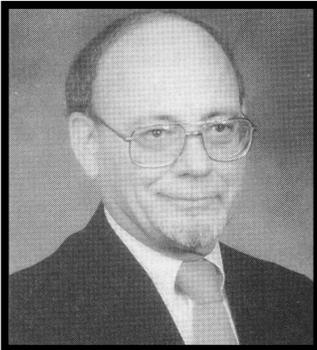


Larry Smith

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1988



Larry was born and raised in Chadron, Nebraska, a small ranching community that has a state college as its “major” industry. He was an only child. His mother was a school teacher and his father was a salesman.

He became interested in speech by taking a couple of years of speech classes from, what he labels, “a very excellent teacher.” He also served in various capacities for four years on the yearbook staff. There was no debate team.

He started college at Chardon State College in 1954, and claims he did not adapt well to the discipline of college study, but did develop a love for playing bridge in the student union. Thinking he needed to find something else in life beyond western Nebraska, he entered the United States Army.

While home on leave, Larry proposed to his high school sweetheart. She accepted. After Army duty was complete, he returned to Chadron and reenrolled in college. Finding jobs was hard in a small town; so, it was not too difficult for a friend to convince him to move to Fresno, California, where he checked in to Fresno State as a theater major.

His first teaching job was drama and English at Mt. Whitney High School in Visalia (Taking the position left by Shirley Keller; who also went on to be a California and NFL Hall of Famer). Ultimately ending up at Hoover High in Fresno, Larry taught and coached speech and debate from 1967 until his retirement in 1996.

He served in many CHSSA positions: Area II chairman, vp activities, president from 1977 to 1980 and treasurer from 1980 until 2000. He was also an NFL district chairman for thirteen years.

When asked of earned awards he tells us, “I was an Eagle Scout in high school. Believe that? There were eleven Eagle scouts on our football team one year. We didn’t win many games, but we were honorable, truthful, “mostly” kind, etc., etc..” In addition to his scouting medals, Larry was a triple diamond NFL coach; Teacher of the Year in Fresno Unified; and was awarded the NFL Ralph Carey District Chair National Award.

When asked whether his twenty-eight years in forensics were worth it, he was quick to reply, “You bet, but I’m happy to relinquish the reins to younger folk.” Speaking to coaches, he continued, “Just remember, what you are doing is providing the skills and confidence they need to survive in life. Teach them first. Coach them second. Winning plastic trophies massages the ego. Seeing future success because of what you taught provides the satisfaction that you did your job properly and well...” For his commitment to the forensics community and its students Larry Smith was inducted into the National Forensic League Hall of Fame in 1996 and the California High School Speech Association Hall of Fame in 1988.

**“Teach them
first...
Coach them
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