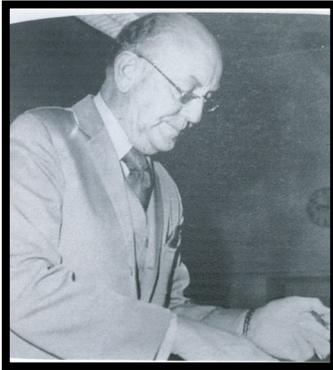


Jack Nolen

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1988



Teaching and coaching speech was not the first career of Jack Nolen. Jack came to education after he retired from the Navy. He was a Navy balloon pilot during WWII and stayed in to retire as a full Commander. It only makes sense that a retired naval officer and his wife would choose a Navy town to call home. Thus, he started his teaching at Chula Vista High School in Chula Vista, California. Jack felt that service to speech was what each coach owed to the activity and he led by example. Whenever a job needed to be done Jack was willing to assume the responsibility. From 1969 to 1971, he was the San Diego Imperial Valley Speech League president. He was Southern California NFL District Chairman, CHSSA area IV chairperson and CHSSA Area IV Rep at Large. His fellow coaches recall that he, “taught the SDIVSL how important service was to speech.”

While in the classroom, Jack worked countless hours with students. It was while Jack was still teaching that he was able to persuade the governing board of the Sweetwater Union High School District to add speech as a required class for graduation from all eight of the district’s high schools. In 1977, Jack left the classroom and moved to the district office where he served as Director of Speech Education. He was to see to it that each of the schools had a strong speech curriculum and the materials with which to teach it. Those inside the league knew Jack for his dedication to speech education as well as what he called “sartorial splendor.” Those outside the league, if they did not know Jack well, only saw his “satirical splendor.”

Jack must have had more sport coats, slacks, shirts, ties, shoes, and hats than anyone. He was able to mix and match his clothing to fit any occasion. His ties always matched his shirts, his shirts matched his sport coat and the shoes always went with the outfit. Chuck Johnson, another CHSSA Hall of Famer, tells the following story about Jack: “Jack arrived at a tournament and realized he was wearing a *brown* belt. He turned to Chuck with a horrified look on his face and said, ‘Will you watch my kids while I go home to change this belt?’” Maybe it was all those years of wearing uniforms that made him so style conscious.

In 1978, the year after Jack left the classroom, Bonita Vista High School took over hosting the interpretation tournament Jack started and named it in his honor. The tournament also started a “Coach of the Year” award that was centered on what Jack had taught the league: “Your success as a coach cannot be judged solely from a win-loss record or the number of qualifiers you may have amassed, but your success needs to be judged also on what you have done to serve speech in your school district, your league, the state and the nation.” Jack did each of these things, and he did them with pride.

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