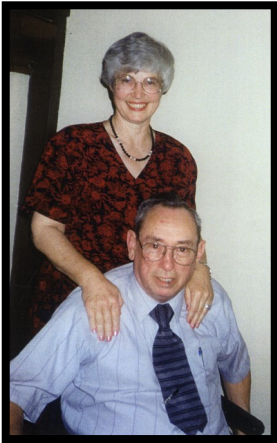


Catherine “Cathy” Berman

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1995



Catherine Wienhold was born in 1941 in Denver, Colorado, albeit Colorado would never be home. In 1942, the family relocated to the Seattle, Washington, area where both of her parents worked in the shipyard. Following the war, the family moved inland to the Wenatchee Valley.

In 1953, Catherine and her mother left that rural existence behind and moved to the San Francisco Bay area. Catherine entered Harry Ells Jr. High School and stayed there for six years as the school transitioned into a high school.

In February of 1958, a fellow student took Catherine to meet a new teacher, a young man named Sanford Berman who had been hired mid-year to teach Oral English and European History. This new teacher was planning to start a forensic team. Fifteen minutes later, Catherine had a new activity

(debate), a much-increased workload, and no more available Saturdays.

Her collegiate work was at UC Berkeley where she earned her B.A. (French, English, and Spanish), elementary and secondary credential, and a MAT in French.

In 1978, CHSSA Hall of Famer, David Dansky, approached Cathy and asked her to replace him at Kennedy High School so that he could take a one-year sabbatical. At that time Kennedy High School was the leading NFL chapter in the nation. Having accepted the challenge, Catherine later wrote, “It was an exhausting introduction to being a coach; it was fine preparation for what lay ahead.”

In August, 1981, the Principal at El Cerrito High approached her regarding an opening in English-with Forensics as her adjunct duty. “No more free Saturdays once again.” It was but four years after she accepted this fulltime coaching position that she was honored by being elected District Teacher of the Year and Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year; an honor that she would receive a second time in 1993.

June, 1985, was memorable as Catherine made her first trip to the NFL National Tournament with an entry from El Cerrito High - in policy debate. During her twenty years at El Cerrito, she would make a total of fourteen trips to Nationals, and her students would earn a third place in policy debate in 1999 and a first place in L.D. in 2002.

Catherine also served the speech community at the national level as a member of the San Francisco Bay NFL district committee and was district chairperson from 1996-2001. At the state level, Catherine became treasurer of the Golden Gate Speech Association in 1985. She also served multiple times as the league’s debate director and events director. From 1988-1995 Catherine served on the California High School Speech Council.



Co-coaches at El Cerrito High School: She retired in January, 2002, as a three diamond NFL coach; he was a two-diamond coach. They shared a lifetime. It seemed only right to share the NFL points. In 1995 both she and her husband were inducted into the CHSSA Hall of Fame, the first couple to be so honored.