

Suzanne Munsell

CHSSA HALL OF FAME 2007



Suzanne Munsell has been a high school English and speech teacher for twenty-four years. She taught at Antelope Valley High School and Corona Del Mar High School for a combined four years before finding her true home at Esperanza High School in Anaheim where she has spent the last twenty years. Suzanne's family includes her husband Gregg and cats Clara, Sam, Suki, and Leo.

Looking back, it seemed highly unlikely that Suzanne would ever become a speech and debate coach. The last speech class she took was in eighth grade. She was terrified at having to deliver the valedictory at her high school graduation. None of the schools she attended offered forensics programs so she never had the opportunity to compete. In fact, she didn't even know what the activity was until she became a student teacher at Corona Del Mar. Suzanne's master teacher was retiring from coaching, and no one else on campus was willing to replace her. Using their well-honed persuasive skills, the students convinced Suzanne to be their coach despite her lack of experience. This serendipitous decision enabled Suzanne to define her life's mission, "To develop knowledgeable, articulate, and ethical young people"

In 1988, she left Corona Del Mar due to a district-wide layoff and was hired at Esperanza High School to establish a program there. Her students have since won over 145 sweepstakes and 1000 individual trophies in OCSL and regional events. As of 2007 she had qualified 257 students to the CHSSA state tournament where they have received over twenty semi-finalists and finalist awards. An NFL triple diamond coach, Suzanne has attended the NFL National Tournament seven times with thirty-three students.

Service to others is a guiding principle of Suzanne's career. In 2007, as OCSL President, she co-hosted the State Tournament. Since then she has become Area IV Chairperson. In addition, Suzanne has been on the CHSSA State Council for eleven years. She has been a debate and congress committee member as well as a state tournament official in judges, debate tab, and extemp prep. In the mid-'90s she was a Big Orange NFL District Committee member and assisted one of her idols, Dr Jane Eldridge, five times in extemp prep at Nationals. She is always willing to help out at the various tournaments she attends each year as a judge room coordinator or tab room worker. She also gets much personal satisfaction from recruiting and mentoring new coaches.

Her loving husband, best friend, and long time CHSSA coach and council member Greg Munsell gave a beautiful introduction at the 2007 CHSSA state tournament when Suzanne was officially honored for her service to the California High School Speech Association and its students and inducted as CHSSA's newest Hall of Fame member.

