hereby recognizes the outstanding achievements of the Nevada Union High School Debate program over the past two decades. There is a very long list of Nevada Union teachers, administrators, coaches and parents who have spent enormous amounts of time and energy to support these hard-working and dedicated student debate teams, but throughout the years there has been one individual at the center of those efforts, staff attorney for Legal Services of Northern California in Sacramento, Mr. Stephen Goldberg.

As a part-time employee of the Nevada Joint Union High School District, Mr. Goldberg is paid a stipend which he generously donates back to the debate program. He drives from Sacramento every Wednesday evening to teach and coach the school's debate teams who participate in over fifteen tournaments per year, which are held over weekends at major colleges in the western United States and even nationally. Mr. Goldberg also coaches two other high school debate programs in Sacramento, teaches a course at American River College, and plays the trombone in two jazz bands.

This coming school year will mark Mr. Goldberg's 20th year volunteering as Nevada Union High School's debate coach. During this year's tournament season, two of Mr. Goldberg's students qualified to compete in Policy Debate at the esteemed Tournament of Champions held annually at the University of Kentucky since 1971. The last Nevada Union High School team to qualify for this tournament was in 2004. Morgan Margulies, a senior with a 4.4 GPA, and Devin Anderson, a junior with a 4.2 GPA, are ranked as one of the top fifty Policy Debate teams in the country.

The Nevada County Board of Supervisors congratulates debate coach Stephen Goldberg and debate students Morgan Margulies and Devin Anderson for their dedication to academic excellence, personal commitment, and all of the hard work that helps to make the Nevada Union Debate program such a resounding success.

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May 22, 2018

'A good run': Nevada Union High School debate partners qualify to compete in Tournament of Champions

News

FOLLOW NEWS

| February 18, 2021

By Victoria Penate | Staff Writer



Nevada Union High School junior Jackson Witt, left, and senior Evelyn Grandfield are the fourth-ever team from their school to qualify for the Tournament of Champions, a prestigious national debate tournament held in April.
Submitted to The Union

Nevada Union High School debate partners Evelyn Grandfield and Jackson Witt, a senior and junior respectively, are the fourth-ever team from their school to qualify to compete in the Tournament of Champions.

Qualifying for this tournament requires securing two bids — each earned by completing multiple preliminary rounds and succeeding in elimination rounds — in qualifying tournaments.

Grandfield and Witt earned their second bid earlier this month at a tournament hosted virtually by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, an achievement Witt said he was “super excited” about.

As he looks toward his senior year, Witt said recruitment is a key issue for Nevada Union’s debate program, explaining, “Early recruitment, and debating from a freshman to a senior, is something that can really help your chances of succeeding.”

Witt said he is thankful for the program’s coaches, Stephen Goldberg and Dan Stanfield, as well as the parents who support the program, who he said “have helped us get to where we are.”

“It’s been amazing to do this as a senior,” said Grandfield, explaining that she is able to take a leadership role and be an example to students in the school’s debate elective class, which she teaches alongside Witt.

Grandfield said the preparation she and Witt have done for competition has involved reading many books and articles — in this case, on criminal justice reform, which was chosen as this year’s topic nationwide for high school policy debaters.

“To be able to talk about criminal justice reform policies has been a very formative experience, and teaches you so much about the biggest issues going on the world,” said Grandfield.

Goldberg, who has coached Nevada Union Debate for over 20 years, described the Tournament of Champions, held each April, as “the most prestigious and most difficult to qualify for championship that we have.”

According to Goldberg, the program is on “a good run,” as three out of the four times a Nevada Union team has qualified for this tournament have been within the last few years — in 2018, 2019, and now 2021.

“There aren’t very many rural schools that have nationally competitive debate programs, and that’s one of the things that makes Nevada Union’s program both special and unique,” he said.

Jamie Hogenson, Witt’s mother and the vice president of the program’s booster club, said qualifying for this tournament is the culmination of years of preparation for the students — both of whom began debate in middle school.

Ryan Witt, Jackson Witt’s father, described each tournament the students participate in as a time-intensive undertaking. “It’s quite a feat in any tournament to achieve one (bid), so they were definitely very excited when they got their second,” he said.

Claire McAdams, Grandfield’s mother and the president of the booster club, said, “We really appreciate the community support, and would love to see the Tournament of Champions be a way for people to get fired up on helping the club for future teams.”

District Superintendent Brett McFadden called supporting the Nevada Union debate program, currently the only one in the district, a “high priority,” saying the skills students are able to hone through debate are “an enormous benefit to analytical skill development.”

“You have to do a ton of research, and think out and process your argument, so they’re skills that can benefit almost any profession or vocation,” said McFadden.

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THE UNION

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