

SHOULD GIRLS TAKE DEBATE?



This was the headline in October 30, 1937 issue of The Loyolan, the school newspaper of Mankato Loyola High School. The article was provided to me by one of our parents who found this in some old family files. I thought this historical perspective might be of interest to everyone. The complete, unedited debate is provided:

PRO

"At Loyola, girl debaters are as scarce as boy cheerleaders. Males continue to monopolize this activity in which females have not penetrated for the last four years at least. One wonders how this situation exists when other schools have the predicament in reverse. Debaters will testify that last year they met more girls than boys while debating.

Although [at Loyola] boys

outnumber girls three to one, it seems that girls, who possess that natural vocal ability attributed to all women, would immediately be attracted to speech activity. Debate at Loyola will continue to thrive without female participants as will cheerleading without the antics of "men," but still an invitation is extended for girls to take advantage of this opportunity. It appears that this is the stronghold that boys always have had and always will have more to say about than girls.

CON

"Debaters, you know not what you ask. You will rue the day you asked girls to come into precincts hitherto sacred to boys only. When women enter anything, they take possession, lock, stock and barrel.

Today, you think it would

be nice to hear the feminine side of an argument once in a while. Tomorrow, you will discover that girls are quicker, girls pay more attention to small details, girls as a rule will keep such things as evidence cards in neater order, girls are willing work hard, especially to please a male.

What happens? The debater who works hardest will forge ahead the fastest. Day after tomorrow, Loyola's first string debaters will include one girl, two girls perhaps. Day after tomorrow, girls will be filling in on both sides of the argument. Next year, debating will have become an all-girl activity. It's happened before debaters. Take warning!

(Bob Ihrig, Southern Minnesota District Chair and editor of the MDTA Last Rebuttal).