

# Natalie Weber

## CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1987



NFL Triple Diamond Coach Natalie Weber is a charter member of the CHSSA Hall of Fame and was amongst the original organizers of the California High School Speech Association. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1957 she attended the first California State Speech Council organizational meeting. Despite her retirement from coaching, her work for the council continues to this day as she organizes the famous state dinner dance each year for the state championship competitors and their coaches. The annual event has become an integral part of the state tournament.

Throughout the sixties, seventies, eighties and early nineties she represented the northern portion of the state on the curricular part of the council and later served as curriculum vice-president. Her school district was very supportive and not only duplicated materials for her, but gave her time off for what she termed “missionary work” which meant time off for her to visit schools, talk to individuals, departments and administrators regarding the inclusion of speech in the curriculum and the advantages of joining CHSSA. Natalie went on to represent CHSSA to the Western Speech Communication Association. She was also instrumental in the development of the CHSSA *Framework* and served as NFL district chair for six years in addition to serving as host for the National NFL Tournament held at Stanford University. She was named to the NFL Hall of Fame in 1989.

Natalie credits her eventual involvement in speech to her mother who would practice play readings in the living room as Natalie was growing up. Natalie attended Northwestern University’s National High School Institute where she competed on her school’s first ever speech team and earned an award at the Illinois State Tournament in dramatic interpretation. She attended Northwestern where she earned her teaching credential before moving to California to get her master’s degree from Stanford University. She taught at the summer institute at Northwestern for seven years and served as oral interpretation chair.

She taught drama and speech at Sunnyvale High School for seven years before transferring to Homestead High School. She succeeded in convincing the district that ALL students should receive instruction in oral communication as part of the basic curriculum. She writes, “I firmly believe that speaking skills are necessary for all educated students and the teaching of them should be a fundamental part of any high school program.”

She shares with us that she feels her greatest accomplishments are the alumni from her more than thirty-eight years of teaching. They are lawyers, leaders in government, education, business and social concerns at the highest level. One year after graduation a student approached and thanked her. She thought he meant for the tournaments, the trips and the trophies. Quietly he told her, “No, that wasn’t it... Thank you; you taught me to think.”

