

# David Mezzera

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## CHSSA HALL OF FAME 2000



The arena of forensics has been a significant component of David Mezzera's academic life. His CHSSA involvement spanned nearly twenty-five years; from his years as a high school debater to student instructor, assistant coach, high school debate director and CHSSA council member.

David was influenced into coaching by Fr. Charles Henry, a Jesuit who had been his instructor and who hired him to become his replacement. A photo of David and his coach Fr. Henry appears at the bottom right of this page. During his competitive high school career David was a three-year state tournament qualifier and NFL Nationals participant.

Upon completing his post-secondary degree, David began coaching and teaching at St. Ignatius College Prep in San Francisco. During this time he led students to the state speech championship tournament sixteen consecutive years. He also coached twenty-five qualifiers to nationals where David's students enjoyed several finalist finishes in student congress as well as a third place finish in team debate. In 1986 the St. Ignatius team earned the NFL Student Congress Sweepstakes Award.

Although Dave's students competed in multiple events, his true love and passion was for student congress. He served multiple years as the co-clerk of the National Forensic League national congress tournament. Dave was also instrumental in rejuvenating student congress as a CHSSA event in the mid-80s by helping to establish the "super-session" tradition and uplifting its status as a successful tournament event.

His personal life was also steered by forensics as he and his wife Helen met at a speech tournament while she was coaching at a competing high school. The two would coach for many years, and spent many a years' vacation at the front - or back- end of a tournament somewhere around the country.

When his high school removed public speaking from its curriculum, David turned over the reins of the debate program, but that did not stop his interest in student congress. He co-authored the National Textbook Company's instructional text *Student Congress and Lincoln-Douglas Debate*, and continues to serve as clerk for the Bay District's student congress.

In addition, he teaches parliamentary procedure as a registered member of the National Association of Parliamentarians, and administers congressional workshop debates during June and July for the Jr. Statesmen of American's summer schools.

For his dedication to the California High School Speech Association and its students David "Dave" Mezzera was inducted into the CHSSA Hall of Fame in 2000.

