

*A HISTORY OF*  
**UNITED STATES**  
*ACADEMIC DECATHLON*



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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON**

The United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization devoted to enhancing the quality of education. Through the efforts of its board and membership, USAD provides students of all learning levels the opportunity to excel academically through team competition. Although USAD works to achieve this in several ways, to students, teachers, and family members across the country, the USAD is primarily thought of as a competition. From local “heats,” to regional, then state, and finally an annual national competition, USAD recognizes outstanding achievement on the part of individuals and schools in ten different academic fields of endeavor: mathematics, language and literature, art, music, economics, speech, interview, essay, Super Quiz, and social science or science alternating depending upon the Super Quiz topic.

A description of the organization, its current members, and current, past, and upcoming competition dates and venues are all available on the USAD website, [www.usad.org](http://www.usad.org). To understand more about the germ of an idea that grew into this competition, it is necessary to travel back more than 60 years to a German prison camp inhabited by members of the United States Army Air Corps.

## DREAM FOR THE FUTURE

During World War II, a young B-17 pilot was shot down over Italy and imprisoned in *Stalag Luft 1* in Barth, Germany. During his seventeen months of imprisonment, he had plenty of time to reflect on several topics. One of them was education. Over time, he was able to secure paper and pencils, and he began a journal. On one page of this journal he wrote: “. . .they ought to have more school rallies and a *decathlon of studies*.”

More than twenty years later, the green USAAF lieutenant had become an elementary school principal in Santa Ana, California. Finally, he was able to translate that concept born so long ago – a competition that would encourage a passion for learning and help motivate youth towards intellectual and academic achievement. As he reflected later, Dr. Robert Peterson had “come up with an idea that can help more students reach their educational potential and become better rounded students.”

Dr. Peterson’s idea called for students to demonstrate knowledge and educational skills in ten different academic areas. And, unlike other competitions, the teams of students competing would not be composed of only “the best and the brightest.” His idea was to form teams comprised of six members: two ‘A’ (Honor), two ‘B’(Scholastic), and two ‘C’(Varsity) students. They would compete against students at their own level, but all students would answer the same questions.



Dr. Robert Peterson, USAAF Lieutenant, served as a B-17 pilot during World War II. The seeds for Academic Decathlon were planted when he was imprisoned during the war.

**Dr. Peterson reasoned, “The average students would benefit the most. They know if they can stay out of trouble and just get ‘C’s they will graduate. They do not work to their fullest potential. The ‘A’ students can benefit by having to study in all areas and not just concentrate on the subjects they know and like best. They usually need rounding out and will benefit from helping mentor the rest of the team. Their social skills will increase.”**

**When Dr. Peterson became a candidate for the office of Orange County Superintendent of Schools, he promised that, if elected, he would start an Academic Decathlon program. He envisioned a governing board comprised of business leaders. After all, they would ultimately benefit the most from having more well-rounded students apply for work.**

**Initially, the idea was that competition tests would be developed by the local Department of Education and would include traditional academic subjects as well as a written essay, an interview, and prepared and impromptu speeches. Each team would have a coach. The coaches would be local educators, and the competitors would be drawn from juniors and seniors enrolled in Orange County schools. In one of his campaign speeches Dr. Peterson stated: “Our students *can* work hard and *do* have spunk and stamina when properly motivated. I believe it is time we re-instill in our young people a sense of competition in learning, which not only helps to achieve greatness, but maturity and self-fulfillment.” Dr. Peterson was elected in 1966, and in 1967, a Decathlon trial run was held.**

## ORANGE COUNTY ACADEMIC DECATHLON

The first Orange County Academic Decathlon (OCAD) was held in November 1968 at Bolsa Grande High School, in Garden Grove, California. One hundred and three high school students from twenty-two public and private schools participated, and the winning team was Foothill High School. Members of the first Board of Directors included representatives from telephone, gas, and electric companies, an airline, a law firm, a CPA firm, an insurance company, and Disneyland. Each firm agreed to donate \$5,000. The Orange County Department of Education figured out the logistics: finding competition locations, developing the tests, and recruiting judges and volunteers. A local caterer, a mother whose child went to school in the district, provided lunch.

In a 1968 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, student Gary Biddle of Orange High School called the decathlon “an excellent idea that gave the students a chance to compare their performance with those from other schools.” John Grant of Lowell High School added, “It’s more exciting and stimulating and at a better level than regular schools’ tests or college board exams.” An editorial from Bolsa Grande High School’s newspaper *El Diestro* stated: “Before the Decathlon, the smartest students won scholarships and the most athletic students won fame; the average student was left out. In looking for the ‘best,’ it is easy to forget that the average student forms the basis of modern society. Before the average student couldn’t hope to enter competition and win. Now he has a chance. It’s time to reward the normal, everyday, well-rounded members of our communities.”

In 1969, the second Orange County competition grew to 175 students from 29 schools. The winning team represented Anaheim High School. In 1970, individual winners of the third Annual Academic Decathlon were awarded with a trip to Sacramento to meet Governor Ronald Reagan. The students spent a half hour with the governor discussing ecology, higher education, the future of the economy, and the possibility of obtaining the vote for eighteen-year-olds.

## CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC DECATHLON – THE FIRST STEPS

In 1978, Dr. Peterson met with Dr. William Johnston, Superintendent of Los Angeles Unified School District, Harry Handler, Deputy, and Dr. Paul Possemato, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Instruction. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage LAUSD to field a team to compete in the first annual State of California academic competition. Dr. Peterson indicated that the Academic Decathlon was an Orange County success but Orange County, at the time, was predominately suburban, Anglo, and middle class. He wanted to prove its value in an urban setting. Los Angeles was the place for such a success. Dr. Johnston gave the job of fielding the school team to Dr. Possemato, stating that the best school to represent the district would be one that could provide a multi-ethnic team.



*Dr. and Mrs. Peterson traveled by plane to meet with Governor Ronald Reagan in Sacramento.*

Dr. Possemato met with University High School principal Paul Godfrey, who enthusiastically agreed to support the program. The two coaches were George Bonorris and Barbara Golding. Dr. Possemato collected all of the magazines, books and other research materials that the team needed. University High School competed in April 1979 at Chapman College in what was now called the California Academic Decathlon (CAD). Schools from 23 counties participated in the competition, and

the following year participation increased to 43 counties.

In 1981, Dr. Possemato, with the help of his assistant Tak Nakahara, administrative assistant Joan Evans and Jane Pollock, increased the LAUSD teams to thirty one high schools. In 1981-82 LAUSD held its first internal competition. The banquet was funded by Coca Cola, an early sponsor which was secured through contact with the Olympic Organizing Committee. The committee doled out surplus profits to worthy causes. Although the banquet had already been taken care of financially, parents and students were charged a reasonable fee so that \$60,000 could be collected for future competitions. Because of Dr. Possemato's role as High School Division

**Superintendent, California Academic Decathlon competition grew to fifty participating LAUSD high schools. The LAUSD Founders Trophy was presented to the first place team in honor of Dr. Robert Peterson. As the LAUSD involvement grew, Dr. Bill Johnston and Mr. Phil Bardos, Board Member for LAUSD, took a more direct role. The inclusion of LAUSD proved that the competition could work in urban schools. A new idea had begun to grow to make this competition a national event.**

## **REGIONAL EXPANSION**

**In 1980, Dr. Peterson phoned State Superintendents and high school principals throughout the western United States. He explained the competition's concept and provided suggestions as to how states, school districts, and individual schools could begin a program. He asked each Superintendent to give him the name of the principal of a school that might be interested. His plan called for each principal to select a teacher to serve as coach. Out-of-state educators were invited to observe the California competitions held from 1979 to 1981. Texas was one of the first states to visit a competition. They quickly raised funds, set up a Board of Directors, and won their first national championship. Arizona came on board next.**

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE USAD

In part, the evolution of the USAD into a national competition was inspired by the fact that the city of Los Angeles was hosting the Olympic Games in 1984. The ten events of the USAD provided a perfect parallel to the athletic decathlon – a focus of each Olympiad. The USAD board contacted Peter Ueberroth and the Olympic Organizing Committee and asked them to recognize the USAD as an adjunct to the Olympics, but the USOC did not accept this relationship.

Refusing to be discouraged, in 1981 Dr. Robert Peterson, Mr. Phil Bardos, and Mr. William Patton, Jr. brought together a group of business and educational leaders to form the first Board of Directors of the United States Academic Decathlon. USAD was recognized as the “premier scholastic competition in America.” The Board of Directors acted as a “hands on” Board with members accepting responsibility for handling the various functions associated with the organization. Mr. Phil Bardos was elected CEO, Mr. William Patton, Jr. was elected President, and Dr. Robert Peterson was named “Founder”. By-laws were developed and papers of incorporation were filed. Dr. Alfonso B. Perez was asked to accept the responsibilities of Executive Director. USAD was established as a formal, legal, tax-exempt national organization.

In the first years that the USAD national competition took place, Dr. Perez coordinated the board’s key administrative responsibilities. He was responsible for scheduling all business conducted by the Board, and acted as Secretary/Treasurer and chief team recruiter. Dr. Peterson and his staff, Nate Lamm, Susie Liberman, and Ann Joynt, developed study guides and other competition materials. Susie Liberman and her staff in Orange County ran the national competition, providing tests and equipment and training volunteers. Dr. Alex Aloia was responsible for coordinating competition site facilities at Loyola Marymount University, where he was Dean in the School of Education. Kristin Caperton was instrumental in fund raising. Dr. Perez was able to get



*Dr. Alfonso Perez, was a member of the First Board of Directors and served as Executive Director from 1984-1987. He currently serves on the USAD Board of Directors.*

**free bus transportation from the LAUSD Department of Transportation for the students to travel to the various sites involved in the competition and other decathlon activities. Suzanne Eisler Roberts coordinated all activities outside the competition including the logistics in getting the students to Disneyland and the activities at the Jonathan Club. She planned the ice cream socials and even ironed the flags!**

## THE FIRST NATIONAL COMPETITION

The first United States Academic Decathlon national competition was held in 1982. Students from 18 states participated. The winning team was Palo Alto High School in Palo Alto, California. James Garcia, a student from Reno, Nevada was recognized as the first “C” student to record a perfect score of 1,000. His essay, entitled “A Casual Madness,” analyzed Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* and was published in the *L.A. Times*.

In a survey conducted of students in 1982, a Scholastic student wrote, “Personally, participation gave me a sense of achievement and stimulated my buried sense of competition. Academically, it served as a reminder that I could achieve whatever I wanted in high school.” Student Ben Zion Argov of Palm Springs reflected in April of 1983: “I won an award in the decathlon, but the greatest prize I received was the tremendous amount of knowledge and skill in oratorical and written self-expression, and in the numerous areas of study in which decathlon members competed. Looking back, my only regret is that I didn’t participate in the decathlon the year before as well. May no one forego the opportunity to compete in the same.” Dr. Peterson’s vision was coming true.



Attending the National Competition Banquet in 1984 are from left to right: William B. Patton, Jr., USAD President; Phillip G. Bardos, Chairman of the Board and Founder, USAD; Joe LaBonte, President, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox; Suzanne Eisler Roberts, Student Activities President; Dr. Alfonso Perez, Executive Director; and Dr. Robert Peterson, Founder, USAD.

For the first five years of national competition, students were greeted at LAX and transported by school buses to the competition hotel. Upon the students’ arrival, they attended the ice cream social, where they exchanged state mementos. The competition took place at Loyola Marymount College. In addition to the quizzes in the academic subjects and the essays, interviews, and speeches, USAD’s unique Super Quiz provided a

new dimension in academic competition. The Super Quiz format provided the audience with a chance to view the contestants at work. It was the culminating and most

exciting event in the competition. The audience encouraged the students by cheering and had the opportunity to watch students who truly enjoyed learning. The emcee mentioned the word “coaches,” and the students, without prompting, rose to their feet cheering for their coaches.

Afterwards, the students were transported to the Friday night party at the Jonathan Club where they played volleyball, swam in the ocean, and ate hamburgers. It was the first time some of the students had seen the ocean and surfed on waves. They were elated by this experience! On Saturday, LAUSD buses took the decathletes to Disneyland for a special tour arranged by Dr. Peterson. The first Awards Banquet took place on April 16, 1982 at the Biltmore Hotel, in Los Angeles, California. With the glitziest presentation ever, Mr. Joseph LaBonte, the President of Twentieth Century-Fox, presided with lights panning the crowd. Celebrities from Twentieth Century-Fox, including Sally Struthers and Jamie Farr, presented medals to the winners.

Another Dr. Peterson brainstorm was the creation of a unique experience involving business executives who were solicited to sponsor tables at the Awards Luncheon for \$1,000. As an incentive for participating, corporations were invited to send one of their executives to join one of the winning state teams to “dialogue” with these Academic Decathletes. They discussed how teams prepared for the competition and the positive rewards and learning experiences they received as academic decathletes. In turn, the corporate executive could share with them what corporations look for in recruiting applicants for jobs in the professional and business world. After about an hour, the team and executive would adjourn and proceed to their table at the Awards Dinner and, together, experience the exciting and emotional process of recognizing the individual medal winners and the team trophy winners. The result was a direct and involved participation by corporate sponsors who were positively impressed with the students and the Decathlon concept. The “Dialogues” were used as a unique and positive approach for funding the USAD National Competition’s Awards Luncheons in Los Angeles during the first four years of this event. USAD was able to raise about \$40,000 and continued corporate support through the first five years in Los Angeles.

USAD Board Members, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation (one time only), and the staffs of Orange County Schools and the Los Angeles Unified School District assisted with awards luncheons and recognition of individual and team

**winners. Dr. Robert Dockson, CEO California Federal S&L, and Kristin Caperton coordinated funding. In-kind support services from Dr. Peterson and Orange County Schools, the Los Angeles Unified School District, Loyola/Marymount University, Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation, Meserve, Mumper & Hughes Legal Firm, Walt Disney Productions, and Xerox Corporation, Blue Shield and ARCO, Patton's health firm, all contributed funding to defray expenses incurred associated with the USAD competition. Free tickets to Disneyland were donated for five years, and LAUSD school buses provided transportation to the park.**

## THE KRISTIN CAPERTON AWARD

The Kristin Caperton Award was established to honor an individual who had motivated others with her determination and hard work in spite of physical adversity. In her short life, Kristin initiated an abuse center, a Junior League Professional group, and chaired USAD's first two award luncheons. When Kristin Caperton was hospitalized in 1983, she continued to work to help fund the United States Academic Decathlon from her bedside. After Kristin's untimely death, Suzanne Roberts suggested that a memorial award be given in Kristin's name. Awardees prior to 1997 included teams or individuals who participated at the national competition who had overcome personal and physical challenges and were inspirations to others. Since 1997, all Decathlon participants nationwide are eligible for this award and, as of 2003, awardees received a \$1500 scholarship award. As of 2007, there were two Caperton Awards, one to a USAD team participant who is honored at the USAD Banquet, and the second is presented on the school site of a Decathlete whose team did not participate in the national finals. Currently, all Decathletes are eligible to receive the Caperton Award(s). Please see list of all awardees in appendix.



*Brian Landrum, from Indiana, is presented the Kristin Caperton Award by Suzanne Roberts at the 1994 National Banquet. He is accompanied by his parents Karen and Mike Landrum.*

## **EXPLORING EXPANSION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

**Dr. Peterson's dream of taking this unique concept of academic decathlon to an international level was realized by expanding USAD internationally. In 1983, teams from Canada, Korea, and Mexico participated at a separate event involving different tests and curricular materials. It was held in conjunction with the USAD competition held in Los Angeles in 1983. A second "World Competition" was held in conjunction with the USAD competition in Los Angeles 1984. This time, three teams from Canada, two from Mexico, and one team each from Korea and New Zealand competed. As a result of these positive experiences, Dr. Peterson was able to generate interest to form a separate organization with the title of International Decathlon for Academics (IDA). However, USAD chose not be involved officially because USAD itself still had a long development process ahead (see history of IDA in appendix).**

## THE NATIONAL COMPETITION MATURES

By 1984, schools representing thirty states participated in the finals in Los Angeles, battling against each other in an intense one-day competition. J.J. Pearce High School of Richardson, Texas took top honors for the first of three consecutive years. *World Book Encyclopedia* publisher Dr. William Nault, who had requested a seat on the USAD Board, donated \$10,000 and committed his company to produce the USAD Study Guide. World Book directed a strong public relations campaign during the 1984 finals. As a result, the competition was covered by ABC Morning News, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *L.A. Times* and many other publications. President Reagan, who as California governor provided so much support to the OCAD, sent a telegram of congratulations to competitors, and invited the winning team to the White House.

Corporate sponsorship grew as Lennox Industries, represented by John Norris, Jr. pledged a grant of \$50,000 a year for six years, and American Honda Foundation committed to an annual donation of \$40,000 for five years to provide scholarships given to Decathlon winners. The Northrop Corporation, represented by Rogg Collins, later USAD President, presented \$30,000 in scholarships to the overall gold, silver, and bronze medalists in the National Finals. The corporation, later known as Northrop Grumman, granted \$5,000 to the Individual Gold Medalists, \$3,000 to the Individual Silver Medalists, and \$2,000 to the Individual Bronze medalists in the Honors, Scholastic and Varsity levels. As the complexity and variety of board tasks and responsibilities increased, the board named Dr. Perez to be the first paid Executive Director.

In 1986, 60,000 students representing 2,000 schools in 40 states took part in early rounds of the competition. At the Awards Banquet, via videotape, the Honorable Thomas Bradley, Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, presented an Award of Academic Excellence to Mr. Paul Ziffren who had inspired personal integrity during the Olympic



*The Academic Decathlon Medal--  
A Medal of Honor!!*

**Games. His encouragement of the Youth Commission provided an impetus for the first USAD competition in 1982. Additionally, six students at Nationals received Most Valuable Participants Awards, and they traveled for a week to Washington, D.C. Highlights included viewing the originals from the Art competition at the National Gallery, attending a reception with members of the House of Representatives, touring Mount Vernon, and meeting with Secretary of Education William Bennett. Winners nominated by their coaches were Eric Colby, Arizona; Bela Patel, Scarborough, Maine; Sandre Garrard, Moscow, Idaho; Mark Walker, Shreveport, Louisiana; Joe Staus, Mankato, Minnesota; and Jeannine Dolan, Rochester, New York. Chaperone Suzanne Eisler Roberts remembers a poignant experience when Eric played a Rachmaninoff's concerto from an original score at the National Archives.**

**At the 1986-87 national competition, David Florey, a C- student on the national championship team from John Marshall High School, an inner city school in Los Angeles, won the individual overall championship. This was the first time a varsity student had ever captured that top spot! When the 1987 national champions returned from competition in Irving, Texas, they were greeted by 200 screaming classmates, cheerleaders and parents. There were television cameras from every network in Los Angeles, and a full color picture of the team was carried on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*. The team met with President Reagan in his office in Century City, and Mayor Tom Bradley dropped in by helicopter to present greetings and resolutions. That same afternoon, the team was picked up by limousine and taken to the NBC studio to be interviewed for the *Tonight Show*. The Marshall Team and David Florey were a topic on NBC *Nightly News* with Tom Brokaw the Monday after winning in Dallas. NBC described the pep rally and included several interviews, including the one with David. David's story continues to provide motivation for decathletes.**

## USAD INTERNAL CHANGES

The Board of Directors is the governing body of USAD, with the organization's officers and directors being responsible for its operations. In USAD's early years, it was the "hands-on" Board of Directors together with part-time Executive Director Al Perez who managed the USAD program and national competition. The Board of Directors created a Board of Trustees to advise the Board of Directors and to assist with fund-raising. Although initially the Board of Trustees raised the majority of the funds necessary for the operation of the organization, its impact on USAD declined as other funding sources were found and the Board of Trustees was subsequently disbanded.



*USAD Board of Directors at the National Competition in San Antonio, Texas in 2000.*

Within a few years of its formation, USAD's only major supporter, World Book Encyclopedia, assumed a leading role in the operations of the organization, and Bob Paltiel (World Book's marketing director) served as the President of USAD from 1986 to 1987. During this period of time, World Book and Mr. Paltiel made substantial contributions to USAD and its program. With Dr. Perez, as Executive Director, being responsible for all USAD administrative matters, World Book took over the development of the Study Guide, testing and public relations. World Book's "adoption" of USAD was, in large part, the result of Mr. Paltiel's personal interest in USAD. The involvement of World Book in the operations of USAD, as well as World Book's perceived connection with USAD, were evidenced by the fact that USAD letterhead and all materials emanating from USAD included the words "Testing in Association with World Book".

The degree of influence of World Book upon USAD and the program was of some concern to certain members of the Board. In part as an attempt to return to the Board more control over the operations of USAD, Jack Peterson was elected as

President of USAD in July 1987. Since it was suspected that this change might result in reduced support from World Book, a major concern of the Board and its new President became whether the organization could survive without that support.

In his dual roles as World Book marketing director and USAD President, Mr. Paltiel had been using World Book personnel and resources to provide many of the functions required to run the competition. World Book had been providing virtually all of the funding for the organization, and had been responsible for reviewing and editing the Study Guide and all tests, printing and distributing the Study Guide, and conducting public relations. At that time, USAD had no significant funding other than from World Book, neither offices nor office equipment, and no staff other than its dedicated part-time volunteer Executive Director Al Perez. It was clear that, if USAD lost World Book's support, the Board and the officers would be required to take an even greater role in the day-to-day operations of the organization, and that additional financial support would be immediately required.

Accepting the fact that World Book's support could not be relied upon in the long-term, the Board addressed the organization's need to prepare for its assumption of all responsibility for competition funding and operations as soon as possible. The major issues facing the USAD leadership became: hiring a full-time executive director and staff, finding corporate offices and acquiring necessary office equipment, and securing funding to supplant that previously provided by World Book. Additionally, in furtherance of its continuing goal of holding the national competition at sites outside of California, the Board needed to secure competition sites for 1989 and beyond, all while ensuring that the competition continued to grow in terms of participation and national exposure.

In 1988, Dr. Perez resigned as executive director and his years of service were recognized at the national competition in San Antonio, Texas, with a presentation to him by former USAD CEO Robert Broaddus of a beautiful Seiko desk clock. USAD employed Ann Joynt as its first full-time executive director. Ann immediately took steps to make USAD an independent and effective organization. Under the direction of USAD's officers, Ann obtained in-kind contributions of office space and office furnishings, acquired necessary office equipment and supplies, hired additional staff, initiated the USAD product line, developed curricular outlines, coordinated the preparation of the Study Guide and tests (first with World Book and then on her

own, once World Book terminated its relationship with USAD), established relationships with and support services for State Directors, standardized the competition scoring process and USAD procedures, monitored and assisted with the national competition, and solicited grants to fund USAD operations, which resulted in new corporate sponsors. For the first few years of her tenure as Executive Director, Ann effectively “was” USAD. As a result of her efforts and those of USAD’s officers and directors, within a very short time USAD was operating relatively smoothly and independently of World Book.

## THE NATIONAL COMPETITION “GOES NATIONAL”

By 1986, the national competition had been held in Los Angeles for five straight years. When plans for the sixth competition ran into difficulties, board member Winston Power of Texas rescued the competition by offering to host the 1987 and 1988 competitions in Texas. He pointed out that these difficulties could be turned into a strength for the competition, since USAD would not be a true national program so long as the national competition continued to be held in California. Consequently, the Board policy was changed to actively solicit other locations.

Early national competition required the state conducting the competition to raise substantial funds and to coordinate and recruit volunteers. It was also at the competition in 1987 that the state directors realized that they needed to organize themselves so that they would be able to provide more input into the decision-making process for Academic Decathlon.

As expected, in December 1988, World Book informed USAD that it was terminating its relationship with USAD. The Board extended its gratitude to World Book for its significant commitment of time and funds that it had made to USAD over the past years and presented World Book with a token of its appreciation at the national competition in Rhode Island. USAD was now on its own, and USAD had substantial new financial obligations, most importantly the salary for Ann Joynt, the creation of an operational office, and taking over the work that had been done by World Book. The Board set about to fund-raise in earnest. Among their efforts was to seek support from McGraw Hill and later to hire individuals to work with both public relations and fundraising. Both efforts were fruitless. In 1989 Frann Shermet joined the organization as Executive Coordinator. Through continued efforts through that two year period, the organization moved from one without any offices, staff, or significant assets, and became an independent functioning organization.

Meanwhile, the national growth of the competition was reflected by the selection of Providence, RI and Des Moines, IA as sites for the national finals in 1989 and 1990. The 1989 finals were also the first to provide live television of the Super Quiz competition.

## USAD STATE DIRECTORS ORGANIZE

As the competition began to grow, USAD state directors recognized the importance of organizing themselves and working together as an integral part of the national organization. The organization they formed, which became the National Council of Academic Decathlon State Executive Directors (NCADSED) in 1989, first met in San Antonio, TX in 1988. Their first President, David Steadman of Idaho, introduced President-elect Anita Lohr, Secretary/Treasurer Gladys Foris, members of the USAD Board of Directors, USAD Executive Director Al Perez, and incoming USAD Executive Director Ann Joynt. Ms. Joynt reported on new national objectives and commitments of the USAD Board including: offering national support for gathering financial and in-kind resources, providing assistance in recruiting corporate support for each state, giving one study guide for the coach of each school team as indicated by the State Director, preparing a data base of high school names and addresses so that newsletters could be sent to coaches, and making changes in USAD test distribution. Tests would no longer be used as study materials; the scope and content of each test area would be reduced, and practice test manuals would be prepared and sent to everyone after November. USAD would also prepare an outline indicating the

percentage of questions which would be written to cover each area of the study guide. State Directors were also asked to consider the concept of a nine-member team and make a recommendation to the Board. State Director Carla Brooks of Utah gave a report of a meeting held by the State Directors' Board with USAD members and representatives of the San Antonio host committee in September 1987. President Steadman had suggested that such a meeting with the site committee be held each year.

President-elect Anita Lohr presented proposed Bylaws for the National Council of Academic Decathlon State Executive Directors. These Bylaws were discussed and approved with some corrections. The purpose of the "Council" was



*Ms. Anita Lohr, who was the State Director from Arizona, served as President of the National Council of Academic Decathlon State Executive Directors. She currently serves on the USAD Board of Directors.*

to support and strengthen Academic Decathlon programs throughout the United States, to assist USAD in improving coordination of the Academic Decathlon program, and to receive gifts and contributions or real and personal property to further the Academic Decathlon program. Membership of the council included several classes: active (only one Director would be allowed active membership per state), associate (individuals wishing to support the program through their membership and assistance to the state directors), organization affiliate (commercial or professional service firms), and honorary (past presidents and current USAD Board members). Only active members would have the right to vote, and there would be only one vote per state.

The governing body of the State Council was called the Board of Directors, and their responsibilities included carrying out the program and policies voted by the membership in its annual meeting and exercising reasonable current policy making authority. The Board of Directors of the Council would consist of officers and two Regional Representatives from each of the four Council regions: Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific. The representatives had to be active members. Officers included president, vice-president/president-elect, secretary/treasurer and immediate past president, each of whom would serve for a term of two years. The Executive Committee was composed of the Officers of the Council, and they would have the authority of the Board of Directors to act in any emergency situation. The entire Council would hold an annual membership meeting in conjunction with the USAD competition activities, the Board of Directors would meet at least once a year, and the Executive Committee would meet at the call of the President. Standing committees were appointed annually by the President, and the Council operated at all times on a nonprofit basis.

A meeting of USAD Board Members and State Directors was held after the Super Quiz competition in Providence in 1989, and the State Directors appreciated the efforts of the Board to listen to and help them. Yet, there were still concerns, primarily in the area of ensuring that Academic Decathlon would truly grow to be a “national” competition. Jack Peterson wrote a letter to the Board as he left the Presidency expressing those concerns. He stated: “We still have a severe problem in expanding the program to additional states and in those states presently participating.” The ongoing effort to ensure the broadest and deepest participation of schools in each of the fifty states continues to be a prime focus of the efforts of USAD and the state directors organization, now called USAD-SD.

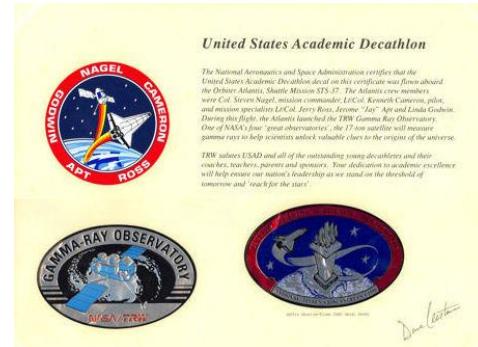
## A PERIOD OF RAPID GROWTH

The Speech Showcase began at the Los Angeles national competition in 1991. The showcase was developed to highlight winning speeches and to provide an additional opportunity to recognize student achievement. It also allowed for more interaction in the community as local celebrities often were invited to act as judges. It was very well received when it began and continues to be a successful and popular part of subsequent competitions.

Through the efforts of both the National Board and the State Directors, through NCADSED, the competition grew rapidly. By 1991, 41 states took part, and Canada also participated with three teams. Three teams, including the gold medalists from J.J. Pearce High School in Richardson, Texas, D.C.'s Benjamin Banneker High School, and Alexandria, Virginia's Thomas Jefferson High School of Science and Technology were invited to the Rose Garden of the White House where they were honored by President George Herbert Walker Bush (see appendix).

The United States Academic Decathlon decal was flown aboard the Orbiter Atlantis in 1991 and was given to each coach to celebrate the Super Quiz theme: Space Exploration. The decal was also flown on board the U.S. Space Shuttle Mission Orbiter Discovery, STS-39, April 28-May 6, 1991.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush invited nine winning teams, including regional champions, the first, second and third place champions, and the Small Schools Winner to the Rose Garden. The President praised the Decathletes for their achievements, the coaches for their dedication, and the sponsors for creating the partnership between education and the private sector. He also singled out the scholarship winners for their accomplishments including the Kristin Caperton awardee. He concluded the historic occasion by sending a letter congratulating USAD's unique concept. The President referred to Academic Decathletes as new heroes on our high school campuses (see appendix).



Pictured is the USAD NASA Space Decal which was flown aboard a shuttle mission in 1991.

**In 1993, President Bill Clinton welcomed the gold medalists from Plano East High School of Plano, Texas; the silver medalists from Taft High of Los Angeles; and the bronze medal winners of Mountain View High School of Mesa, Arizona. He especially honored Sonny Chu whose father suffered a severe stroke just days before the national competition. Sonny still won the highest overall score in the nation!**

## **MEETING A TESTING CHALLENGE**

**Unfortunately, USAD experienced a difficult situation in 1995. This unfortunate situation provided USAD the opportunity to demonstrate its ability to monitor and ultimately validate test scores. A primary concern was the integrity of the competition and the testing procedure within each State event and that a process was in place to challenge abnormal circumstances. The effective handling and remediation of these unusual results demonstrated the strength and ability of the State and National organizations. It was now clear that USAD had matured as a credible national competition with appropriate vehicles in place to protect the integrity of the competitors and the competition.**

## RESOLVING ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

In the early 1990's, USAD established a curriculum committee to develop a three-year theme for the curriculum and Super Quiz. The idea was that there would be a general connection among the three themes in each cycle, and the themes would be made public in sets of three. There were two three-year cycles. The first cycle was done for years 1997-98, 1998-99, and 1999-2000, and the themes were "Looking Outward", "Looking Inward," and "Looking Forward: Creating the Future." The overarching theme that sought to link together the years 2000-01, 2001-02, and 2002-03 was "Understanding Ourselves and the World." USAD's decision to stop the three-year cycle approach was based on feedback from coaches (via the Ad Hoc Committee on Improving USAD). Some coaches felt that the connection between each of the themes within the three-year cycle was nebulous and vague and was useless from a pedagogical standpoint. Some coaches also voiced concerns that the themes themselves were too vague, abstract, and conceptual and urged USAD to move toward more topical/concrete themes. The Field Advisory Committee, created in 2001, recommended that USAD's curriculum continue to be developed around a central theme. However, the committee also recommended that the themes should be more topical than conceptual and stated that three-year program cycles with an overarching theme were not necessary.



*Pictured are Jack S. Peterson and Franklin Reinhauer, USAD Board Members in 1999. Mr. Peterson wrote the first By-Laws for USAD and served as President of USAD 1987-89.*

The USAD began the process of an important transformation during the period from 1996-2000. One might characterize it as an effort to incorporate some amount of structure and principles-based decision making regarding the following policy issues: the interface between the national and state organizations, national identity and program growth, equity and accountability involving the

performance of USAD staff, and quality control of tests and related products as well as

revenue.

During this time, there was considerable friction between the USAD Board and the state directors. The primary concern centered around the perception on the part of state organizations that national policy worked against their efforts to keep the competitions timely and cost effective. One example was in the area of security. After the security breach in the Chicago competition, the National Board considered that test security was the matter of highest priority. The state organizations sympathized with the concerns of the board, but they were concerned that additional security would make it more difficult to distribute the test materials in a timely and economically sensible manner. The debate over whether or not test materials should be available in electronic form and whether or not practice tests and “official” tests should be viewed similarly was a continuing issue.

A second area of disagreement between the national board and the state directors concerned equity in the national competitions, specifically the dominance of schools from California, Texas, and Illinois. The USAD Board adopted various strategies that were designed to level the playing field in a manner intended to benefit each participant while leaving none worse off. It was the point of view of the national board that the major cause of the imbalance was the unequal availability of resources among competing states. Some members of the board believed that in some states, coaches played a disproportionate role in assisting in student research. The USAD Board believed that the continuing dominance of a few states impeded the ability to grow the program nationally. The state directors recognized the logic in those arguments, but they were concerned that efforts in “leveling the playing field” should not come at the expense of the pure research model of the competition. There were many vocal participants whose programs benefited from the pure research model of the competition and felt any change unwarranted.

A third issue involved national identity and program growth. The perception that the state associations were operating independently and without the benefit of a strong national umbrella organization was of concern to the USAD Board. They identified a number of marginally performing states and recommended increasing revenues and visibility as ways to grow the program. The Board’s idea was that a more uniform methodology, guided and supported by the national office would offer the best chance for overall growth. While applauding the aims and intentions of the

national board, state directors worried that an overarching national identity for the program would compromise their continued ability to work with local and regional sources of support.

A fourth issue regarded equity and accountability involving the performance of USAD staff. Issues of personnel management became a focus of USAD Board discussions because of the need to consider total compensation as a function of job description. This resulted in steps to implement in-kind benefits on an equitable basis and as a function of seniority. The question of bonus compensation was also frequently discussed because the staff was charged with the responsibility for program growth. There was also the matter of curriculum and support materials development that required focused efforts that went beyond the traditional responsibilities for overseeing a smooth national competition.

In addition to those disagreements between the national and state boards, there were also some areas of concern within the national board about their own functions. One of these concerns dealt with a perceived lack of revenue to insure quality control of test and related materials. Because of the loss of some significant recurring annual grants and contributions, the Board accepted the responsibility of awarding scholarships. Additionally, the Board determined that study materials provided by third-party vendors were inconsistent in quality and completeness from one source to another. Finally, it was agreed that responsibilities needed to be shared to ensure optimum quality control. The national office was responsible for quality control of the national finals, but budgetary responsibilities and the challenges of securing venue and volunteers became the responsibility of the host state.

As a result of the frank discussions resulting from these internal and external issues, the USAD Board implemented a number of programs and policies. In addition to the promulgation of the individual programs, the national board made a conscious effort to involve state directors in all discussions about future policy. It was agreed that all future policies should be designed with the long-range goals of growing the program, leveling the playing field, strengthening state programs, increasing quality control, and recruiting and retaining staff.

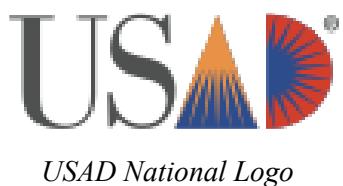
The Board authorized the executive director, Dr. James Alvino, to conduct a trial version of a critical thinking activity that was tested for the first time at the California National Finals in 1999. Dr. Paul Possemato had proposed this idea

for problem solving at several board meetings. He suggested that although the Decathlon competition did not promote rote memory only, the critical thinking activity would help to offset a perception that this was the case. Although some Board members and coaches were concerned that a problem-solving competition could replace one of the ten existing areas, Dr. Possemato argued that it would replace nothing but act as an alternate competition involving the participation of even more schools at the national level. His idea was that teams who finished second in their state competitions could compete in this activity. There was only limited participation, and the results of the experiment were inconclusive.

In an effort to level the playing field, the Board authorized a change in the national competitions that reduced the amount of original research required to compete successfully. A specific fraction of questions would be drawn from a known block of study material and the remaining questions would fall into the category regarding broad research.

## GOALS OF THE USAD BOARD

In an effort to increase the number of participating schools within existing states and to recruit other states, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution to have some form of Academic Decathlon activity present in every high school in America. Candidates for involvement included virtual competitions and the use of technology. In an effort to build a bridge between the target students and former Decathletes, the Board authorized a project to stimulate alumni participation and approved the development of an alumni board of directors that would work closely with the USAD Board. At the national competition in Providence, Rhode Island, a group of alumni Decathletes came together and elected Michelle M. Thomas as its first president. The new organization voted to name Dr. Perez as an honorary alumnus. In 2005 the Board voted to refer this organization as a function for State Directors to develop. Former Decathlete, Coach, and State Director Michael Richards was the first decathlete USAD Board member.



In order to strengthen state programs, the USAD Board commissioned the design of a new national logo. The project was designed to provide the state associations with a visual link to a strong national organization for the purpose of securing support. The logo was developed with the in-kind support of the design firm of Point Zero in Marina del Rey, California. State Directors were invited to best practice retreats designed to create a strategy that could be used to strengthen states with marginal programs. The USAD Board also created a competitive grant program for state directors designed to support best practices concepts.

In order to increase quality control over the competitions, the USAD Board authorized testing and procurement of a scoring service to provide real-time updates on Super Quiz and to enable reliable posting of state rankings immediately after the competition. Recognizing that third-party vendors of Decathlon study materials were offering products of variable quality, and significantly increasing the cost of the competition, the USAD Board authorized the development of the "On Target" set of

study materials during the 1996 study year. The materials were developed in consultation with experts around the country, and several new board members were recruited to the National USAD Board based upon their skills in the areas of curriculum and test development. The first time that USAD produced resource guides in each subject area was for the 1999-2000 school year. Prior to that USAD published an art guide, a music guide, and a short subject areas guide that provided an overview of each subject area. There were some concerns about errors of fact in the resource guides and, soon after, USAD fine-tuned contracts for resource guide and test writers to better protect USAD's interests and to help assure the quality of the products developed. Additionally, USAD instituted review procedures for all curriculum and test materials to improve quality control.

To retain excellent national office staff, an effort was made to create job descriptions for every staff position. Compensation packages were discussed including direct salary, 401K and health benefits, and bonus compensation was also discussed to find an equitable method for rewarding staff for program growth and other measurable accomplishments over and above the duties outlined in the job descriptions. The Board made an effort to conduct regular and fair assessments of executive director performance and implemented a policy requiring the executive director to conduct performance review for other staff. In 2001, Executive Director James Alvino resigned,

and Dr. Les Martisko was named Administrative Consultant.

By 2000, an important change took place which gave more responsibility to the State Directors. Coaches would be encouraged to communicate with State Directors who would communicate with the USAD-SD Representative, who, in turn, would communicate



*Pictured are the United States Academic Decathlon State Directors at the National Competition in 2000 in San Antonio.*

with the National Board. The formal name, NCADSED (National Council of Academic Decathlon State Executive Directors), was changed to USAD-SD (United States Academic Decathlon-State Directors). The Bylaws Committee, chaired by Dr. Ruth S. Cowan, State Director from Georgia, revised the Bylaws originally passed in 1988, and those revisions were approved in April 2000 by the President, Dr. Les Martisko, President-elect Michael Richards, Secretary/Treasurer Sue Edwards, Past President Harriet Bush, Regional Representative/West Carla Brooks, Regional Representative/Mid-West Diane Hansen, Regional Representative/South Lee Meyer, and Regional Representative/Northeast Gus Picardo. There were some changes in classes of membership. There was no longer a category for Organization Affiliate, and Honorary members now included the President and Vice President of the USAD Board of the Directors as well as the Executive Director. A new category, "Life Member", included past presidents of the Council when no longer serving as State Director. The governing body of the council, the Board of Directors, continued to consist of the President, President-elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and immediate Past President, but there would now be only one Regional Representative from each of the four new Council regions: Northeast, South, Midwest, West. State Directors would meet by these regions and elect a representative and alternate at the annual meeting. There was also a new regrouping of states in the four regions. There would no longer be an executive committee. State Directors would meet on the site of the national competition yearly, but they would also meet in the summer with the President of the USAD Board. Although there was previously tension between the USAD Board and State Directors, tremendous strides have been made in providing a good working relationship between the two groups.

The importance of State Directors cannot be overemphasized; without them, there would be no state competitions. Although their responsibilities have not changed much during the years, their most difficult role continues to be in the area of fund raising. According to Jerry Helgeson, State Director from Idaho since 1988, the problem is that there are too many organizations chasing a limited amount of funds.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2001, a Field Advisory Committee was created to develop recommendations for future operations of the United States Academic Decathlon. This committee was established so that representatives from the large constituency base of USAD could provide direct input to the Board of Directors on important issues that significantly impact the academic competition. The Committee was comprised of fourteen members, representing ten states, a Chairperson, a Facilitator, and the USAD President (Ex Officio). Resource and support staff included the Executive Director, the Curriculum Director, the Director of Operations, the Testing Director, and the Office Coordinator. Dr. James Augustin served as Chair at this time, and Dr. E. Arthur Stunard served as Facilitator of this Committee. The purpose of this meeting was to review a series of items/issues presented by USAD staff and to formulate recommendations for the USAD Board of Directors' consideration. These items/issues were divided into eight broad categories that included: 1) National Competition—Policies and Practices, 2) Curriculum and Test Development, 3) Scoring Procedures—National & State, 4) Technology, 5) Scholarship Program—Funding and Distribution, 6) Standardized Evaluations of National and State Competitions, 7) Communications/Public Relations, and 8) Development/Funding Plans. To facilitate the Field Advisory Committee deliberation process, each of the above items/issues was discussed, initially by a small group of five to ten members, then by the entire committee. All final recommendations were derived, by consensus of the entire committee.

As recorded and reported by Terry Boucher McKiernan on July 25, 2001, the Committee's many recommendations were offered for consideration during Board deliberations regarding the USAD Competition. The Committee recommendation that USAD maintain a three-division structure at the National Competition, with school enrollment being the only criterion used to determine the divisional assignment of teams, was implemented in 2002. At the completion of each state's championship competition, the Executive Committee reviews the enrollment statistics for each of the winners. Schools are then ordered, by enrollment from highest to lowest. The Large School Division consists of those teams whose school population comprises the greatest one-third. The Medium School division is comprised of those schools whose enrollment is in the middle third, and schools in the Small School Division are those whose

enrollment falls in the lowest third for that season. It is not unusual for a school to be in one category one year and in another category in the following year.

The Committee had also discussed the invitation of “Second Teams” to the National Competition. Although the committee recommended that a maximum of 55 teams be permitted to attend, utilizing a lottery system if necessary, the State Directors were in favor of inviting only one team per state, and the invitation of second teams to Nationals was discontinued after 2002.

Upon the advice of the Field Committee, a procedures manual was developed for the USAD National Competition in 2003. The manual was designed to serve as a guide for those involved in the planning and administration of the USAD National Competition. It listed the responsibilities of the host state and the competition coordinator. USAD and the host state would share the responsibility for all competition and contractual arrangements, including hotels and other venues, for the National Competition. The host state was responsible for organizing support at the local level, including volunteers, judges, transportation, entertainment and social events. The recommendation that USAD rotate the location of the National Competition to different geographic areas was implemented in 2003.



*USAD Board of Directors in Erie, Pennsylvania in 2003.*

The development of the 2003-2004 curriculum materials reflected the Field Advisory Committee’s recommendation that the competition theme be more topical than conceptual in nature. Additionally, while a portion of each subject might address a survey of fundamental topics, the outline now included a section or sections with a narrower focus to encourage an in-depth understanding of the given topic or topics. There would be an indication as to which of the outlined topics would require independent research and which of the topics would be covered in the Resource Guides. Subject areas from year to year would be such that no one subject would be absent from the curriculum for more than one year.

There were significant developments in 2002 with regard to the “communication” categories. USAD developed a bank of high-quality prompts

and provided essay and impromptu prompts to the states for use at competitions. Multiple prompts were made available for the sake of security. The Arizona Academic Decathlon's speech and interview consultants developed speech and interview training videos, and the manuals, written by Dr. Ruth Cowan, are in keeping with the content of the tapes. An essay-training manual was developed by USAD in concert with a panel of State Directors and writing assessment specialists. Students were now given a choice of three essay prompts during the essay event at the National Competition. These prompts could include either two prompts focused on the selected literature and one prompt focused on the Super Quiz topic or two prompts focused on the Super Quiz topic and one prompt focused on the selected literature. A modified holistic essay rubric, developed by Dr. Ruth Cowan and Mary Jane Koenig, was approved by the State Directors. This rubric specifically addressed the problem of off-prompt essays. USAD includes sample prompts in the Practice Test Booklet as well as the Essay Notebook Divider. Anchor papers are included in the Essay Training Materials. A committee recommendation that students not be penalized for revealing their school, state or location during the prepared speech, impromptu speech, and interview events at the National Competition was also implemented in 2002.

The Field Advisory Committee also addressed concerns with regard to technology. As a result, the scoring program was simplified and revised in 2002 to reflect a hybrid Windows/Mac format, so information would be easily exportable between platforms. USAD continues to offer online practice tests, and considerable work has been done on the USAD website to improve its effectiveness. Although there was a web cast of events at the National Competition in 2001, USAD's participants did not express much interest in this, and USAD has not received any requests for the web casting of events at Nationals. The committee also recommended that USAD create a solid database of information on its alumni population. This was developed in 2002 in order to garner support from USAD alums.

As advised by the Field Advisory Committee, efforts are being made to increase interest and participation in the program through videos and promotional brochures. Testimonials are being sought from coaches, current students and alumni. Such efforts would also be helpful in pursuing avenues for funding. Although responses to surveys are, generally, quite low, USAD continues to survey students, coaches, volunteers, State Directors and Board members in order to improve the program.

**Two important philosophical changes came about in 2003. First, national staff would go into the states to recruit teams and offer training programs, utilizing a Coaches Manual. This manual exists on the USAD website and is regularly updated to ensure that each coach has all current information. Currently, USAD staff is demonstrating how the Academic Decathlon curriculum dovetails with National Standards in order to garner more support from school administrators.**

## **CREATING THE VIRTUAL OFFICE**

**A major step in cutting costs and improving efficiency occurred in 2003, when USAD's headquarters and staff made the transition to a virtual office. This idea was proposed at the USAD Executive Committee meeting in July 2003. Mylene Chafe, USAD's Director of Operations, would begin working out of her home office in Council Bluffs, Iowa. USAD's other two full-time employees—Testing Director Daniele Grigsby and Curriculum Director Terry McKiernan—had already begun telecommuting on a part-time basis. USAD's mailing address had been a post office box for the past several years and was not tied to the physical location of the office. The transition was so smooth, that all functions continued without interruption and support to State Directors continued to their satisfaction. The California office space was officially closed on December 1, 2003.**

## **SMALL SCHOOL COMPETITION AND OTHER CHANGES**

**In an attempt to provide an incentive for more teams to participate, in 2006 the Board authorized a virtual competition for small schools. The event coincided with the national competition dates. More than 180 students from twenty-one states participated in eight of the ten Academic Decathlon events, and over 100 medals were distributed. Saint Johns High School in Arizona won top honors. The competition was open to schools with total enrollments of fewer than 650 students. The competition's success was due in large part to USAD's partnership with a new corporate sponsor, Enlyght Software. Ashley Lane, a student at Tri-County High School in Buena Vista, Georgia, reflected on this opportunity: "I was amazed that our small school was given the privilege to compete in a national competition, especially an academic competition. We have normally done pretty well in state competition for Academic Decathlon. However, we are a small school and don't have a large group of students to choose from, so we are not well known for our academic success. It was a great honor to our entire community for a school in our area to get a chance to compete in the national online small school competition. We have raised the standards higher for our school than just competing at state competition and winning medals there. The opportunity to compete nationally makes more of our Academic Decathlon Team want to do better and score higher in more areas of the contest." The Virtual Competition, based on its success and popularity, expanded to medium-sized schools on a pilot basis beginning in 2008.**

**Two significant changes took place at the national competition in 2007. For several years, the Board had provided some support, both in terms of scoring and financing, for the national competitions. For the first time, the National Board assumed complete responsibility for the national competition in 2007 in Honolulu, Hawaii by running the competition and providing necessary financing. Also, for the first time, the Essay test was submitted on-line two weeks prior to the actual competition in Honolulu, and fourteen evaluators reviewed the essays before the competition took place. Such a change ensured fairness and consistency in the grading of the essays.**

## THE KEY TO USAD – THE COACH

At the heart of each competition is the coach. USAD not only changes the lives of students but also of teacher-coaches. The 1984-85 Study Guide reveals the thoughts of one teacher: “There is no thrill in the world greater than seeing an uninterested, going-nowhere student become excited and lit with a great desire to learn.” Several former decathletes have decided not only to pursue teaching careers, but also to coach their own decathlon teams. One former decathlete took his commitment to Academic Decathlon one step further. From 1987-88, Michael Richards participated as a student at Scarborough High School in Scarborough, Maine. While in college he would stop by the school on breaks to listen to speeches and offer his assistance in his major: finance/economics. From 1992-96, he joined his former coach, Ellen Ross, as a co-coach, and the team won the state competition each year for four years. Although his commitments at work did not allow him to continue to coach in 1997, he was strongly encouraged to help out at the state level. He mentored with the State Director, and, following the state competition, was named State Director. He served in this capacity from 1997-2005 and also served as President Elect/President of the State Director’s Association from 1998-2002. When asked why he became involved in Academic Decathlon, he indicated that Academic Decathlon’s challenge of competing in so many different areas is what attracted him to the competition. Michael stated: “Academic Decathlon is not for everyone, but when you compete you know you’re going up against the best of the best. The lessons and knowledge I learned as a competitor have stayed with me, and I continuously fall back on those experiences in my life.”

Sherilyn Narker, who won two medals in regional competition in 1987-88 in New York, sponsored a team from Druid Hills High School in Atlanta, Georgia. As a decathlete she was always interested in talking about ideas, so she sponsored a team to promote “the intellectual dialogue that goes on at practice.” Jared VanVleet, a 1991 decathlete from Gillette, Wyoming, now coaches the team from Noxon High School in Montana. When Jared was injured while playing sports, he joined the Decathlon Team, an activity which, he believes, changed his life. He said that his coach, Gary Winegar, “believed in me at a time when I didn’t think anyone else did.” He now has a junior member of his own team who feels the same way about Jared. Sarita Denny, who is a teacher at Chattahoochee County High School, was a decathlete her senior year at

**Marion County High School, Georgia** and her parents, Olin and Margie Holloman, were her coaches. She stated: “That one weekend (of competition) changed my perspective on the future. I attended college, became a teacher, and my first professional ambition was to coach a GAD team. I want to bring the exhilaration of learning and achievement that I experienced to my students.” Sarita and her parents are now friendly competitors.

The USAD continues to help enhance the educational experience for students, teachers, and communities. At the national competition in San Antonio in 2006, USAD President Robert Brezina initiated a round table discussion with selected decathletes. This discussion revealed that the Academic Decathlon experience gave the students a sense of camaraderie and team spirit. They learned organizational and test-taking skills and developed an even stronger work ethic. Only recently, a decathlon contestant commented: “Academic Decathlon has created within me a passion for learning that will last throughout my life.” This thought echoes a comment made by Decathlete Jeff Foust of Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1989: “Overall, I believe that I have gained more from my Academic Decathlon team experience than from the rest of my overall high school experience. While I fear I may be oversimplifying everything, I can say that I learned how to learn from ACADEC. What I gained from this I will carry with me not only through college, but through my entire life.” In 2007, Kevin Williams, captain of the Hamden Hall High School Team from Connecticut and Varsity member for four years, stated: “The most important part of ACADEC has been bonding with my team all year, and at nationals meeting students from around the country with similar interests and social dynamics.” Little did Robert Peterson realize, as he sat in his German POW camp more than sixty years ago, that his dream for a “decathlon of studies” would inspire so many students to intellectual and academic achievement through team competition.

## **VISION REALIZED**

**Hopefully, anyone reading this historical perspective will better understand how the idea of a nationally known and respected academic competition for young people was born from the ponderings of an imprisoned military aviator. His dream brought about the organization that helped create the competition and make it a positive contributor to the quality of education in the United States.**

The pages that follow contain information from USAD's archives reflecting not only the competing and victorious students and coaches, but also the small, incredibly industrious executives of the organization, all volunteer members of the Board of Directors. Additionally, listed are the individuals and organizations whose generosity and support across the years has helped to make this organization and competition vital, strong, and meaningful to the lives of so many youthful competitors over the years.

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# *APPENDICES*

## **ORANGE COUNTY ACADEMIC DECATHLON (OCAD)**

**Was founded in 1968 by Dr. Robert D. Peterson, Orange County Superintendent of Schools. 103 high school students from 22 public and private schools took part at Bolsa Grande High School, Garden Grove, CA.**

**First Sponsors: Assisting through financial and managerial support**

**Alpha Beta Markets  
Autonetics  
Bullocks  
Chevron Oil Field Research Co.  
Disneyland  
General Telephone Co.  
Hughes Ground Systems  
The Irvine Company  
KNOB Radio  
Pacific Telephone Co.  
J. C. Penney Co., Inc.  
Philco-Ford Corporation  
Newport National Bank  
Sears-Roebuck  
Signal Oil and Gas Co.  
Southern California Edison Co.  
Southern California Gas Co.  
Union Oil Co. of California**

**Earliest Winners:**

<b>1968</b>	<b>Foothill High School</b>
<b>1969</b>	<b>Anaheim High School</b>
<b>1970</b>	<b>Los Alamitos High School, Rosary High Catholic School</b>
<b>1971</b>	<b>El Modena High School</b>
<b>1972</b>	<b>Villa Park High School</b>
<b>1973</b>	<b>Villa Park High School</b>
<b>1974</b>	<b>Orange High School</b>
<b>1975</b>	<b>Costa Mesa High School</b>
<b>1976</b>	<b>Troy High School</b>
<b>1977</b>	<b>University High School</b>
<b>1978</b>	<b>Esperanza High School</b>

# **CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC DECATHLON (CAD)**

**Established in 1979. Twenty-three counties participated, and it was held at Chapman College, Orange, CA**

## **First CAD Officers**

<b>Chairman of the Board of Trustees</b>	<b>R. Parker Sullivan</b>
<b>President</b>	<b>Dolores Diehl, Pacific Telephone</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Donald R. Rudkin, Deloitte Haskins and Sells</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Michael Spitzer, Arthur Andersen &amp; Co.</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Judith Shane, 7 Up Bottling Co.</b>
<b>Founder</b>	<b>Dr. Robert D. Peterson, Superintendent, Orange County Department of Education</b>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Donald L. Primrose</b>

## **Sponsoring Companies**

<b>Air California</b>	<b>Los Angeles Herald Examiner</b>
<b>Alpha Beta Company</b>	<b>Mattel</b>
<b>Arthur Andersen &amp; Co.</b>	<b>Mervyn's</b>
<b>Atlantic Richfield</b>	<b>Montgomery Ward Northrop Corp.</b>
<b>Bank of America</b>	<b>Pacific Mutual Life</b>
<b>Beckman Instruments, Inc.</b>	<b>Pacific Telephone</b>
<b>The Bekins Company</b>	<b>Riverside Community Foundation</b>
<b>California Federal</b>	<b>Rockwell International</b>
<b>Carl's Jr. Restaurants</b>	<b>Sears, Roebuck and Co.</b>
<b>Carnation Company</b>	<b>Security Pacific Charitable Fdn.</b>
<b>Chevron U.S.A., Inc.</b>	<b>Seven Up Bottling Companies</b>
<b>Coast Federal Savings</b>	<b>Southern California Gas</b>
<b>Datsun</b>	<b>State Mutual Savings</b>
<b>Deloitte Haskins and Sells</b>	<b>Teledyne, Inc.</b>
<b>Fluidmaster, Inc.</b>	<b>Ticor Foundation</b>
<b>Fluor Corporation</b>	<b>Times Mirror</b>
<b>General Dynamics</b>	<b>Toyota Motor Sales, Inc.</b>
<b>General Telephone</b>	<b>TRW Systems &amp; Energy</b>
<b>Getty Oil Company</b>	<b>Union Bank</b>
<b>Gramercy Enterprises</b>	<b>United California Bank</b>
<b>Great Western Financial</b>	<b>Walt Disney Productions</b>
<b>Home Federal Savings of San Diego</b>	<b>Western Airlines</b>
<b>Knott's Berry Farm</b>	<b>Xerox</b>
<b>The Lear Siegler Foundation</b>	

# UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON (USAD)

## Founded 1982

### FOUNDERS:

**Dr. Robert Peterson**  
**Dr. Alex Aloia**  
**Phillip G. Bardos**  
**Robert Broaddus**  
**Kristin Caperton**  
**Millard Foist**  
**Max Hammond**  
**Wade Hampton**

**Robert Lamson**  
**Donald R. McLean**  
**Goldy Norton**  
**William B. Patton, Jr.**  
**Dr. Paul Possemato**  
**Suzanne Eisler Roberts**  
**Robert Sampieri**  
**William H. Webber**

### FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Dr. Robert Peterson, Founder\***  
**Phillip G. Bardos, Chairman of the Board\***  
**William B. Patton, Jr., President\***  
**Robert W. Lamson, Vice President**  
**Max Hammond, Secretary\***  
**Donald R. McLean, Chief Financial Officer\***  
**Dr. Alex D. Aloia\***  
**Robert Broaddus**  
**Suzanne Eisler**  
**Millard F. Foist\***  
**Beverly Froelich**  
**Wade Hampton**  
**Dr. Joseph P. Linscomb**  
**Richard A. Littlestone**  
**Goldy Norton**  
**Dr. Al Perez\***  
**Dr. Paul M. Possemato**  
**Robert Sampieri**  
**William H. Weber**

**Jack Peterson served as Attorney for the Board (wrote first by-laws)**

**\*Start up board – 1980 (according to Phillip G. Bardos)**

## **FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Harry G. Bubb, President**  
**Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company**

**Daniel W. Derbes**  
**President, The Signal Companies**

**Robert R. Dockson**  
**Chairman & Chief Executive**  
**California Federal Savings & Loan**

**Thomas E. Drohan**  
**President and Chief Executive**  
**Foremost-McKesson, Inc.**

**Gerald Jennings**  
**Chairman and Chief Executive**  
**Everest & Jennings, Inc.**

**William Jorgenson**  
**President, Ward Foods**

**Robert A. Kleckner**  
**Executive Partner, Alexander Grant & Co.**

**J. Robert Meserve**  
**Senior Partner**  
**Meserve, Mumper & Hughes**

**C. Ridley Rhind**  
**Vice President, Ampex**

**Carl L. Sadler**  
**Chairman and Chief Executive**  
**Rohr Industries, Inc.**

**Elwood Springer**  
**President, Calistoga Mineral Water Company**

## **CORPORATIONS SUPPORTING THE FIRST AWARDS LUNCHEON**

<b>Alexander Grant &amp; Co.</b>	<b>J. C. Penny Co.</b>
<b>Ampex Corporation</b>	<b>Mattel, Inc.</b>
<b>ARA Services, Inc.</b>	<b>Meserve, Mumper &amp; Hughes</b>
<b>Beverly Enterprises</b>	<b>Pacific Mutual Life Insurance</b>
<b>Bullocks/Bullocks Wilshire</b>	<b>Pacific Telephone</b>
<b>Carl Karcher Enterprises</b>	<b>Dr. Robert Peterson</b>
<b>Community Bank</b>	<b>Pro-Vita Corporation</b>
<b>Davry Davidson</b>	<b>Torr Vacuum Products, Inc.</b>
<b>Everest &amp; Jennings, Inc.</b>	<b>Trans World Insurance</b>
<b>Fireman's Fund Insurance Co.</b>	<b>Twentieth Century-Fox Film</b>
<b>Fluidmaster, Inc.</b>	<b>Val Cheks, Inc.</b>
<b>Foremost-McKesson, Inc.</b>	<b>Vidal Sassoon, Inc.</b>
<b>General Telephone Co. of CA</b>	<b>Ward-Johnston Co.</b>

## **OTHER BENEFACTORS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL COMPETITION**

<b>Ampex Corporation</b>	<b>Lawry's Foods, Inc.</b>
<b>CA Parents-Teachers Association</b>	<b>Meserve, Mumper &amp; Hughes</b>
<b>Distribution Services West</b>	<b>Orange County Dept. of Ed.</b>
<b>Glendale Federal Savings &amp; Loan</b>	<b>Pacific Mutual Insurance Co.</b>
<b>William F. Hooper, Inc.</b>	<b>Seiko Time Corporation</b>
<b>Los Angeles Unified School Dist.</b>	<b>Twentieth Century-Fox Film</b>
<b>Loyola-Marymount University</b>	<b>Walt Disney Productions</b>

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

<b>1984-1987</b>	<b>Dr. Alfonso Perez</b>
<b>1988-1995</b>	<b>Ann Joynt</b>
<b>1995-2001</b>	<b>Dr. James Alvino</b>
<b>2001-2015</b>	<b>Dr. Les Martisko (Administrative Consultant)</b>
<b>2015-Present</b>	<b>Dr. Les Martisko (CEO)</b>
<b>2025-Present</b>	<b>Amy Dosch (Executive Director)</b>

## **PERSONNEL**

**Terry McKiernan, Curriculum Director**  
**February 1999-Present**

**Daniele Grigsby, Testing Director**  
**January 2000-Present**

**Tara Brown, Administrative Services Director**  
**July 2025-Present**

## USAD PRESIDENTS

<b>1982-83</b>	<b>William B. Patton, Jr.</b>	<b>Phillip G. Bardos, Chairman</b>
<b>1984-86</b>	<b>William B. Patton, Jr.</b>	<b>Robert Broaddus, Chairman</b>
<b>1987</b>	<b>A. Robert Paltiel</b>	<b>Robert Broaddus, Chairman</b>
<b>1987-89</b>	<b>John S. Peterson</b>	<b>Robert Broaddus, Chairman</b>
<b>1989-91</b>	<b>Bruce Ferguson</b>	
<b>1991-93</b>	<b>Jill Von Delden</b>	
<b>1993-95</b>	<b>John Foley</b>	
<b>1995-96</b>	<b>Rogg Collins</b>	
<b>1996-98</b>	<b>Dr. Kenneth Phillips</b>	
<b>1998-00</b>	<b>Dr. Arnold Oates</b>	
<b>2000-03</b>	<b>Franklin Wurtzel</b>	
<b>2003-05</b>	<b>Dr. E. Arthur Stunard</b>	
<b>2005-12</b>	<b>Robert Brezina</b>	
<b>2012-14</b>	<b>Joseph Jones</b>	
<b>2014-15</b>	<b>Nadine Kujawa</b>	
<b>2015-22</b>	<b>David Mikkalson</b>	
<b>2022-Present</b>	<b>Keith Wenner</b>	

## **INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS**

**Dr. Kanwar Habib Khan**  
**President and CEO**  
**International Academy for Social Development**  
**2014-2019**

**Houston Hou**  
**Founder and CEO**  
**SKT Education Group**  
**2014-Present**

## USAD NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Competition	Host	Super Quiz Topic/Theme	Teams
1981-1982	Los Angeles, CA		18
1982-1983	Los Angeles, CA	Super Quiz: The Housing Crisis	27
1983-1984	Los Angeles, CA	Super Quiz: The Olympics	30
1984-1985	Los Angeles, CA	Super Quiz: Futurism Megatrends	34
1985-1986	Los Angeles, CA	Super Quiz: Immigration	41
1986-1987	Irving, TX	Super Quiz: We the People: The Constitution of the United States	38
1987-1988	San Antonio, TX	Super Quiz: The History of Flight: 38 From Daedalus to Kitty Hawk to Voyager	
1988-1989	Providence, RI	Super Quiz: The U.S. Presidency	38
1989-1990	Des Moines, IA	Super Quiz: American Indians: Our American Heritage	39
1990-1991	Los Angeles, CA	Super Quiz: Space Exploration	45
1991-1992	Boise, Idaho	Super Quiz: Habitat Earth	48
1992-1993	Phoenix, AZ	Super Quiz: A Diversity of Achievers	44
1993-1994	Newark, NJ	Super Quiz: Documents of Freedom	42
1994-1995	Chicago, IL	Super Quiz: Biotechnology: The Next Frontier	39
1995-1996	Atlanta, GA	Theme: Competition and Cooperation Super Quiz: The United Nations	38

Competition	Host	Super Quiz Topic/Theme	Teams
1996-1997	St. George, UT	Theme: Communication and Culture Super Quiz: The Information Revolution	37
1997-1998	Providence, RI	Theme: Looking Outward Super Quiz: Globalization: The New Economy	38
1998-1999	Anaheim, CA	Theme: Looking Inward Super Quiz: The Brain	38
1999-2000	San Antonio, TX	Theme: Looking Forward: Creating the Future Super Quiz: Sustainable Earth	40
2000-2001	Anchorage, AK	Theme: Understanding the Self Super Quiz: Concepts of the Self: Psychology, Philosophy and Religion	37
2001-2002	Phoenix, AZ	Theme: Understanding Others Super Quiz: E-Communication: The Internet and Society	38
2002-2003	Erie, PA	Theme: Understanding the Natural World Super Quiz: The Blue Planet---Beneath the Surface (Oceanography)	38
2003-2004	Boise, ID	Theme: America: The Growth of A Nation Super Quiz: The Lewis and Clark Expedition	41
2004-2005	Chicago, IL	Theme: Exploring the Ancient World Super Quiz: Astronomy---From Empty Space to Incredible Universe: The Sky is Not the Limit	39
2005-2006	San Antonio, TX	Theme: The European Renaissance Super Quiz: The European Renaissance: Renewal and Reform	39

<b>Competition</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Super Quiz Topic/Theme</b>	<b>Teams</b>
<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>Honolulu, HI</b>	<b>Theme: China and Its Influence On the World Super Quiz: An Introduction to Climatology</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>Garden Grove, CA</b>	<b>Theme: The Civil War Super Quiz: The Civil War</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>Memphis, TN</b>	<b>Theme: Latin America Super Quiz: An Introduction to Evolutionary Biology</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>Omaha, NE</b>	<b>Theme: The French Revolution Super Quiz: The French Revolution</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>Charlotte, NC</b>	<b>Theme: The Great Depression Super Quiz: An Introduction to Geology</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>Albuquerque, NM</b>	<b>Theme: The Age of Empire Super Quiz: The Age of Imperialism: The Making of a European Global Order</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<b>Theme: Russia</b>	<b>53*</b>
<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>Honolulu, HI</b>	<b>Theme: World War I</b>	<b>51**</b>
<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>Garden Grove, CA</b>	<b>Theme: New Alternatives in Energy: Ingenuity and Innovation</b>	<b>46***</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>Anchorage, AK</b>	<b>Theme: India</b>	<b>48****</b>
<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>Madison, WI</b>	<b>Theme: World War II</b>	<b>51*****</b>
<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>Frisco, TX</b>	<b>Theme: Africa</b>	<b>72*****</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>Minneapolis, MN</b>	<b>Theme: The 1960s: A Transformational Decade</b>	<b>73*****</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>Anchorage, AK</b>	<b>Theme: In Sickness and in Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness</b>	
		<b>CANCELED</b>	
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>Virtual Nationals</b>	<b>Theme: The Cold War</b>	<b>41*****</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	<b>Virtual Nationals</b>	<b>Theme: Water: A Most Essential Resource</b>	

<b>2022-23</b>	<b>Frisco, TX</b>	<b>Theme: The American Revolution and The New Nation</b>	<b>55*****</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	<b>Pittsburgh, PA</b>	<b>Theme: Technology and Humanity</b>	<b>60 *****</b>
<b>2024-25</b>	<b>Des Moines, IA</b>	<b>Theme: Climate Change</b>	<b>71*****</b>
<b>2025-26</b>	<b>Garden Grove, CA</b>	<b>Theme: The Roaring Twenties</b>	

**\*In 2012-2013, seventeen states hosted two teams, and one team was comprised of individual participants.**

**\*\*In 2013-14, fourteen states hosted two teams, one team was from London, UK and three teams were comprised of students from the People's Republic of China.**

**\*\*\*In 2014-15, there were eleven teams from the People's Republic of China and two teams from London, UK.**

**\*\*\*\*In 2015-16, there were thirteen teams from the People's Republic of China, two teams from London, UK, and one team from Canada.**

**\*\*\*\*\*In 2016-17, there were fifteen teams from the People's Republic of China, two from the United Kingdom, and two from Canada.**

**\*\*\*\*\*In 2017-18, thirty-two states each hosted one team. Seventeen state teams participated in Division IV. There were twenty teams from the People's Republic of China, and three teams from the United Kingdom.**

**\*\*\*\*\*In 2018-19, thirty-one states each hosted one team. Nineteen state teams participated in Division IV. There were twenty-one teams from the People's Republic of China, and two teams from the United Kingdom.**

**In 2019-20, the National Competition was cancelled.**

**\*\*\*\*\*In 2020-21, the National Competition was held virtually. Nine states competed in Division I, eight states competed in Division II, nine states competed in Division III, and 15 states competed in Division IV.**

**\*\*\*\*\*In 2021-22, the National Competition was held virtually. Ten states competed in Division I, nine states competed in Division II, nine states competed in Division III, and seventeen states competed in Division IV.**

**In 2022-23, nine states competed in Division I, nine states competed in Division II, nine states competed in Division III. Twenty-eight states competed in Division IV for a total of 55 Teams.**

**\*\*\*\*\* In 2023-24 ten states competed in Division I, ten states competed in Division II, nine states competed in Division III. Eighteen states competed in Division IV and thirteen teams competed in Division V for a total of 60 Teams.**

**\*\*\*\*\* In 2024-25, fourteen teams competed in Division I, fourteen teams competed in Division II, fourteen teams competed in Division III. Fifteen teams competed in Division IV and fourteen teams competed in Division V for a total of 71 teams.**

## **USAD NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

<b>1982</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Palo Alto High School</b>
<b>1983</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Palo Alto High School</b>
<b>1984</b>	<b>TEXAS, J.J. Pearce High School</b>
<b>1985</b>	<b>TEXAS, J.J. Pearce High School</b>
<b>1986</b>	<b>TEXAS, J.J. Pearce High School</b>
<b>1987</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, John Marshall High School</b>
<b>1988</b>	<b>TEXAS, J.J. Pearce High School</b>
<b>1989</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, William Howard Taft High School</b>
<b>1990</b>	<b>TEXAS, Lake Highlands High School</b>
<b>1991</b>	<b>TEXAS, J. J. Pearce High School</b>
<b>1992</b>	<b>TEXAS, J. Frank Dobie High School</b>
<b>1993</b>	<b>TEXAS, Plano East High School</b>
<b>1994</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, William Howard Taft High School</b>
<b>1995</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, John Marshall High School</b>
<b>1996</b>	<b>TEXAS, J. Frank Dobie High School</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>TEXAS, James E. Taylor High School</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Moorpark High School</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>TEXAS, James E. Taylor High School</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>WISCONSIN, Waukesha West High School</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Moorpark High School</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>

<b>2005</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, William Howard Taft High School</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Moorpark High School</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Moorpark High School</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real High School</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>COMPETITION CANCELED</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, Granada Hills Charter High School</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real Charter High School</b>
<b>2024</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real Charter High School</b>
<b>2025</b>	<b>CALIFORNIA, El Camino Real Charter High School</b>

## **HIGHEST SCORING TEAMS AT USAD\* (1986-2025)**

<b>State</b>	<b>Times in Top Ten</b>	<b>Times in Top Five</b>	<b>Times in Top Three</b>
Alabama	9	1	
Alaska	4		
Arizona	39	27	11
California	40	39	37
Colorado	1		
Georgia	2		
Hawaii	4		
Idaho	2		
Illinois	38	31	12
Indiana	4		
Iowa	18	2	
Louisiana	1		
Maine	1		
Massachusetts	26	9	
Minnesota	5	2	
Mississippi	5		
Nebraska	8	2	2
New Jersey	12	4	
New Mexico	2		
New York	3		
Ohio	26	13	8
Oklahoma	3	1	
Pennsylvania	14		
Rhode Island	7	1	
Tennessee	8		
Texas	39	36	30
Utah	4		
Virginia	1		
Wisconsin	36	18	12
Texas "B"	4	2	
California "B"	4	1	1
Arizona "B"	2		

*\*\*Based on overall team scores, not by regions, or size categories.*

*In 2013, seventeen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2014, fourteen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2019, nineteen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2020, competition was canceled.*

*In 2021, fifteen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2022, seventeen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2023, eighteen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2024, eighteen states hosted two teams.*

*In 2025, eighteen states hosted two or more teams.*

## USAD STATE DIRECTORS – 1984-2025

*The compilation is taken from study guides, competition handbooks, and awards programs, and may not be complete. \*\*Directors who have served 10+ years.*

### ALABAMA:

Mildred Enfinger:	1985-86
Marian Loftin:	1986-91
Dale Hill:	1991-92
David Stearn:	1992-94
L. Holt Cloud:	1994-98

### ALASKA:

Dr. Gladys R. Foris:	1985-92
Audrey Meyer:	1987-88
Karen Kroon:	1992-97
Bonnie Head:	1997-2002
Anne Yutrzenka:	2002-05
Curtis Clifton**:	2005-2021
Joan Pardes:	2021-2023
Emily Baker:	2024-2025
Jess Mangram:	2025-Present

### ARIZONA:

Hal Buckley:	1984-85
Anita Lohr**:	1984-96
Paul Street:	1992-93
James Curlett:	1994-95
Cathleen Condren:	1996-97
Sylvia Udall:	1997-06
Anne Edelstein**:	2006-2021
Sarah Morris:	2021-Present

### ARKANSAS:

Michael J. Moran:	1984-85
Brenda Matthews:	1985-89
Carol Brody:	1997-2006

### CALIFORNIA:

Dick Nagle:	1984-85
Don Primrose:	1985-86, 86-87, 87-88
Ann Joynt:	1988-89, 89-90
Judy Combs**:	1990-2002
Marvin Cobb:	2002-05
Ken Scarberry**:	2005-Present

**COLORADO:**

Duane Nelson:	1984-85
Dan Ryan:	1985-87
Don Ihrke:	1987-90
Jenny Joslin:	1990-91
Kay Lorenz:	1991-92
Bryce Snyder:	1992-94
Bill Callahan:	1994-97
Launa Garton:	1997-2001
Jeanette Bishop:	2001-05
Stan May:	2005-07
Paul Branum:	2017-2023
Tara Brown:	2023-2025
Art Dominguez:	2025-Present

**CONNECTICUT:**

Thomas Brown:	1985-87
John Elliott:	1987-89
Jack Molloy:	1989-91
William Coan:	1991-95
Howard Lohr:	1995-98
Jennifer Tebbs:	1999-2004
Aja LaDuke:	2004-09
Sebastian Garza:	2017-Present

**DELAWARE:**

Kristina M. Swain:	1985-86, 1987-89
Gregory Meese:	1986-87
Peggy Dee:	1991-94

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:**

Dorothy Hampton:	1984-85
Doris Trabue:	1990-92
Annabelle Strayhorn:	1992-95
Dr. K. Habib Khan	2013-14
Naveed Khan	2015-19

**FLORIDA:**

Beverly Everett:	1984-90
Peggy Cole/Ron Davis:	1990-92
Bill Pelaia:	1997-98
Judy Edsal:	1998-2001

<b>Karen Wikman:</b>	<b>2004-07</b>
<b>Laura Springstroh:</b>	<b>2007-2015</b>
<b>Chris Vu:</b>	<b>2025-Present</b>

**GEORGIA:**

<b>Howard Stroud:</b>	<b>1985-92</b>
<b>Tom Wommack:</b>	<b>1992-98</b>
<b>Dr. Ruth Cowan**:</b>	<b>1996-2006</b>
<b>Cary Sell**:</b>	<b>2006-2017</b>
<b>Michelle Crawford:</b>	<b>2017-Present</b>

**HAWAII:**

<b>Robert Whiting:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Margaret Oda:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Joan Yanagi:</b>	<b>1991-94, 1996-98</b>
<b>Becky Moneymaker:</b>	<b>1994-96, 1998-2004</b>
<b>Charlene Masuhara:</b>	<b>2004-06</b>
<b>Anne Miller:</b>	<b>2006-2011</b>
<b>Cindy Martisko:</b>	<b>2013-Present</b>

**IDAHO:**

<b>David Steadman:</b>	<b>1984-88</b>
<b>Jerry Helgeson**:</b>	<b>1988-2015</b>
<b>Mary Bird:</b>	<b>2015-2022</b>
<b>Nick Hoffman:</b>	<b>2022-Present</b>

**ILLINOIS:**

<b>Randy Wortman:</b>	<b>1984-89</b>
<b>Marsha Bollendorf:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Roger Prietz:</b>	<b>1990-92</b>
<b>Frances Holliday**:</b>	<b>1992-2004</b>
<b>Linda Pierzchalski:</b>	<b>2004-09</b>
<b>Joyce Swenson:</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Dave Chiszar:</b>	<b>2018-2023</b>
<b>Tammy Raffen:</b>	<b>2023-Present</b>

**INDIANA:**

<b>Paul Schuyler:</b>	<b>1984-91</b>
<b>Gerald Kolter:</b>	<b>1991-97</b>
<b>Rick Russ:</b>	<b>1997-2002</b>
<b>Kyle Harrop**:</b>	<b>2002-2018</b>
<b>Abby Warren:</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
<b>Cameron Clark:</b>	<b>2020-2023</b>
<b>Rusty King:</b>	<b>2023-Present</b>

**IOWA:**

<b>Dick Wiederhold**:</b>	<b>1985-95</b>
<b>Linda Fernandez:</b>	<b>1995-2000</b>
<b>Robert Tesar:</b>	<b>2000-02</b>
<b>Cheryl Osterhaus:</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>Harvey Kimble:</b>	<b>2003-2012</b>
<b>Jolene Teske**:</b>	<b>2012-2025</b>
<b>Daniel Nizzi:</b>	<b>2025-Present</b>

**KANSAS:**

<b>Charles O. Stones:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Rosemary Moran:</b>	<b>1991-98</b>
<b>Diane Hansen**:</b>	<b>1998-2008</b>
<b>Megan Clark:</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>
<b>Shelley Vittorino**:</b>	<b>2011-2023</b>

**KENTUCKY:**

<b>Anne Crockett:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Amanda Brown:</b>	<b>1985-86, 1987-89</b>
<b>Mary Buckalew:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Ted Brown:</b>	<b>1992-96</b>
<b>Diane Calhoun-French:</b>	<b>1996-2004</b>
<b>Janet Morris:</b>	<b>2006-09</b>
<b>Paul Bartels:</b>	<b>2025-Present</b>

**LOUISIANA:**

<b>Riley Bratton:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Laura Amberson:</b>	<b>1985-87</b>
<b>Cynthia Martin:</b>	<b>1987-90</b>
<b>Susan Smith:</b>	<b>1990-91</b>
<b>Barbara Gillis:</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
<b>Robert Sawyer:</b>	<b>1992-94</b>
<b>Kathy Plante:</b>	<b>1995-2001</b>
<b>Andy Benoit**:</b>	<b>2001-2013</b>

**MAINE:**

<b>Peter Greer:</b>	<b>1985-86</b>
<b>Shirley Grover:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>David Brown:</b>	<b>1987-90</b>
<b>Ron Moody:</b>	<b>1990-94</b>
<b>Paul Pendleton:</b>	<b>1994-97</b>
<b>Michael Richards:</b>	<b>1997-2005</b>
<b>David Heckman**:</b>	<b>2005-2018</b>
<b>Mark Larkin:</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>

<b>David Heckman:</b>	<b>2019-2021</b>
<b>Pam Smith:</b>	<b>2021-Present</b>

**MARYLAND:**

<b>Douglas Norwood:</b>	<b>1984-89</b>
<b>Deborah Bellflower:</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
<b>Habib Khan:</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
<b>Sebastian Garza:</b>	<b>2017-2023</b>

**MASSACHUSETTS:**

<b>Henry Lukas**:</b>	<b>1984-2008</b>
<b>Michael Tempesta:</b>	<b>2008-10</b>
<b>Paul Thorp:</b>	<b>2010-2014</b>
<b>Steven Noble:</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
<b>Sebastian Garza:</b>	<b>2015-Present</b>

**MICHIGAN:**

<b>Luala O’Neal:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Tim Quinn:</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
<b>Kathy Foley**:</b>	<b>1992-2003</b>
<b>Mark Rudd:</b>	<b>2003-09</b>
<b>David Squires</b>	<b>2009-10</b>

**MINNESOTA:**

<b>David Stead:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Carol Ackerson:</b>	<b>1985-87</b>
<b>Deanna Steele:</b>	<b>1987-92</b>
<b>Dr. Les Martisko:</b>	<b>1992-2000</b>
<b>Kate Martens:</b>	<b>2000-01</b>
<b>Wanda Sommers-Wall:</b>	<b>2001-10</b>
<b>Joyce Swenson and</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>
<b>Wanda Somers-Wall:</b>	
<b>Joyce Swenson*:</b>	<b>2011-2021</b>
<b>Amy Dosch:</b>	<b>2021-Present</b>

**MISSISSIPPI:**

<b>Ralph Brewer:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Ted J. Alexander:</b>	<b>1985-86</b>
<b>Vi Gunn:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Buddy Wagner:</b>	<b>1987-96</b>
<b>Caroline Herring:</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
<b>Lynne Geller:</b>	<b>1998-2001</b>
<b>Suzanne Teel:</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>Shanda Barrett:</b>	<b>2004-06</b>

**LaTasha (Grayson) Bibb:** 2006-08  
**Anne McCauley:** 2008-10  
**Justin Phillips:** 2010-2011

**MISSOURI:**

**Bill Heyde:** 1984-89  
**Grace McReynolds:** 1990-91  
**Randy Wortman:** 1991-92  
**Gary Phelps:** 1992-94  
**Carla Holmes:** 1995-96  
**Roy Copeland:** 2013-Present

**MONTANA:**

**Sid Wilson:** 1984-87  
**Rich Wilson:** 1991-94

**NEBRASKA:**

**Judy Henning:** 1984-86  
**John Anstey\*\*:** 1986-2015  
**Jim Barstow** 2015-2017  
**Dr. John Kyndt and Brian Kear** 2017-2018  
**Dr. John Anstey:** 2018-2020  
**Vicki Deniston Reed:** 2020-2023  
**Ardis Moody & Cris Hay-Merchant:** 2023-Present

**NEVADA:**

**Niles Boyles:** 1984-85, 1986-87  
**Marvin Moss:** 1985-86  
**Larry Mason:** 1990-91

**NEW HAMPSHIRE:**

**Walter Borkowski\*\*:** 1985-95  
**Jeff Quinn:** 1995-96  
**Rodney Mansfield:** 1998-2001  
**Norman Katz:** 2002-09

**NEW JERSEY:**

**I.L. Roy Stern:** 1985-87  
**John Geissenger:** 1987-90  
**William Cobb:** 1990-94  
**Jerry Murphy:** 1994-99  
**Mario Volpe:** 1999-02

<b>Lisa Martone:</b>	<b>2002-08</b>
<b>Glenn Koegel:**</b>	<b>2008-2019</b>
<b>Kathy D'Andrea:</b>	<b>2019-2023</b>
<b>John Marshall:</b>	<b>2023-Present</b>

**NEW MEXICO:**

<b>Don Noe:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Mary Nebgen:</b>	<b>1985-87</b>
<b>Yvonne Kauffman:</b>	<b>1987-89</b>
<b>Toni Martorelli:</b>	<b>1989-92</b>
<b>Karen Honeycutt:</b>	<b>1992-2001</b>
<b>Eric Maddy:</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
<b>David Sheriff:</b>	<b>2002-04</b>
<b>Karen Kinsman:</b>	<b>2004-10</b>
<b>Leslie Keeney</b>	<b>2010-2012</b>
<b>Jerry Helgeson</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>

**NEW YORK:**

<b>Joseph Sproule:</b>	<b>1984-89</b>
<b>Nancy Lederer:</b>	<b>1989-96</b>
<b>Steve Saya:</b>	<b>1997-2001</b>
<b>Carol Yohannes:</b>	<b>2001-04</b>
<b>Maggie Burtwell:</b>	<b>2004-08</b>
<b>Barry Jones*:</b>	<b>2008-2023</b>

**NORTH CAROLINA:**

<b>Daniel A. Cockman:</b>	<b>1985-89</b>
<b>Jerry Kasperek:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Riley Bratton:</b>	<b>1990-92</b>
<b>Sonya Lyda:</b>	<b>1992-95</b>
<b>Robert Peterson:</b>	<b>1995-2001</b>
<b>Ann Hooker:</b>	<b>2001-02</b>
<b>Flo Durway:</b>	<b>2002-04</b>
<b>Jennifer Falk:</b>	<b>2004-09</b>

**NORTH DAKOTA:**

<b>Vern Bennet:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>Kathy Hawken:</b>	<b>1992-95</b>
<b>John Antsey:</b>	<b>2013-2015</b>

**OHIO:**

<b>C.A. (Al) Zimmerman:</b>	<b>1984-87</b>
<b>James Costanza:</b>	<b>1987-89</b>
<b>William T. Hiller:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Bill Kraus:</b>	<b>1990-92</b>

<b>Harriet Bush:</b>	<b>1992-98</b>
<b>John Beale**:</b>	<b>1998-2008</b>
<b>James Krancevik:</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>
<b>Joshua Reichard:</b>	<b>2011-2014</b>
<b>Judy Shrefler:</b>	<b>2014-2017</b>
<b>Jennifer Orr:</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Laura Hart:</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
<b>Dan Janning:</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>
<b>Sabrina Neeley:</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>Susan Ayres:</b>	<b>2021-Present</b>

**OKLAHOMA:**

<b>Jerry Moon:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Ivalene Neptune:</b>	<b>1985-94</b>
<b>Donna Wade:</b>	<b>1994-95</b>
<b>Guy Sconzo:</b>	<b>1995-97, 1998-2003</b>
<b>Saundra Vallejo:</b>	<b>1997-98</b>
<b>Patty Neuwirth**:</b>	<b>2003-2015</b>
<b>Shep Pamplin:</b>	<b>2015-2017</b>

**OREGON:**

<b>Bonnie Nalley:</b>	<b>1985-89</b>
<b>William Lakes:</b>	<b>1989-90, 90-01, 91-92</b>
<b>Joan Robbins:</b>	<b>1992-95</b>
<b>Robert Bernhard:</b>	<b>1998-2004</b>
<b>Christian Cerone:</b>	<b>2007-09</b>
<b>Jerry Helgeson:</b>	<b>2013-2016</b>

**PENNSYLVANIA:**

<b>David Emery**:</b>	<b>1985-97</b>
<b>Gus Picardo**:</b>	<b>1996-2008</b>
<b>Michelle Schroeder and</b>	
<b>Joey Duke</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>
<b>Michelle Buchanan**:</b>	<b>2011-2025</b>
<b>Phil Cerami:</b>	<b>2025-Present</b>

**RHODE ISLAND:**

<b>Jim Montague:</b>	<b>1984-87</b>
<b>John Howell:</b>	<b>1987-91</b>
<b>Judy Edsal:</b>	<b>1989-97</b>
<b>Pat Lehnertz**:</b>	<b>1997-2010</b>
<b>Sue Melaragno:</b>	<b>2010-2016</b>
<b>Mary Johnson:</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>
<b>Frank Lenox:</b>	<b>2017-Present</b>

**SOUTH CAROLINA:**

<b>John T. Harllee:</b>	<b>1985-87</b>
<b>Malcolm Doubles:</b>	<b>1987-91</b>
<b>Neal Martin:</b>	<b>1991-98</b>
<b>Joseph P. Clarke:</b>	<b>1999-2003</b>
<b>Peter Sederberg:</b>	<b>2003-06</b>
<b>Davis Baird:</b>	<b>2006-08</b>
<b>Beth Oliver:</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>
<b>Kevin Kirkley:</b>	<b>2012-2017</b>

**SOUTH DAKOTA:**

<b>Sue Hendricks:</b>	<b>1986-87</b>
<b>John Christiansen:</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
<b>Shirley Peterson:</b>	<b>1992-95</b>
<b>John Anstey:</b>	<b>2013-2015</b>

**TENNESSEE:**

<b>Lynne Jordan:</b>	<b>1985-89</b>
<b>James Swain:</b>	<b>1989-98</b>
<b>Cindy Fagan:</b>	<b>1989-2001</b>
<b>Emory Register:</b>	<b>2001-02, 2003-09</b>
<b>Susan Scott-Wilson:</b>	<b>2002-03</b>
<b>Brenda Ables:</b>	<b>2008-2011</b>
<b>Linda Swope:</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
<b>Trent Weaver:</b>	<b>2012-2014</b>
<b>Charlotte Woehler:</b>	<b>2014-2023</b>
<b>Eddie Keel:</b>	<b>2023-Present</b>

**TEXAS:**

<b>Winston Power, Jr.:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Charles Christesson, Jr.:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>C. Lee Meyer**:</b>	<b>1985-2000</b>
<b>Sue Edwards**:</b>	<b>1999-2016</b>
<b>Rick Hopkins:</b>	<b>2016-Present</b>

**UTAH:**

<b>Carla Brooks*:</b>	<b>1984-99</b>
<b>Barbara Hanson:</b>	<b>1999-2002</b>
<b>Ed Rogers**:</b>	<b>2002-2014</b>
<b>Linda Morrison:</b>	<b>2014-2020</b>
<b>Greg Hansen and</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
<b>Stacie Whitford:</b>	<b>2021-Present</b>

**VERMONT:**

<b>Jackie Murphy:</b>	<b>1990-91</b>
<b>Steve Houghton:</b>	<b>1992-94</b>

**VIRGINIA.:**

<b>Jim Wilson:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Cranston Rogers II:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Robert Marshall:</b>	<b>1990-92</b>
<b>Charles Fischer:</b>	<b>1992-94</b>
<b>Warren Stewart:</b>	<b>1995-96</b>
<b>Claude Sandy:</b>	<b>1996-2003</b>
<b>Dr. K. Habib Khan:</b>	<b>2013-14</b>
<b>Naveed Khan</b>	<b>2015-2019</b>

**WASHINGTON:**

<b>Larry Norwood:</b>	<b>1983-86, 1987-91</b>
<b>Tom Kelleher:</b>	<b>1986-87, 1992-95</b>
<b>Dick Kistler:</b>	<b>1991-92</b>
<b>Robert Sahr:</b>	<b>1996-98</b>
<b>Raymond Harry:</b>	<b>1998-2001</b>
<b>Vicki Lee:</b>	<b>2001-09</b>
<b>Jerry Helgeson:</b>	<b>2013-2017</b>

**WEST VIRGINIA:**

<b>Connie Strickland:</b>	<b>1985-92</b>
<b>Cheryl McVay:</b>	<b>1992-94</b>
<b>Brent Kober:</b>	<b>1994-95</b>
<b>Michelle Schroeder:</b>	<b>2013-16</b>

**WISCONSIN:**

<b>James Kroll:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Arnold Chandler:</b>	<b>1985-86</b>
<b>Jim Nys:</b>	<b>1986-89</b>
<b>Richard Terry:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Meg Olejniczak:</b>	<b>1990-99, 2000-01</b>
<b>Sharon Van Den Heuvel:</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>
<b>Molly Ritchie**:</b>	<b>2001-2017</b>
<b>Janelle Bailey:</b>	<b>2017-2022</b>
<b>Amanda Albrecht:</b>	<b>2022-Present</b>

**WYOMING:**

<b>Charles Wing:</b>	<b>1984-85</b>
<b>Sharon Anderson:</b>	<b>1985-86</b>
<b>Kathleen Ragan:</b>	<b>1986-89</b>
<b>Robert Neeb:</b>	<b>1989-90</b>
<b>Greg Tatham:</b>	<b>1990-92</b>
<b>Mohammed Waheed:</b>	<b>1992-94</b>
<b>Karl Bear:</b>	<b>1994-96</b>
<b>Cathy Marine:</b>	<b>1996-2003</b>
<b>Joy Badwound:</b>	<b>2003-04</b>
<b>Denise Marquiss:</b>	<b>2004-06</b>
<b>Maureen Ryff:</b>	<b>2006-2015</b>

<b>Elissa Ruckle:</b>	<b>2015-2022</b>
<b>Art Dominguez:</b>	<b>2025-Present</b>

**CANADA:**

<b>Aileen Munro:</b>	<b>1989-92</b>
<b>Connie McCabe:</b>	<b>1993-94</b>
<b>Jon Gale:</b>	<b>1994-95</b>

**UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 1982-2023**

<b>Dr. Alex D. Aloia</b>	<b>1982-2010</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Dr. James Alvino</b>	<b>1995-2000</b>	<b>Executive Director Emeritus</b>
<b>Dr. James Augustin</b>	<b>1997-Present</b>	<b>Emeritus (2007-2017)</b>
<b>Janelle Bailey</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	
<b>Carol Baker</b>	<b>1997-2003</b>	
<b>Phillip G. Bardos</b>	<b>1982-1983</b>	<b>(Board of Trustees 1983-1987)</b>
<b>Liz Boario</b>	<b>2001-Present</b>	
<b>Robert Brezina</b>	<b>2002-Present</b>	
<b>Robert Broaddus</b>	<b>1982-1992</b>	
<b>Carla Brooks</b>	<b>1992-1994; 2001-2005</b>	
<b>Linda Burgess</b>	<b>1994-1995</b>	
<b>William Burghardt</b>	<b>1986-1987</b>	
<b>Antoinette Martinez Burgoyne</b>	<b>1984-1985</b>	
<b>Harriet Bush</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	
<b>Marilyn Bush</b>	<b>1984-1992</b>	
<b>Arnold Chandler</b>	<b>1985-1992</b>	
<b>Dr. Chad Coauette</b>	<b>2018-Present</b>	
<b>Rogg Collins</b>	<b>1992-2008</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Judith J. Combs</b>	<b>1994-1995</b>	
<b>Mike Cook</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	
<b>Dr. Richard T. Cooper</b>	<b>1983-2016</b>	
<b>Vivian Cornwell</b>	<b>2008-2010</b>	
<b>Barb Courtier</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	
<b>Patricia Higgins Crane</b>	<b>1987-1989</b>	
<b>Patrick Crosetto</b>	<b>2008-2010</b>	
<b>H.E. Cypert, Jr.</b>	<b>1986-1990</b>	
<b>Louis P. Davis</b>	<b>1987-1994</b>	
<b>Dori Denning</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	
<b>Dr. James Dewar</b>	<b>1996-2001</b>	
<b>Joann Duke</b>	<b>2005-2008</b>	
<b>Sue Edwards</b>	<b>2006-2010</b>	
<b>Bruce Ferguson</b>	<b>1986-1996</b>	
<b>Millard F. Foist</b>	<b>1982-1983</b>	
<b>John H. Foley</b>	<b>1991-2021</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Gloria Froehle</b>	<b>2001-2006</b>	

<b>Beverly Froelich</b>	<b>1982</b>	
<b>Lawrence Ganzell</b>	<b>1989-2008</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Denise Greene-Wilkinson</b>	<b>2012-Present</b>	
<b>Judd F. Hambrick</b>	<b>1984-1990</b>	
<b>Max Hammond</b>	<b>1982-1985</b>	
<b>Wade Hampton</b>	<b>1982-1985</b>	
<b>Diane Hansen</b>	<b>2003-2006</b>	
<b>Kyle Harrop</b>	<b>2009-2011</b>	
<b>David Heckman</b>	<b>2016-2018</b>	
<b>Mary Heers</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	
<b>Jerry Helgeson</b>	<b>1994-1996;</b>	<b>2010-2014</b>
<b>Stephanie Sartain Herrera</b>	<b>2001-2011</b>	<b>Leave of Absence</b>
<b>Gary Hinsche</b>	<b>1997-2001</b>	
<b>Eugene R. Hoffman</b>	<b>1984-1987</b>	
<b>Don Hymel</b>	<b>2005-2008</b>	
<b>Joseph D. Johnson</b>	<b>1986-1992</b>	
<b>Joseph Jones</b>	<b>2004 -2014</b>	
<b>Ann B. Joynt</b>	<b>1988-1995</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
<b>Don Kano</b>	<b>1994-1995</b>	
<b>Dr. James Kelley</b>	<b>2004-2011</b>	
<b>Nadine Kujawa</b>	<b>2008-2015</b>	
<b>George Kremer</b>	<b>1986-1987</b>	
<b>Robert W. Lamson</b>	<b>1982-1986</b>	
<b>David B. Lang</b>	<b>1995-1996</b>	
<b>Dr. Joseph P. Linscomb</b>	<b>1982-1983</b>	
<b>Brigitte Lindstrom</b>	<b>2004-2008</b>	
<b>Richard A. Littlestone</b>	<b>1982</b>	
<b>Dr. Pam Lloyd</b>	<b>2011-Present</b>	
<b>Anita Lohr</b>	<b>1988-2014</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Tim Lowe</b>	<b>2001-2003</b>	
<b>Henry Lukas</b>	<b>1992-1994</b>	
<b>Dr. Les Martisko</b>	<b>1995-Present</b>	<b>Executive Director/CEO</b>
<b>Brian Mayhew</b>	<b>1998-2002</b>	
<b>Lidia Li Maylath</b>	<b>2018-Present</b>	
<b>William McFarlin</b>	<b>1987-1992</b>	
<b>Donald R. McLean</b>	<b>1982-1985</b>	
<b>Dr. C. Lee Meyer</b>	<b>1991-1992, 2002-2003</b>	
<b>Dave Mikkalson</b>	<b>2006-2025</b>	
<b>Carmen Mitchell (Howes)</b>	<b>1983-1986</b>	
<b>Nelson Mitchell</b>	<b>1996-2015</b>	
<b>John J. Moeling, Jr.</b>	<b>1991-1994</b>	
<b>Sarah Morris</b>	<b>2024-Present</b>	
<b>Debbie Murmylo</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	
<b>Dr. William H. Nault</b>	<b>1984-1986</b>	
<b>Goldy Norton</b>	<b>1982</b>	
<b>Robert Novell</b>	<b>1985-1986</b>	
<b>Dr. Arnold Oates</b>	<b>1990-1998;</b>	
	<b>2000-2023</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>

<b>Kevin Olson</b>	<b>1997-1999</b>	
<b>A. Robert Paltiel</b>	<b>1984-1990</b>	
<b>Richard Parker</b>	<b>2001-2003</b>	
<b>William B. Patton, Jr.</b>	<b>1982-1987</b>	
<b>Mercedes V. Paxton</b>	<b>2005-Present</b>	
<b>Dr. Alfonso B. Perez</b>	<b>1982-2010</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>
<b>Jack S. Peterson</b>	<b>1986-2021</b>	
<b>Dr. Robert Peterson</b>	<b>1982-2004</b>	<b>Founder</b>
<b>Dr. Kenneth Phillips</b>	<b>1994-2001</b>	
<b>Gus Picardo</b>	<b>2001-2008</b>	
<b>Dr. Paul Possemato</b>	<b>1982-1983; 1991-2020</b>	<b>(Board of Trustees 1983-87); Emeritus</b>
<b>Alan Pound</b>	<b>1995-1996</b>	
<b>Winston C. Power, Jr.</b>	<b>1985-1990</b>	
<b>Asa Reaves, Esq.</b>	<b>1995-2016</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Franklin Reinauer II</b>	<b>1986-2009</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Michael Richards</b>	<b>1998-2002</b>	
<b>Barry Roberts</b>	<b>2002-2004</b>	
<b>Suzanne Eisler Roberts</b>	<b>1982-2022</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Robert Sampieri</b>	<b>1982-1985</b>	
<b>Angie Schendt</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	
<b>Cary Sell</b>	<b>2011-2016</b>	
<b>Frann Shermet</b>	<b>1992-2000</b>	<b>Executive Coordinator</b>
<b>Dr. Gail Siller</b>	<b>2001-2007</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>John Skipper</b>	<b>1992-1995</b>	
<b>Dr. David Steadman</b>	<b>1987-1988</b>	
<b>William A. Straughan</b>	<b>1986-1989</b>	
<b>Dr. E. Arthur Stunard</b>	<b>1994-2023</b>	<b>Emeritus</b>
<b>Robert Suarez</b>	<b>1987-1995</b>	
<b>Cynthia Swetnam</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	
<b>Dr. Brian Talbott</b>	<b>2010-Present</b>	
<b>Dr. Jolene Teske</b>	<b>2016-2024</b>	
<b>Michelle Thomas</b>	<b>1999-2004</b>	
<b>MelloDee Thornton</b>	<b>1996-1998</b>	
<b>Linda Tucker-Harris</b>	<b>1992-1995</b>	
<b>John Varner III</b>	<b>2000-2003</b>	
<b>Jill von Deldon</b>	<b>1990-1996</b>	
<b>Dr. Joan Wade</b>	<b>2017-Present</b>	
<b>William H. Weber</b>	<b>1982-1986</b>	
<b>Keith Wenner</b>	<b>2014-Present</b>	
<b>Jasani Whitehead</b>	<b>2021-2023</b>	
<b>Franklin R. Wurtzel</b>	<b>1989-2019</b>	
<b>Dr. Robert Zeigler</b>	<b>2006-2008</b>	
<b>Dr. Sally Ann Zoll</b>	<b>1997-2014</b>	
<b>Carol Zuniga</b>	<b>1998-2006</b>	

*\*Dates taken from study guides—may have some inaccuracies.*

## **USAD CORPORATE SPONSORS** (for one or more years between 1982 and 2023)

<b>AESA</b>	<b>Intel Foundation</b>
<b>American Airlines</b>	<b>International Academy for Social</b>
<b>American Honda Corporation</b>	<b>Development</b>
<b>Arthur Andersen&amp; Co.</b>	<b>Jostens</b>
<b>Alexander Grant &amp; Co.</b>	<b>Krauz Companies</b>
<b>Ampex Corp.</b>	<b>LearnStar</b>
<b>Atlantic Richfield</b>	<b>Lennox Industries, Inc.</b>
<b>Audience Response Systems</b>	<b>Loeb&amp;Loeb LLP</b>
<b>Blue Shield of CA</b>	<b>McMillian Group</b>
<b>Cado Systems</b>	<b>Meserve, Mumpers &amp; Hughes</b>
<b>California S&amp;L</b>	<b>Motorola</b>
<b>Carl Karcher Corp.</b>	<b>Northrup Grumman</b>
<b>Cable in the Classroom</b>	<b>Panasonic</b>
<b>CNBC</b>	<b>Point Zero</b>
<b>Coca-Cola USA</b>	<b>P.R. Newswire</b>
<b>Data Recognition Corporation</b>	<b>Promethean</b>
<b>D.C. Heath Corporation</b>	<b>Psychological Corp.</b>
<b>DeVry Institute of Technology</b>	<b>Raytheon</b>
<b>Disney Corporation</b>	<b>Ronald McDonald</b>
<b>Dollar General</b>	<b>Scantron</b>
<b>Educational Measurements</b>	<b>Scientific American</b>
<b>Educational Testing Service</b>	<b>Seiko Time Corporation</b>
<b>Enlyght Software</b>	<b>Sourcewell</b>
<b>Epson</b>	<b>South Central Service Cooperative</b>
<b>Ernst &amp; Whinney</b>	<b>Torr Vacuum</b>
<b>Flour Foundation</b>	<b>T.R.W.</b>
<b>Foristall Corp.</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Inc.</b>
<b>Formost McKesson, Inc.</b>	<b>Union Oil Co. of CA</b>
<b>GCI</b>	<b>Woodmen of the World</b>
<b>Harcourt Brace</b>	<b>World Book Inc.</b>
<b>HBO</b>	<b>Xerox Corporation</b>
<b>Hilton</b>	
<b>Home Savings of America</b>	

**\*\*From the records of Dr. Alfonso Perez**

## **CURRENT SPONSORS**

<b>AESA</b>	<b>2017-Present</b>
<b>GCI</b>	<b>2012-Present</b>
<b>Loeb&amp;Loeb</b>	<b>2003-Present</b>
<b>Norsoft Digital Solutions</b>	<b>2006-Present</b>
<b>South Central Service Cooperative</b>	<b>2013-Present</b>
<b>Sourcewell</b>	<b>2018-Present</b>

## **HISTORY OF IDA**

**(International Decathlon for Academics)**

**In 1986, an historic satellite competition was held with four students from Foothill High School in Tustin, CA, pitted against four students from a school in northern Ireland. Software Ireland wanted to demonstrate what could be accomplished with teleconferencing technology. British Telecom produced the competition via satellite in cooperation with ARCO Corporation's Los Angeles Office. The final score was decided on the final question: Foothill 235, Ireland 222.5. As a result of this positive experience, Dr. Peterson formed a separate organization with the title International Decathlon for Academics. Papers of Incorporation were filed and IDA was adopted in 1990 in Costa Mesa, CA, the location of the second competition that same year. Nine students from Orange County's Laguna Hills High School competed against nine from King Edward VI School, in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England.**

**In 1991, a third international competition was conducted over two days via satellite television, matching students from London, Singapore, and New York. The first day was devoted to testing in the nine disciplines. London served as the "Master Venue" and the source for all questions. Questions were displayed simultaneously at each venue on a large screen as well as given verbally to the contestants. The second day scheduled the televising of the "Super Quiz" focusing on the "Global Environment".**

**On May 2, 1992, the Fourth IDA competition was held at Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, California. Countries competing included Argentina, Canada, Australia, England, Mexico, New Zealand, Turkey and the United States.**

**Although enthusiastically received by students and coaches, further financial and technological support did not materialize, and the IDA was forced to dissolve.**

## KRISTIN CAPERTON AWARD

Chairperson Suzanne Eisler Roberts has been instrumental in coordinating this award since its inception. Awardees include teams and individuals who have overcome personal and physical challenges and are inspirations to others. The initial winner was an alternate from Louisiana who walked door-to-door to solicit funds for his team. He did so in a body cast and on crutches. In 1997 all Decathlon participants nationwide were eligible for the award. That year a remarkable student with glioblastoma multiform brain tumor did not make the Nationals, so she was given a Special President's Award. The "surprise" element and support of the team at the national competition was missed so the State Directors requested a return to a winner being selected from the participants at the Nationals. Currently, however, two Caperton Awards are available each year for United States Decathletes participating at any level.

### WINNERS OF THE KRISTIN CAPERTON AWARD

- 1984 *Christopher Scott, Louisiana.*
- 1985 *Samantha Ruth Rawlins, Delaware.*
- 1986 *The Team from Alaska.*
- 1987 *Kelly Griffith, Idaho.*
- 1988 *John Miller, Nebraska.*
- 1989 *Christopher Taylor, Rhode Island.*
- 1990 *Fred Klug, Wisconsin.*
- 1991 *The Team from Kansas.*
- 1992 *Rhondee Johnson, District of Columbia.*
- 1993 *Kevin Bigelow, New York.*
- 1994 *Brian Landrum, Indiana.*
- 1995 *Matthew Bowman, Colorado.*
- 1996 *Ana Ruzic, Kentucky.*

1997 *Laura Gipson, California.*

1998 *Levon Camp, Tennessee.*

1999 *Charlotte Lanvers, Utah.*

2000 *Corinne Schmitt, Colorado.*

2001 *John Mushat, Pennsylvania.*

2002 *Jess Burkle, Ohio.*

2003 *Jameson Lane Oxnard, Pennsylvania.*

2004 *Heather Bandy, California.*

2005 *Natalie Rivera, New Mexico.*

2006 *Joan King, Texas.*

2007 *Duncan Hardee, North Carolina.*  
*Christiana Mata, Washington.*

2008 *Gordon Tahquechi, Oklahoma.*  
*Ryan Joe, Alaska.*

2009 *Robert Dooling, Nebraska.*  
*Andrew Wai, Pennsylvania.*

2010 *Melissa Corbett, South Carolina.*  
*Sara Rice, Nebraska.*

2011 *Tyler Murphy, Ohio.*  
*Renita Buss, Nebraska.*

2012 *Colby Wolfe, Georgia.*  
*Gary Lose, Alaska.*

2013 *Kristian Robinson, Pennsylvania.*  
*Ryder May, Georgia.*

2014 *Beatrice Braeuer, Maine.*

2015 *No award given.*

2016 *Raiden Domingo, Hawaii.*

2017 *Carlos Garcia, Wisconsin.*

*2018 Michael Timmerman, Nebraska.*

*2019 Keyrin Dutko, California  
Gwendolyn Miller, Illinois*

*2020 Siani Booth, Arizona  
Alex Welshons, Minnesota*

*2021 Julia Holdcroft, Nebraska  
Kate Lasko, Wisconsin*

*2022 Levi Seymour, Texas  
Logan Williams, Idaho*

*2023 Ellie Tavani, Georgia  
Sophie Walker, Arizona*

*2024 Benjamin Chicoria, Texas  
Ashley Stevens, Iowa*

*2025 Jesus Gomez, Texas  
Isak Autrey, Ohio*

*COMMENTS BY*  
*UNITED STATES PRESIDENTS*



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 29, 1985

I am pleased to send warm greetings to those students and educators who are participating in the United States Academic Decathlon this week in Los Angeles. I understand nearly 300 students representing some 40 states are taking part in this unique academic competition.

I also extend my congratulations to the winners of this year's decathlon. However, it is clear that there are no losers. Each of you has excelled and should be proud to represent your various schools and communities.

America's strength depends on the continuing development of our young people's minds. USAD is a fine example of this, particularly since students at all academic levels are encouraged to participate in all phases of competition.

In addition, USAD demonstrates the importance of local communities taking the initiative to enhance the work of our educational systems. It is also encouraging to find that companies in the private sector, such as World Book, Inc., are enthusiastically joining in this effort.

I wish each of you great success as you continue your education and commend you for rising to the challenge of the United States Academic Decathlon.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Reagan".

*President Ronald Reagan*  
*March 29, 1985*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

April 12, 1996

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, for the National Finals of the United States Academic Decathlon.

As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, our nation is faced with many challenges, and I firmly believe that education is the key to overcoming those challenges. It is through education that we learn to excel, that we are able to remain competitive, and that we are able to live in unity within our global environment. This year's theme, "Competition and Cooperation," reflects this principle, and you have proved its value by learning to work and study together while advancing the academic standards of American education.

I congratulate all the students participating in this year's event for the diligent study, hard work, and dedication that brought you to this level of competition. Our nation's young people are the next generation of leaders and thinkers, and as my Administration works to rebuild America, I am counting on you to act as role models for every student who has a desire to succeed.

Best wishes for an exciting decathlon and for every future success.

*Bill Clinton*

***President William Jefferson Clinton***  
***April 12, 1996***



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 17, 2001

I am pleased to send warm greetings to the 39 state championship teams and 16 small division winners attending the National Finals of the United States Academic Decathlon.

Participating in activities such as scholastic team competitions is an outstanding way to stretch your mind and to gain greater knowledge. Young people performing in such events learn discipline, focus, and teamwork. Those lessons can be very helpful to them in the classroom and in their future careers. I commend you for your commitment to excellence and dedication in earning a spot in the competition, and I encourage you to keep setting high goals as you prepare for new challenges ahead. I also salute your parents and instructors for their encouragement and support of your efforts.

Best wishes on this special occasion.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "George W. Bush".

***President George W. Bush***  
***April 17, 2001***

"America 2000 is a challenge posed to each of us - to literally reinvent American education. To reach deep within us to find answers - so that our kids can reach out to find the stars.

And that's why I am so proud of you as messengers of this idea. Your lives and your accomplishments speak to other kids the way no words from a government or even a teacher can. These kids look at each of you and they see themselves. They look at you and they see what they, too, can become.

And that's what a new kind of hero is. A new generation of heroes. With the good values you learn from disciplined determination. The sharp mind that's not wasted on drugs. The confidence and pride that come from stretching yourself, proving yourself. You're the ones who will help our America 2000 dream come true."

***President George Herbert Walker Bush***

***Presidential Address***

***April 25, 1991***

***The White House***



*National Winners from Texas visit President George Herbert Walker Bush at the White House on April 23, 1992.*

“The importance of this kind of pursuit of educational excellence cannot be overemphasized. We’re at a moment in our history when we have to increase the educational ability of all Americans; and in which it is not simply important how much our people know, but what they are capable of learning and how quickly and well they are capable of thinking through complex problems that may face them tomorrow but are even unpredictable today. Because of these kinds of challenges, we cannot meet our educational excellence goals through government mandates, we have to meet them through incentives and through environments which promote excellence and leadership from teachers and principals, the kind of group work that we see in this Academic Decathlon.”

*President William Jefferson Clinton  
The Rose Garden  
April 1993*