

Karen Glahn-Meredith

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 2003



Born and raised in Stockton, California, Karen feels that her father, a lawyer, was the one who started her career in speech and debate. She tells us, "My father always believed, and what I have passed on to my students, there is no better training for life than debate and speech." When her sister, two years older than she, attended tournaments, Karen would tag along. She got to know the events and began forming friendships. So it wasn't a surprise that in her freshman year she joined the team, although she quips that she might have been disowned by her father if she hadn't!

In the summer of 1979 she attended the Redlands debate camp where she met renowned coaches Randy McCutcheon and Bonnie Miller. Competing in drama, humor and debate, high school speech became the focus of her education. She loved speech, "even though the tournaments were long, the competition was stiff and the buses were early." She had a number of debate partners, all of whom she feels helped her become a better thinker and be to handle defeat. Karen qualified to the state championship tournament in her senior year.

Upon graduating from Lincoln, she attended Colby College in Waterville, Maine. During her senior year, she was offered a position at her alma mater, Lincoln, as a speech coach and English teacher. She tells it this way, "I came back to Stockton and Lincoln. Even though I was a new coach, I was not new to the Yosemite Forensic League. I spent the next sixteen years learning from and working with a most wonderful group of people."

She took on leadership roles in the YFL almost immediately, serving as secretary, vice president, and eventually president. She was later elected area II chair. She discovered what it was like to help run a state tournament while running the judging houses at state and serving on the congress and IE committees. A few years later, she was elected CHSSA vice-president of activities and thus director of the CHSSA state tournament. She claims this was both a difficult and rewarding aspects of her coaching career, "I was most proud of the tournament we held at Delta College in 1998. The YFL put on a first class tournament." After three years as VP, she took a year off from the council, but found herself unable to stay away resuming her roll in CHSSA as curriculum representative and a year later editor of the *CHSSA Bulletin*. She continued as editor and a member of the curriculum committee until 2007 despite the fact that she retired from coaching in 2003. She also served as IE tabroom director through the 2008 state tournament.



Karen recalls that throughout her years of work, "The coaches that became my friends are important to me, but my students are the real reason I continued coaching. I had the pleasure to coach so many wonderful young people who have gone on to become teachers, coaches, doctors, lawyers and anything else that they have wanted to be. Ultimately, I would not trade any of my speech experiences for money or fame. And I certainly would not trade any of my hats!"