

Rita Prichard

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 2002



In 2002, Rita Prichard, Granite Bay High School, became the first Sacramento League coach to be elected into the CHSSA Hall of Fame. Rita began her interest in speech as a high school student under the calm and encouraging instruction of her high school drama teacher, Mr. Norman Berryhill. Rita describes herself as "very shy and very hesitant about starting high school. I just happened to find myself in the drama teacher's freshman English class. Writing speeches and delivering monologues were class requirements!" She credits Mr. Berryhill and his patient support with changing her life.

Due to the remote location of her school, no interscholastic competition was available, except through invitationals. Southern Oregon College, in Ashland, hosted the equivalent of the Oregon State Qualifiers and SOC allowed

Rita's coach to bring a few competitors. She won the qualifier spot in programmed reading two years in a row, but could never attend the Oregon State Tournament as a California resident. Her events of choice were programmed reading (thematic), humorous, dramatic, oratory, duo and expository. She believes that trying every event, including policy, eventually helped her become a coach prepared and willing to provide a program of depth and variety.

After high school, Rita continued her interest in speech competition at Chico State and spent two years team debating and traveling with a team of twenty college students. "We had a great team and a great coach. I had a chance to travel, see some very competitive rounds, win some hardware and manage an expense account for my food. It was a great way for a starving college student to eat well!"

Rita established her first team at Galt High School in 1984. After her own successful speech and debate experience, she was determined to provide a like experience for her students. She has dedicated herself to academic excellence and developing oral communication skills in the leaders of tomorrow. Rita was the coach of the 1999 LD State Champion. In 2000 she moved to build a new program at Granite Bay High School. Her students continue to excel on all levels in a "one coach program" that offers all twelve individual events and debate.

Rita served as the president of the Sacramento Forensic League for ten years, hosting the 1994 State Tournament at Sacramento City College and coordinating the community judges in 2006 at the Sierra College state tournament. As a long-time member of the CHSSA curriculum committee she contributed to academic publications including the 1996 CHSSA Coaches' Handbook and the 2004 CHSSA Speaking Across the Curriculum. In addition, for three years, as CHSSA vice president of curriculum, Rita has spear-headed a series of DVD instructional materials – *expository, advocacy, student congress and thematic* – that feature powerful lessons and example speeches.

Her concern for her students, the success they have realized because of her tutelage, the mentoring she has provided in building quality speech education programs in her league and throughout the state – these are just a few of the reasons for the high esteem with which she is regarded by her friends and fellow teachers.

