

Gay Brasher

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1991



Gay P. Brasher began coaching speech in 1966 at Carencro High School. Within two years, she was named Louisiana Speech Teacher of the Year and chosen as President-elect of the Louisiana Speech Association. She has a B.A. in speech education and a master's degree in secondary schools' education from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. Gay achieved a Degree of Highest Distinction in her four years of collegiate speech and debate competition. This experience not only helped her initially in Louisiana, but also carried on to California when she moved to San Jose in 1970. Here, on her own initiative, she started forensics programs concurrently at all six San Jose Unified High Schools and continued to simultaneously direct these programs for a decade. In 1998, she was named San Jose Uni-

fied's Teacher of the Year in recognition of her many contributions to the district and its students.

Gay currently coaches at Leland which was the nation's largest NFL chapter in 2000 and 2004. Her program was also recognized with the Speech Communication Association's K-12 Model Program Award. Gay served on the CHSSA council from 1985 to 2002: Four terms as president of the CFL and eighteen years as Area I Chair.

She retired from full time teaching in June of 2002 but continues to volunteer over forty-five hours per week as the director of Forensics at Leland in addition to her part-time employment at the school. Gay also volunteers at an urban middle school, which has since been named a communications magnet, by teaching speech in seven English classes. She also directs after-school speech programs for middle school students in San Jose Unified. Gay also volunteers at another local high school teaching speech one day a week in its IB program, and teaches speech at the district's continuation school. The curriculum used in these programs is developed by Gay and her Leland students, who also generously provide workshops, and performance evenings to help new local forensics programs.

Gay directs two tournaments for students outside of the Leland program. Starting in 1986, she began annual middle school tournaments for the local feeder school. In the spring she will host a middle school forensics tournament offering standards-based events. And since 1992, she has hosted annual speech tournaments for English Second Language students from throughout the Santa Clara School District. She was the recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Associations Good Neighbor Award in 1999. In addition, she is a 2008 Honoree for the Tribute to Women Award, honoring Silicon Valley's Executive Women.



Gay was elected to the CHSSA Hall of Fame in 1991 and the National Forensic League Hall of Fame in 2006. A five diamond coach she was named NFL's Coach of the Year in 2000. Recently, Leland's new small auditorium was named in her honor. Gay attributes her longevity in the profession to the help and support she receives from her students, their parents, and the school. She especially enjoys the camaraderie of the California coaches and says tournaments are as much fun for her as they were for her students.