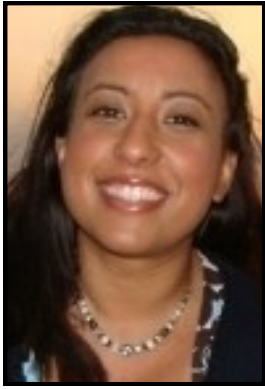


Donovan Cummings Service Above Self Award

2012 Recipient Nermin Kamel Fraser



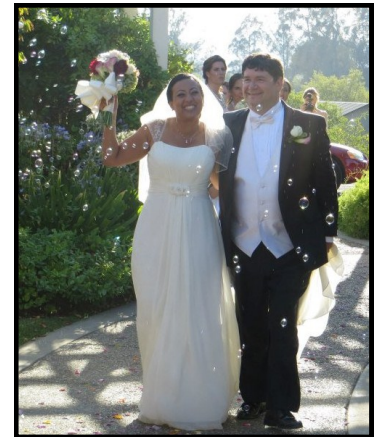
The prestigious Donovan Cummings Service Above Self Award is given annually in honor of original CHSSA Hall of Fame member Donovan Cummings who gave selflessly to others until his untimely death in 2010. During his long career he coached at Edison, Stagg and Franklin High Schools, all in Stockton and at times simultaneously. He served the CHSSA Council longer than any other, 1963-2008. After retirement he taught speech to Migrant Ed students in San Joaquin County. In recognition of Donovan's passion for service the CHSSA began the tradition in 2010 of awarding the *Donovan Cummings Service Above Self Award* to someone who has gone above and beyond in service to the speech community. The California High School Speech Association is privileged to name Nermin Kamel Fraser as this year's recipient.

Nermin's speech and debate experience started as a competitor under Bruce Gevirtzman at La Mirada High School in the Orange County area. She competed in Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas debate, Advocacy, Impromptu and United States Extemp. She was a NFL National Qualifier in the late 1990's and a State Semi-Finalists. After graduating from Whittier College, Nermin was offered, but turned down positions at other schools in order to teach and continue the program at her alma mater.

For many years, Nermin directed both the La Mirada Invitational and the La Mirada Pentathlon Speech and Debate Tournaments. These tournaments were so competitive and well run that they attracted schools from as far away as Utah. In addition, to being a superstar coach, Nermin served as Secretary and President of the Southern California Debate League for multiple terms and was a long-time committee member of the East Los Angeles NFL District. In 2004, Nermin became the Vice-President of Activities for CHSSA and began running the California High School Speech and Debate State Championship Tournament. As soon as she took over, we could all feel those powerful winds of change.

Under Nermin's direction for the past nine years, the State Tournament has leapt head first into the 21st century. We have moved to almost total digital automation. From entering students into the tournament, to checking breaks, results, or auto posting points into the National Forensics League database, she's made it a totally streamlined operation. Need to know when postings go up or rounds are delayed? Just check your cellphone for mass text alerts. Even reserving your school's hotel rooms is a breeze because Nermin has spent countless hours negotiating perks like hot breakfasts, free parking, and free wifi along with a very low price. The traditional dinner dance on Sunday evening after competition has grown from roughly 250 attendees to over 700 little speechies, shaking it on the dance floor after an intense three days of competition.

Nermin drafted the original proposal to the CHSSA Council for the "Service Above Self Award" in honor and memory of her long time friend and mentor, Donovan Cummings. Gabrielino High School coach, Derek Yuill says, "If people knew all the things Nermin does for coaches and students in this activity, they would name a bridge, school, park and/or city after her." SCDL president and Arcadia High School coach Ashley Novak believes, "The entire world of speech and debate has been transformed because of her. The impact she has made is enormous. I think every coach here at the state tournament this weekend will wholeheartedly agree." Eventually, Nermin left La Mirada to become the Assistant Principal at Redondo Union High School and then at San Ramon Valley High School. The position she currently holds, Principal of Alhambra High School in Northern California, she earned by beating out 88 other applicants. Although she is not personally coaching a team, Nermin has stayed highly involved in speech and debate at the state and local level. In fact, this past fall at a beautiful vineyard in Petaluma, Nermin married long time Stanford and Head Royce Speech and Debate Director, Matt Fraser, making them a nationally and statewide ranked championship "Duo" and "Debate Team".



Nermin, thank you for giving so much of yourself to the service of students and coaches involved with Speech & Debate in California. Indeed, our speech and debate experience continues to be second to none because of the dedication and commitment you continue to offer our activity and organization year after year.