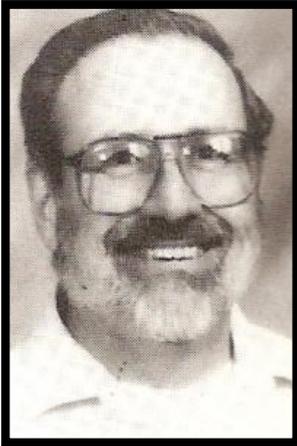


Tom Roper

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1989

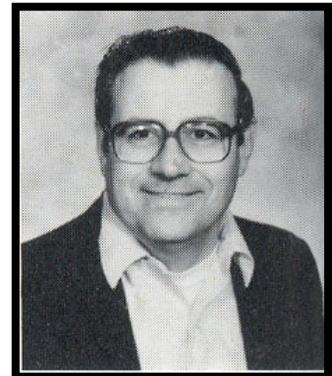


Born in Wellsville, New York, Tom attended St. Vincent Prep in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where he competed in high school extemp and debate. Despite the fact that he had no coach, he was able to advance to the State Championships, and won the Pennsylvania State Championship in extemporaneous speaking. He graduated from high school in 1959 before attending Georgetown University where he competed in debate before earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1963. While attending Georgetown, Tom majored in English, History and Philosophy. He eventually moved to California where in 1968 he earned his Masters Degree from the University of California Riverside.

Tom not only began Yucaipa High School's speech program, but he coached there for his entire teaching career. During his coaching career, he not only had a great impact on his students, but on speech education in general. He was a leader in the Citrus Belt Speech Region serving as an officer every year for fifteen years. Five of those years he held the office of league president. In honor of Tom Roper's numerous contributions, The Citrus Belt Speech Region named their sweepstakes trophy after him!

Tom also served the California State Speech Council as a representative at large and later as area IV chairperson. In addition, he served on the National Forensic League District Committee for fifteen years: Four years as district chairperson. During his years of service, Tom made many great contributions to high school speech, but perhaps most memorable is that he was responsible for devising the current method of allocating qualifiers for the state tournament. A complex system that took into account the importance of league and area balances along with the importance of weighing in the total number of kids being given the opportunity to participate from each area over the previous three years.

Tom's students also attained a great deal of competitive success, during his time at Yucaipa, students won the NFL District Sweepstakes three times, and the Citrus Belt Speech Region Sweepstakes Award eight times. An NFL triple diamond coach, Tom coached nearly 200 students to the State Championships including a State Champion in extemp. He also coached nearly forty students to the NFL National Championships including three national finalists!



Tom writes, "I have always been convinced that students really benefit from the activity and as long as coaches meet their responsibility of teaching ethics, the winning will take care of itself."

In recognition of his contributions to the California High School Speech Association and its students Tom Roper was inducted into the CHSSA Hall of Fame in 1989!

Sadly, Tom passed away in March of 2009.