

Myrna Goodwin

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 1996



Myrna Goodwin had her first competitive speech experience at a small high school near Oberlin, Ohio. She and her debate partner represented Firelands High using 'recipe boxes' to hold their evidence. After graduating in 1961, she attended Miami University in Ohio and majored in mathematics with plans to teach high school. She soon discovered her electives in communications, oral interpretation, drama, plus a few speech tournaments were far more interesting, and by the time she graduated, she had a double major.

Myrna's first teaching position—in speech, not math—was at Fairborn High School near Dayton, Ohio. She recalls that tournaments were simple back then with just three rounds, no double entries, ribbons rather than trophies, and entry fees were only a quarter. But the educational opportunities for her students and the excitement of competition were there. It was quite a learning experience for Myrna because her teams competed in a league with five future NFL Hall of Fame coaches—Arlene Akerman, Phyllis Barton, Ralph Bender, Leah Funck, and Esther Kalmbach.

After four years, Myrna and husband Jim packed their belongings into a U-Haul and headed for San Diego. They arrived at the end of August—unemployed teachers. Good fortune smiled on Myrna because Robert Sanders, Mount Miguel High School speech teacher and forensics coach, was leaving teaching to assume a position in counseling. By the second week of the school year, Myrna had inherited Bob's classes, an active speech team, a classroom full of trophies, and Bob's job on the committee to revise the SDIVSL constitution.

For the next thirty-one years, Myrna taught speech, drama, English and even math at Mt. Miguel. Although she coached all events early in her career, she later focused on prepared individual events—to fit in the time to direct two or three drama productions yearly. Miguel teams attended the state tournament twenty-six times and ranked in the top ten schools on two occasions. They also attended the nationals fourteen times taking twenty-seven students. Myrna was thrilled to end her career at the 2000 Portland Nationals where her students placed first, fifth and sixth.

During her years at Miguel, Myrna also served as secretary, vice president, and president of the San Diego Imperial Valley Speech League; committee member and chairperson of the Southern California NFL District; and Area IV Chair and member-at-large for the CHSSA. In 1979, 1987, 1991, and 1999 she served on the SDIV committee to host the State Championships.

Since retiring in 2000, Myrna continues to work with high school speech and drama programs on a limited basis and travels extensively with her husband Jim. Myrna has a sweatshirt with the quote, "Just Do It!" She believed if she could convince high school students to 'just do it'—try competitive speech, it could change their world and open up countless opportunities.

