

# HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

August 2, 2019

Dear Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to send my warmest greetings to everyone gathered at Trinity Washington University for the culmination of the Matthew Harris Ornstein Memorial Debate Camp.

As a student, I loved studying history and current events not only for their informational value, but also because they prepared me to become a better citizen. I was interested in politics from an early age, and I loved to practice my debating skills with my friends whether about world peace, baseball scores, or whatever topic came to mind. In high school, I had the opportunity to hone my debate skills, which set me up for success in college, law school, in advocacy and law practice, politics, public service, and, of course, winning arguments with my husband!

It may surprise you to learn this, but I was an active Young Republican when I was in high school, and supported arch-conservative Barry Goldwater when he ran for president. We staged a mock presidential debate for the 1964 election at my school. Mr. Baker, a young government teacher who knew I was supporting Goldwater, assigned me to play the role of President Lyndon Johnson, and my friend, Ellen—a vocal Johnson supporter—to play Goldwater. While we both protested, Mr. Baker said this would force each of us to learn about issues from the other side. So I immersed myself—for the first time—in President Johnson's Democratic positions on civil rights, health care, poverty, and foreign policy. I resented every hour spent in the library reading the Democrats' platform and White House statements. But as I prepared for the debate, I found myself arguing with more than dramatic fervor.

By the time we graduated from college, Ellen and I had both changed our political affiliations, but that early experience curated by Mr. Baker taught me a key lesson of debating: you have to know, and understand, all sides. Doing this helped me make the best case I could for what I believed, while also understanding better what those who believed the opposite felt, and why they believed what they believed. Learning how to research, how to think on my feet, how to speak in front of others, including large audiences—which was really terrifying the first times I had to do it—and how to interact in a civil way with my opponents, even when we lost the debate, are all skills and lessons I have carried with me ever since.

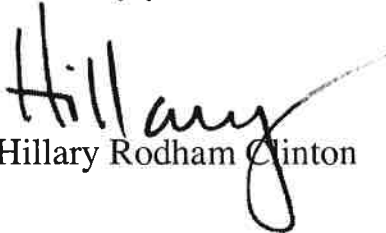
And so, today I am writing to congratulate you for going into this arena, learning debate, and moving into competitive debating throughout the year. I hope you will keep studying and learning, because the experience you will have and the skills you will hone will help you succeed in life no matter where your future takes you. Being able to stand up for yourself, articulate an idea, and think strategically about an argument are not just debate skills, they are important life skills.

I would like to thank the Washington Urban Debate League for what it does, and especially the Ornstein-Harris family for creating the Matthew Harris Ornstein Summer Debate Institute. Judy Harris was my classmate at Yale Law School, and I helped her win our prize trial competition, so I know full well where Matthew got his ability to argue! And I was fortunate to know Matthew from the time he was a young man, and saw him blossom as he excelled at debate. I honor his memory, as you do by carrying his legacy forward.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in the Matthew Harris Ornstein Memorial Debate Camp, and please know that I am cheering you all on for futures of great success!

With best wishes and warm regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



Hillary Rodham Clinton



BARACK OBAMA

August 2, 2019

I am pleased to send greetings to everyone gathered at Washington Latin Public Charter School today to celebrate the incredible strides made by each of you during your last two weeks participating in the Matthew Ornstein Memorial Debate Camp. Although I could not join you in person in Washington, I want you to know I am inspired by your hard work and your growth.

There is nothing that gives me and Michelle greater hope for our bright future than the creative ideas and inquisitive minds of our students. Your generation holds the greatest stake in our future and a primary role in shaping it, and in the coming years, America will look to you to help solve our most difficult challenges. As long as you stay engaged in the world around you, continue looking for ways to help others, and never give up on yourself, I'm confident our tomorrow will be brighter and more beautiful.

Congratulations to an outstanding group of young people! Keep aiming high, keep dreaming big dreams, and know that Michelle and I will be rooting for you every step of the way.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Barack Obama', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.