

SERVICE ABOVE SELF

In Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," when Malvolio remarks that, "some have greatness thrust upon 'em," he is referring to an opportunity to advance himself, but true greatness is, as the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. noted, "determined by service." If we are speaking of true greatness then, no one I know has "greatness thrust upon 'em" more often, or accepts that burden more willingly, than Terry Abad. In the Golden Gate Speech Association, when the question is, "Who is willing to serve as league President?" or, "Can anyone host this tournament?" all eyes turn to Terry. And his answer is almost always, "I can."

Over his 14 years directing the speech and debate program at his alma mater, San Francisco's Lowell High School, Terry Abad has served as the coach of his students, a frequent tournament host (including the CHSSA State Championship), President and Treasurer of the GGSA, Chair of the San Francisco Bay NSDA District, and tournament tab staff extraordinaire.

Laila McClay of Sonoma Academy recalls:
"When our league first switched from tabbing on cards to using Joy of Tournaments, Terry was one of the first to jump in and take that on. He did this WHILE he was also league president. In my early years of GGSA, Terry was the GGSA. None of our tournaments would have happened without Terry."

This is no exaggeration, as the move from paper to computer tabbing had the effect of shrinking the tab staff from a multitude of coaches to a single person, namely Terry, doing all of the data entry for every single tournament.



We were, unsurprisingly, in no hurry to relieve Terry of these duties, so he soldiered on for many years as a "tabroom of one" (assisted by a reader and runner or two) for far too long. When it became clear that this mode of operation was unsustainable, Terry trained other coaches in how to use the program and he was always there to offer phone support when he could not attend the tournament. Close to a dozen coaches now tab GGSA tournaments because it requires that many people to replace Terry. Yet even at the tournaments that he does not attend, Terry is a constant presence, as Kimberly Fradelis of Bentley explains:

TERRY ABAD

2019 Donovan Cummings
Service-Above-Self Winner



"More often than not, when the crew of people are doing the job that Terry used to do alone tabbing IE or debate, we ask ourselves, WWTD (what would Terry do)? That, along with a quick phone call and review of the bylaws usually gets us out of rough spots."

Terry's tournament tabbing is just one example of the many ways he serves his students and the greater speech and debate community. He accepts leadership positions and critical tasks that no one else will take and, as Kristen Plant says, "embraces any opportunity to empower students through speech and debate. Through his consistent hosting and hospitality, and compassion and problem-solving, Terry makes time for any student or coach who needs help." He has also been known to share his birthday cupcakes with the kids in Parli Prep (truly selfless!).

Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Director Emeritus of the James Logan High School program sums it up well when he writes that:

"Terry stands out as the epitome of what a coach should be. I cannot imagine anyone else more worthy of this honor. Terry has served as the foundation of the GGSA for numerous years, serving as the (former) president and oftentimes not only the brains and brawn behind the scenes, but also the moxie that holds our league together. We are proud to have his guiding presence in the GGSA and thank him tremendously for his tireless service."



Written by Lexy Green

Each year, one person is selected by the Executive Council to receive this award, named after CHSSA's first historian, Donovan Cummings. This award is given to someone who goes above and beyond to spread forensics throughout the state of California.

Prior Service Above Self Winners

Gay Brasher - 2010 | Ron Underwood - 2011 | Rita Prichard - 2012 | Nermin Fraser - 2013 | Hoon Ko - 2014
Mikendra McCoy - 2016 | Matt Fraser - 2017 | Karson Kalashian - 2018