

Veva Bissonnette/Jenkins

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1996



Veva Bissonnette Jenkins was born in San Francisco, California. She attended Cupertino High School where she was coached by the late and very much missed Penny Johnson.

She completed her undergraduate degree at Brigham Young University where she majored in English with an emphasis in Communication. Following her time at Brigham Young she completed her masters degree in special education at Santa Clara University.

Veva coached at many schools throughout her tenure including one year each at Lehi High School (Utah), Del Norte High School (California), Camas High School (Washington), and three years at Cupertino High School. The majority of her coaching time was spent at Saratoga High School, where she coached sixteen years. Veva's coaching career was highlighted by several state finalists and champions and five national finalists!

In addition to coaching forensics, Veva served the forensic community by acting as league director of debate for ten years and league president for two years.

When not coaching speech, Veva enjoys spending time with her husband of over twenty years, Charlie, and their son. Although she never had time for hobbies while coaching, now that she lives in rural Washington, she spends a great deal of time gardening. She quips, "I still can't get over the miracle of putting seed in the dirt and getting flowers or food!"

Veva had a similar affect on her students as many of them went from timid high school students to successful adults because of her nurturing and care. Several of her students have gone on to do great things although she modestly says, "Speech kids have a tendency to do that!" Her students have started successful businesses, become doctors or lawyers, and one even went on to follow in Veva's footsteps by becoming a teacher.

Veva once wrote, "If I am remembered at all, I hope it is for my honesty and ethics. I tried hard to instill these qualities in my students."

She gives a great deal of credit for her success to having three great ladies of speech and debate as her mentors: her former coach Penny Johnston, and two of the "greats of speech" California High School Speech Association and National Forensic League Hall of Famers: Carmendale Fernandes and Shirley Keller-Firestone.

For her great service to the speech community and her students Veva Bissonnette-Jenkins was inducted into the California High School Hall of Fame in 1996.

