



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

2023-24 NFHS Performing Arts Educator Award Recipients Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 22, 2024) – A total of 56 individuals have been selected to receive Outstanding Performing Arts Educator Awards from the NFHS, including 22 with Outstanding Music Educator Awards, 21 with Outstanding Speech and Debate Educator Awards, and 13 with Outstanding Theatre Awards.

The 22 music honorees include seven section recipients and 15 state recipients. Eight individuals are receiving section awards in speech and debate and 13 will be honored with state awards. In theatre, there are seven section and six state recipients.

Since 1988 when the first Outstanding Speech/Debate/Theatre Educator Awards were presented, 254 individuals have received section awards and 413 have been honored with state awards. The Outstanding Music Educator Awards began a year later in 1989, and 213 individuals have received section awards and another 394 have been honored with state awards. The Outstanding Theatre Award was given for the first time last year, separating it from the Outstanding Speech/Debate Educator Award, and 13 individuals have received section awards and 12 have earned state awards.

Click [here](#) to see prior winners of the [Outstanding Music Educator](#) or [Outstanding Speech/Debate/Theatre Educator](#) awards.

(NOTE: The following biographical information on this year's 56 award recipients was written by Ken Burke, coordinator of performing arts and sports at the NFHS.)

Outstanding Music Educator Awards

SECTION WINNERS

Section 1 - David LaMorte - Staten Island, New York

David LaMorte has been a stalwart figure as the director of Tottenville High School's marching band for an impressive 35 years. In addition to his role as the Assistant Principal for Visual, Performing, and Career Arts at Tottenville, LaMorte serves as the conductor for the Staten Island Community Band and the executive director of the Summer Arts Institute—a specialized program for gifted music and arts students in New York City. LaMorte is a professional trombonist and conductor educated at Montclair State College and the University of Buffalo.

Under LaMorte's leadership, Tottenville's musical ensembles, including six bands, three symphonic orchestras, and four choruses, have garnered acclaim for their musical excellence. His hard work in fostering musical talent is evident through the regular receipt of New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) Gold Ratings with Distinction, highlighting the exceptional quality of Tottenville's musical offerings. Beyond traditional academic achievements, LaMorte's influence extends to the community, where he leads the Staten Island Community Band, showcasing the diversity and passion of local musicians.

LaMorte's impact reaches far beyond the confines of Tottenville High School. As the Executive Director of the Summer Arts Institute, he has created a platform for gifted students to engage in creative and rigorous performance endeavors during the summer. LaMorte's commitment to music education has earned him various accolades, including the George N. Parks Leadership in Music Education Award, recognizing his collaborative spirit, dedication to students as individuals, perseverance, enthusiasm, and the ability to instill qualities for students' lives.

His leadership philosophy revolves around being an advocate for children, providing them with the best training possible, and cultivating respectful and successful citizens. His achievements are not only a testament to his own loyalty but also to the collaborative community that surrounds him at Tottenville High School.

Section 3 - Jennifer D. Davis - Starkville, Mississippi

Jennifer Davis brings 26 years of experience and a wealth of knowledge to her role as the Director of Choral Activities at Starkville High School in Mississippi as well as at Meridian High in Mississippi and Crowley High in Texas. As a dedicated educator, Davis has not only directed choirs but has significantly contributed to the enhancement of her schools' music programs. She played a key role in securing the I2T2 Technology grant for a piano lab at Meridian High School and facilitated the establishment of piano labs at the high school and Partnership Middle School in Starkville, MS.

Additionally, Davis pioneered the introduction of AP Music Theory at both Starkville and Meridian High Schools, making them trailblazers in the state. Her commitment to broadening students' musical exposure is evident through her efforts to re-establish musicals and her involvement in collaborative projects with colleagues.

Davis's impact extends beyond the classroom, where she has led the revitalization of the Mississippi Solo and Ensemble Music Performance Assessment, transforming it from a local event to a statewide initiative with over 130 participants across five locations. As the High School Division president for the Mississippi Music Educators Association (MMEA), she has actively contributed to policy-making decisions, including the transition to the "one and done" procedure for State Performance Assessments.

Davis's commitment to excellence is reflected in the achievements of her choirs, which have earned Sweepstakes and Superiors at festivals, performed at renowned venues like Carnegie Hall, and participated in various national events. She has not only grown the All-State selection at Starkville High School but has also significantly impacted the wider community through initiatives like the SPARK ART Summer camp, a tuition-free camp for elementary students.

Davis's impressive list of awards includes being named the Starkville High School Rotary Club Teacher of the Year in 2023 and receiving the Thad Cochran Arts Educator Award in 2017, among numerous other accolades. Her leadership roles in professional associations, such as the presidency of the MMEA and her involvement in various advisory committees, underline her commitment to the continuous improvement of music education in Mississippi.

Section 4 - Duane Philgreen - Manchester, Iowa

Duane Philgreen stands as a beacon of excellence in the realm of high school music education, with a career spanning over 45 years, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of countless students.

Philgreen's career includes pivotal roles such as the 7-12 Vocal Music Instructor at Montezuma Community School District and, more prominently, the 9-12 Vocal Music Instructor at West Delaware Community School District from 1995 to 2021. In the latter role, he not only built a comprehensive choral program featuring four curricular choirs, an extra-curricular show choir, and an annual musical but also achieved remarkable success with over 100 National Anthems presented at state events and producing over 200 Iowa All-State Chorus members.

Apart from his classroom endeavors, Philgreen's impact extends to leadership roles in several organizations. Serving as President of the Iowa High School Music Association Executive Committee and a committee member for the 75th All-State Music Festival celebration, he has demonstrated a selfless devotion to the betterment of music. His involvement in the NFHS Music Committee, including serving on the Heart of the Arts Award Selection Committee, attests to his national influence.

Philgreen's commitment to students continued to his creation and co-direction of the Broadway Kids annual musical summer camp, catering to over 100 elementary students each year from 1997 to 2019. Recognitions, such as the Teacher of the Year award in 2007 and the Choral Composition Competition Winner in 2019, underscore his outstanding contributions.

As a dynamic leader and compassionate educator, Philgreen's tireless work ethic, moral integrity, and ability to inspire make him an ideal recipient for the NFHS Outstanding Music Educator Award. His passion for music education and commitment to the student experience are evident in his remarkable career and numerous accomplishments, making him a true luminary in the field.

Section 5 - Amanda Kaus - Rochester, Minnesota

Amanda Kaus currently serves as the Director of Bands at Century High School in Rochester, Minnesota. Kaus has been instrumental in shaping the musical landscape at Century High School since 2012. In addition to leading three Concert Bands, the Century Marching Panther Band, Pep Band, and Jazz Band, she holds the position of Music Department Chair and directs the pit orchestra for Century's Musical Production.

Under Kaus's leadership, the Century Symphonic Winds achieved notable performances at prestigious events, including the Minnesota Music Educators Association Midwinter Convention and the University of

Northern Iowa Invitational Wind Band Clinic. The Century Marching Band participated in the MSHSL Prep Bowl Championship and embarked on biannual trips to Florida. Kaus's dedication to fostering musical talent is evident in the consistent representation of Century Band students in the MMEA All-State Ensembles, achieved through a competitive audition process, along with their numerous Superior and Best in Site Recognitions at Section Solo/Small Ensemble Contest.

Kaus was recognized with The First Alliance Credit Union Music Educator Award from the Southeastern Minnesota Youth Orchestras in 2017 and the Teacher of the Month accolade from the Rochester Post Bulletin in 2018. Her influence reverberates in her leadership roles within prominent music education associations, including the NFHS, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL), the Minnesota Music Educators Association (MMEA), and the Minnesota Band Directors Association (MBDA).

As an At-Large Board Member on the NFHS and a Music Representative on the MSHSL Board of Directors, Kaus is a trailblazer, the first Fine Arts representative on the NFHS Board of Directors, and a driving force in shaping musical learning in Minnesota.

Section 6 - Dr. Jason Paulk - Portales, New Mexico

Dr. Jason Paulk's illustrious journey in the realm of music education spans from his roots in Cartersville, Georgia, to his position as the Director of Choral Activities at Eastern New Mexico University. While his accomplishments are vast and varied, it is his impact on high schools throughout New Mexico that truly stands out. During his tenure as the Director of Choirs at Deltona High School in Florida, the ensemble's growth from a modest 25 members to an impressive nearly 200 underlines Paulk's transformative leadership. This exponential growth not only reflects the depth of his musical expertise but also highlights his ability to inspire and cultivate a passion for choral music among students.

Transitioning to his role at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU), Paulk continued to elevate the standards of choral music education, guiding his students towards excellence both in performance and academia. His dedication to mentorship is evident in the numerous ENMU students who have pursued advanced degrees, securing scholarships at prestigious institutions across the nation. Moreover, his commitment to fostering academic growth is showcased by the students who have become published authors under his guidance. This legacy of scholarly and professional achievements underscores Paulk's dedication to nurturing the next generation of musicians and educators.

Beyond his direct influence at ENMU, Paulk's impact reverberates throughout the broader choral community in New Mexico and beyond. As a leader within the National American Choral Directors Association and other esteemed organizations, he has championed the advancement of choral music education on a statewide and national level. His contributions, including serving as the Collegiate VP for various associations and as the Column Editor for Student Times in the Choral Journal, exemplify his dedication to elevating the standards of music education and fostering a collaborative spirit within the choral community. Through his leadership and mentorship, Dr. Jason Paulk has left an indelible mark, enriching the musical landscape of high schools throughout New Mexico.

Section 7 - Marci May - Ogden, Utah

With over 23 years of experience, Marci May has made significant contributions to the choral music landscape in Utah. May's teaching career has been marked by transformative roles at Roy Jr. High School, Morgan School District, and her current position as the Choir Director at Davis High School. Notably, she has been pivotal in rebuilding and growing choral programs, doubling the size of both Roy Jr. High and the Morgan schools' choirs and revitalizing the Davis High Choir into a beacon of choral excellence.

May's passion for providing diverse opportunities to her students is evident in the multitude of ensembles she directs, including a 5-octave Handbell Choir and a 12-voice jazz ensemble. She emphasizes collaboration with fellow educators for biannual musical productions and unique events like Moonlight Serenade.

Her influence extends with active involvement in professional organizations, including the Utah Music Educators Association (UMEA) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA). She served on the UMEA Choral Committee as the High School State Honor Choir Chair for over a decade, demonstrating her commitment to providing enriching experiences for students across the state. Her prowess as an adjudicator and sought-after clinician attests to her expertise in the choral classroom, and her knowledge is evident through her participation in hosting and running conference sessions. May's tireless efforts, passion for excellence, and commitment to student success make her an outstanding candidate for recognition in the field of music education.

Section 8 - Karen Bohart - Portland, Oregon

Embarking on a life-long journey that intertwines personal passion with professional commitment, Karen Bohart has proven to be an unwavering advocate for music education. Her teaching odyssey began in

1996 at Lake Oswego Jr High School and continued through various institutions, including Reynolds High School and Franklin High School, where she demonstrated her prowess in building and reviving choral programs.

Throughout her career, Bohart has showcased her adaptability by teaching and directing mixed, treble, and tenor/bass choirs at all levels. A distinguishing feature of her impact is the broad spectrum of institutions she has served, spanning socio-economic backgrounds. This exposure has afforded her unique insights into diverse approaches that lead to student success. Bohart's teaching philosophy revolves around inspiring passion, providing meaningful opportunities, and fostering a positive and safe community for students to express themselves through music and performance.

In addition to her commendable work within the classroom, Bohart has been a luminary figure in the choral community on a regional and national scale. Her leadership roles include serving as Oregon President for the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and playing various managerial roles in the Oregon Music Educators Association (OMEA) and the National Association for Music Education (NAFME).

Her dedication to the advancement of choral music education is reflected in the Outstanding Service Award from NAFME and the awards from OMEA for presenting sessions and conducting choirs at state conferences. Bohart's passion goes farther than her classrooms, as she continues to influence the lives of her students long after graduation, earning her the affectionate moniker "K-Bo" among her students.

STATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

New Jersey, North Brunswick Twp HS - Cooper Ford

Cooper Ford has been dedicated to music education since obtaining his bachelor's degree from The College of New Jersey in 2002. Since 2015, he has served as the Orchestra Director at North Brunswick Township High School, where he emphasizes the diverse cultural backgrounds of his students in musical experiences. Ford is an active composer, clinician, and member of a variety of music associations.

Maine, Easton Schools - Pamela Kinsey

Pamela Kinsey, based in the Easton School District in Maine, has been the sole Music Teacher K-12 in Easton since 1988 and has held various positions in local and state music organizations. Kinsey has been an active member in NMMEA and MMEA, serving in leadership roles such as District Chair and President, showcasing her commitment to music education in Maine.

Connecticut, Waterbury Arts Magnet School - Marianna Dadamo

Marianna Dadamo of Waterbury Arts Magnet School in Connecticut has been deeply involved in the local music and educational community. She pioneered the Middle School Chorus and High School Chamber Choir,

and under her leadership, students have participated in various regional and national music festivals. Dadamo has also fostered connections with community programs like the Palace Theater After-School Program and has been recognized with awards such as the Naugatuck High School Distinguished Alumni Award for her contributions to the community.

Georgia, Gordon Central High School - Dr. Kimberly Watters

Dr. Kimberly Watters has dedicated an extensive 36-year teaching career to the Gordon County School System in Georgia. Throughout her tenure, she has directed over 100 musicals, led numerous concerts, and achieved recognition both locally and nationally for her contributions to music education. Watters has been actively involved in various music and arts associations and influenced thousands of students in the state of Georgia.

Indiana, Avon High School - Dean Westman

Since initiating the Avon High School Orchestra program in 2007, Dean Westman has expanded the musical programs significantly, now encompassing over 800 students from grades 6 through 12. Throughout his 30-year tenure in music education, Westman's leadership has been recognized with numerous accolades, including multiple Indiana State School Music Association State Orchestra Championships. His students have showcased their talents at renowned venues such as Carnegie Hall and the Midwest Clinic in Chicago.

Illinois, Alton High School - Laura Plummer

Laura Plummer currently serves as the director of orchestras at Alton High School, her alma mater, and has been doing so since 1995. Throughout her tenure, she has expanded the program drastically, introduced the Alton High School Chamber Strings, and led various ensembles to notable performances and recognitions.

Kansas, Pittsburg State University - Susan Marchant

Since joining Pittsburg State University (PSU) in Kansas in 1978, Susan Marchant has left her mark as the Director of Choral Activities and Chair of the Department of Music. Under her leadership, PSU Choirs have embarked on numerous tours, including destinations in Europe and North America, and she has been instrumental in the acquisition of acclaimed organs for both PSU and First United Methodist Church in Pittsburg.

Missouri, Retired - Jana Fox

Jana Fox, with a rich background in music education, served in various roles from choral directorships at Stover Public Schools and Jefferson City Public Schools to helping choirs at Helias Catholic High School. Her influence is evident in the numerous accolades her students have achieved in state festivals and honor choirs. Fox has been honored with awards such as the Missouri Music Educators Association's Outstanding Music Educator and the Missouri Choral Directors Association's Presidential Award of Excellence.

South Dakota, Mitchell High School - Ryan Stahle

Ryan Stahle has dedicated two decades at Mitchell High School in South Dakota. As the Director of Bands, he has overseen award-winning performances by the marching, jazz, and symphonic bands, while also pioneering events like the Palace City Jazz Festival. Stahle has been recognized with accolades such as the Phi Beta Mu Outstanding Bandmaster Award and has played pivotal roles in statewide music associations and festivals.

Arkansas, Fulbright Junior High School - Curtis Minor

Curtis Minor of Bentonville's Fulbright Junior High School in Arkansas has seen the music program flourish with significant achievements, including top ratings at regional assessments and numerous accolades in various competitions. Minor's involvement extends to the Arkansas Choral Directors Association, where he held leadership roles, showcasing his commitment to choral education and professional development.

Oklahoma, Retired - Gayla "Jeanine" Gully

Gayla "Jeanine" Gully, a seasoned music educator from Oklahoma, dedicated over four decades to shaping young voices. Spanning from Anadarko to Edmond Public Schools, Gully's teaching journey included directing choirs, facilitating music programs, and serving as a pivotal figure in numerous choral competitions and camps. She held positions in music education organizations, including serving as president of OkMEA and COCDA.

Colorado, Delta High School - Stuart Johnson

Stuart Johnson, a dedicated music educator from Colorado, embarked on his teaching journey in the early 1990s, shaping young musicians at institutions like Montrose HS, Columbine MS, and Fort Morgan High School. Johnson's rich musical background includes being a part of esteemed groups like the Colorado Brass Band in Gunnison since 1986 and the Western Colorado Jazz Orchestra from 2017.

Washington, Washington Interscholastic Activities Association - Danh T. Pham

Danh T. Pham, affiliated with the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA), has had an impressive career spanning from public school teaching in Oregon to teaching music education at Washington State University. His extensive achievements include guest conductor invitations from international platforms and accolades such as the Washington Music Educators Association's Collegiate Music Teacher of the Year in 2023.

Idaho, Ridgevue High School - Ron Curtis

Ron Curtis currently teaches at Ridgevue High School in Idaho. Over the years, Curtis has garnered recognition for his choral groups, with several of them, including Choral Legacy from Ridgevue High School, being selected for the IMEA All State. He received District Three Music Educator of the Year in 2014 and has actively mentored student teachers from various universities.

Montana, Bozeman High School - Andrew Alley

Based at Bozeman High School in Montana, Andrew Alley boasts an extensive career in music education, with roles spanning multiple institutions since the late 1970s. His contributions include co-founding the Flathead Lake Music Camp and serving as its board president, while also earning consistent Superior Ratings for various ensembles at MHSA District Music Festivals. Alley has been an active member of several music and educational associations throughout his career, including the Montana Music Educators Association and NAFME.

Outstanding Speech and Debate Educator Awards

SECTION WINNERS

Section 1 - Katherine Burke – Denville, New Jersey

Katherine Burke, an accomplished educator and coach, has made significant contributions to the field of Speech and Debate, earning recognition and awards for her dedication and impact. Since joining Randolph High School in the 2016–2017 school year, she has not only excelled as a teacher but also taken on leadership roles within the academic community. Burke's commitment to fostering inclusive environments is evident in her role as a Professional Development Consultant for the New Jersey Education Association, where she focuses on educating professionals statewide on LGBTQ+ issues, supporting trans students, and promoting diversity and inclusion. Additionally, she earned her Master of Arts and Letters in 2021 and now serves as an adjunct professor at The College of New Jersey, where she teaches courses in the History Department and the Women & Gender Studies Department.

As the head coach of the Speech and Debate team at Randolph High School, Burke has demonstrated exceptional direction and adaptability. Under her guidance, the team successfully navigated transitions from entirely in-person to virtual and hybrid seasons, participating in both national in-person and virtual tournaments. Beyond the competitive realm, Burke has initiated a mentorship program between her high school students and middle school teams, emphasizing the importance of nurturing future generations of Speech and Debate participants. Her commitment to student voice, safety, and support has been a driving force behind her success.

Burke's impact extends beyond coaching and teaching. She has actively contributed to the broader educational community through her roles in professional organizations, including the Randolph Education Association, New Jersey Speech & Debate League, New Jersey Education Association, The College of New Jersey, American Federation of Teachers, and the National Speech and Debate Association. Notably, she received the Paula Mittleman Educator of the Year award from the New Jersey Speech and Debate League in March 2023, recognizing her outstanding contributions to the field of education and debate. Burke's transformative dedication to education made her a deserving recipient of the Paula Mittleman Educator of the Year award and an asset to the educational community in New Jersey.

Section 2 - Craig Owen Edgerton – Palmyra, Virginia

Craig Edgerton stands as a stalwart figure in the Virginia speech and debate community, boasting an impressive career spanning over three decades. His journey began in 1989 when, as a college junior, he joined the National Forensic League (NFL) and commenced coaching Speech and Debate at North Canton Hoover

High School. Since then, Edgerton's commitment to education and speech activities has only strengthened. Over the past 24 years, he has been a dedicated educator at Fluvanna County High School, teaching Theatre, Broadcasting, and Speech across all grade levels (8th-12th grade) and directing school plays. Edgerton's influence reaches far beyond the classroom, as he took on the challenge of building the Speech and Debate team from scratch at Fluvanna, achieving remarkable success, including district titles, state championships, and an impressive track record in various leagues.

Edgerton's impact is not limited to coaching and teaching; he is deeply involved in shaping the landscape of speech and debate in Virginia. He has served on committees, including the VHSL Drama, Debate, and Forensics Advisory Committee, and held key positions within the Virginia Chapter of the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA). His supervision has been recognized with numerous awards, including the NSDA 2 Diamond Coach distinction, the NSDA Excellence in Leadership Bronze Award, and the Allstate Foundation-VHSL Achievement Award/Mentor.

Beyond his coaching achievements, Edgerton has proven himself as collaborative and supportive in the speech community. Whether leading the Shenandoah Forensics League to become one of the strongest in the state or providing instrumental support for a growing debate team, Edgerton succeeds at all levels. His dedication to students, coupled with his advocacy within the Virginia High School League, showcases Edgerton as a paragon of excellence, embodying the qualities of a passionate and impactful speech coach.

Section 3 - Dr. Tim Harris – Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Tim Harris has left an indelible impact on the lives of countless students through his passion for speech and debate. From his early years, Dr. Harris demonstrated a natural flair for performance and public speaking, setting the stage for a lifelong love of drama and communication. As an educator, his success as a coach in dramatic interpretation and extemporaneous speaking is evident through numerous regional and state championships. Dr. Harris' unique approach to coaching extemporaneous speaking involves extensive conversations about current events, cultivating a deep understanding of world affairs and fostering impromptu speaking skills among his students. His coaching success is further underscored by the impressive careers of former students who have excelled in fields such as sports broadcasting, law, documentary production, and stand-up comedy.

Dr. Harris' commitment extends beyond the classroom, transitioning from a classroom teacher to an administrator, where he regularly addresses teachers, parent groups, and community stakeholders.

Emphasizing interconnectedness, Dr. Harris strives to make others better, creating a positive ripple effect that enriches both his life and the lives of those around him. His dedication to education and public speaking has earned him accolades such as being named Teacher of the Year at both Troup High School and Buford High School, a nine-time STAR Teacher, and receiving the Northeast Georgia Outstanding Educator award twice. Dr. Harris' influence also stretches to the broader educational community, where he has served as the GHSA Literary Coordinator and played a crucial role in overhauling rules and rubrics for the annual Literary competition.

Dr. Harris' warmth, humor, and inclusive nature make him a joy to work with, as expressed by a colleague who notes that his philosophy as an educator reflects a commitment to mutual growth and improvement. Dr. Harris' tireless efforts in hosting State Literary and One-Act Play competitions showcase not just his organizational skills but also his passion for the arts. In the words of a colleague, Harris has not only made a positive impact on the GHSA and fine arts in Georgia but has also extended the love of fine arts nationwide through countless students during his illustrious career.

Section 4 - Scott McDermott – Arlington Heights, Illinois

Scott McDermott's journey in the world of speech and debate has spanned an illustrious 38 years, fueled by a passion ignited by teacher John Marquette. As a special education teacher, McDermott took a less traditional route to coaching, learning from mentors and giving back to the speech community through volunteering and mentoring. His co-founding of the Blue-Ribbon Speech Camp at Indiana University and later St. Mary's stands out as a significant achievement, offering students a world-class experience at minimal expense. McDermott's coaching philosophy revolves around teaching individuals to share their stories, fostering understanding, and enabling them to become the best versions of themselves. His commitment to inclusivity is evident in his work with students facing various challenges, including those with cerebral palsy, anxiety, emotional problems, and stuttering disorders.

Transitioning to administration, McDermott continued to advocate for speech and debate, mentoring new and experienced coaches alike. As an administrator, he emphasized the importance of the skills learned in speech and debate, working to secure funding and support for arts-related programs. His dedication to growing programs and opportunities led him to enter students into the NSDA Middle School Tournament, resulting in notable successes. The extensive list of achievements includes coaching national champions, state champions, and numerous finalists across various speech events. Recognized for his outstanding

contributions, McDermott received the John Hires Award in 2020 and has been nominated for the NSDA Hall of Fame in 2023.

Beyond the competitive realm, McDermott's leadership spread to various educational organizations, where he served on committees, mentored others, and contributed to the growth of speech and debate at both the state and national levels. Colleagues commend McDermott's energetic and dynamic coaching style, emphasizing his creativity, problem-solving skills, and commitment to cultivating an inclusive environment. McDermott's effect on speech and debate, education, and the lives of students is profound, marked by a long-standing commitment to inclusivity, mentorship, and the belief that everyone has a story worth sharing. His guidance, both as a coach and administrator, has left an indelible mark on the speech community and beyond.

Section 5 - Matt Heimes – Lincoln, Nebraska

Matt Heimes, Speech Coach at Lincoln Southwest High School, stands out not only for his impressive coaching record but also for his humility and commitment to students. In his 38 years in speech and debate, Heimes has left a lasting mark on the Nebraska speech community. Described as a quiet leader and everyone's biggest cheerleader, Heimes is more than a coach; he's a mentor and advocate for the arts, treating his students as family.

Heimes's impact goes beyond the coaching arena to his service on various committees and organizations related to speech and debate in Nebraska. His voluntary contributions to the Nebraska School Activities Association, Nebraska Speech Communication and Theatre Association, and other committees exemplify his dedication to the growth and improvement of speech and debate at the local and national levels. He has coached students to an impressive 379 national qualifications and 23 national finalists, showcasing his commitment to providing opportunities for success. Heimes's influence is not only recognized in numbers but also in the lasting effects he has had on the arts in Nebraska.

Despite his extensive achievements and induction into the National Speech and Debate Association Hall of Fame in 2023, Heimes remains remarkably humble. His actions speak louder than words, and his focus on helping students discover their voices and find a love for the arts is evident in the lasting impact he has had on the lives of his students. Colleagues and peers admire Heimes's dedication, describing him as a mentor and a fierce advocate for the speech community. The awards and recognition he received, including the National Speech and Debate Association Fourth Diamond Coaching Award and the Matt Davis Distinguished Service

Award, reflect the deep respect and admiration his peers and the community hold for him. Heimes's legacy in the Nebraska speech community is characterized by selfless dedication, mentorship, and a passion for helping students find their voices and succeed in the world of speech and debate.

Section 6 - Kim Falco – El Paso, Texas

Kim Falco, a seasoned educator with 42 years of experience, emerges as a “shining example of commitment, quiet strength, and servant leadership” in the realm of speech and debate education. Her educational journey, spanning multiple schools and roles, reflects a deep dedication to fostering the growth of students not only academically but also personally. As a speech coach and theater director in various schools, including Madison High School and Franklin High School, she has left a mark by contributing to the development of speech and debate programs, curriculum writing, and mentoring students in areas beyond the classroom.

Falco's impact is not limited to the academic sphere; it extends into the community through her involvement in various organizations and roles. Her quiet strength and humility are evident in the multitude of committees and leadership roles she has undertaken at the Texas Speech Communication Association, Texas University Interscholastic League, and the National Speech and Debate Association. She has been a consistent advocate for the growth and enhancement of speech and debate activities, contributing significantly to the success of these organizations.

What sets Falco apart is not only her impressive list of achievements, including state and national awards in debate, coaching numerous award-winning students, and her induction into the Texas Forensic Association Hall of Fame, but also her selfless service to the community. As a Girl Scout leader and a youth group leader at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, she has played a crucial role in shaping the lives of young individuals, emphasizing core values and providing stability during crucial developmental stages.

Section 7 - Dr. Tommie Lindsey – Hayward, California

Beginning in 1980, Dr. Tommie Lindsey’s mission was to inspire and empower young minds, which led to groundbreaking achievements throughout his journey. Graduating as the University of San Francisco's first African American valedictorian in 1973, he started his teaching career at Alameda County Juvenile Hall and later at El Rancho Verde Alternative High School. However, it was at James Logan High School in 1988 that he revolutionized speech programs, taking a modest team of thirteen students to a nationally acclaimed program with over two hundred students.

Dr. Lindsey's commitment to nurturing talent and inspiring greatness is evidenced by his numerous awards, including the California Teacher of the Year (1994), the MacArthur Fellowship (2004), and the National Forensics Coach of the Year (2000). Oprah Winfrey herself acknowledged his dedication on her show, emphasizing his role in the program's success, and his impact continues through the namesake of the Duo Interpretation event at the NSDA.

Beyond the accolades, Dr. Lindsey's legacy is most profound in the lives he has affected. Over 50 of his students have become coaches, spreading his philosophy of equity, empowerment, and Black excellence. His coaching prowess resulted in an astounding 14 national champions at the NSDA national tournament, with his program claiming the title of NSDA School of Excellence for 17 consecutive years. Dr. Lindsey's influence goes farther than trophies, emphasizing hard work, perseverance, and effective communication as tools for success in forensics and life. His story, captured in the documentary "Accidental Hero: Room 408" (2001), is one of resilience, dedication, and the transformative power of education.

As a sitting board member of the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) and Vice President, he remains a pivotal figure, contributing to the organization for over 40 years. His involvement in the California High School Speech Association (CHSSA), including induction into its Hall of Fame, winning the Service Above Self Award, and coaching for more than four decades, solidifies his standing as a trailblazer and role model. Dr. Lindsey's vision continues to shape the landscape of speech and debate education, inspiring generations of educators and students alike.

Section 8 - Kristen D. Sullivan – Jacksonville, Oregon

Kristen D. Sullivan embarked on her journey in 2016 by establishing the Speech & Debate team at Crater High School. Throughout her seven-year tenure, she has demonstrated exceptional coaching skills, leading her students to a variety of achievements, including multiple State and Nationals qualifications each year. Under her guidance, the team achieved significant success, such as State champions in Duo Interpretation in 2020 and high placements in sweepstakes. Sullivan's commitment goes beyond coaching, as she actively contributes to the speech community. She has served on the NSDA District Committee and is currently a member, showcasing her dedication to fostering a supportive and competitive environment.

In addition to her coaching responsibilities, Sullivan has been an educator for 19 years, teaching English and Social Science in both Arkansas and Oregon. Her involvement extends to supporting the speech community through roles such as secretary of the Oregon High School Speech and Debate League Coaches'

Association (OHSSL-CA) for three years. Sullivan's organizational and communication skills shine as she helps run judge training, manages the judge lounge at tournaments, and hosts the Crater High School tournament. She has been instrumental in elevating her team's profile, transforming it from local competitions to participating in out-of-town tournaments, even during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sullivan's dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed, as evidenced by her recognition of the Donus D. Roberts Award, signifying over 14,000 NSDA Points. Her impact extends to the broader speech and debate community in Oregon, where she serves as the Secretary for the OHSSL-CA and the South Oregon NSDA board. Sullivan's exemplary coaching, leadership, and contributions to the speech community make her a deserving recipient of recognition, demonstrating her commitment to the growth and success of the program at Crater High School and beyond.

STATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Kentucky, Hebron Middle School - William (Woody) Thomas Zorn, Jr.

As an active member of the speech and debate community since 1998, William (Woody) Thomas Zorn, Jr. has been a mentor of hundreds of students throughout his career. His organization, determination, and love for coaching has been a bright spot for Kentucky speech and debate.

Mississippi, Purvis High School - Joseph VanZandt

Joseph VanZandt has dedicated 11 years to Purvis High School's academic world, notably serving as the speech and debate coach for 8 of those years. Beyond his teaching accolades, including being named PHS's Teacher of the Year in 2016-2017, VanZandt takes pride in molding students into open-minded individuals who appreciate diversity and understand multifaceted perspectives.

Indiana, Westfield High School - Holly Reineking

Holly Reineking has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to the speech and debate community since 2007, holding memberships with notable organizations such as the National Speech and Debate Association and the Indiana Schools Speech and Debate Association. Her vast array of accolades spans from winning the Indianapolis Rotary Speech Contest to achieving the esteemed "Gold Standard" recognition in 2023 and 2014.

Iowa, Waukee High School - Jacqueline Pleggenkuhle

Jacqueline Pleggenkuhle has dedicated nearly three decades to enhancing educational experiences in Iowa's schools, notably at Waukee High School, where she serves in speech and theatre education. With extensive involvement in the Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA), Pleggenkuhle's passion and commitment have not only garnered accolades but have also inspired former students to pursue diverse careers in the arts, broadcasting, and education.

Wisconsin, Holmen High School - Kam-Lin Roswall

Kam-Lin Roswall stands as a cornerstone in speech and theatre education at Holmen High School in Wisconsin, celebrated for her exemplary mentorship and coaching prowess. She has led her team to numerous accolades at Wisconsin's State Speech and Theatre festivals, and Roswall also notably oversees the Poetry Out Loud competition and has played influential roles in organizations like WISDAA and La Crosse Festivals, Inc., further cementing her impact and leadership in the Wisconsin speech and theatre community.

Kansas, Shawnee Mission South High School - Carolyn Cook

Carolyn Cook's journey in speech and debate began as a student, igniting a lifelong passion that has profoundly shaped her career. Recognized multiple times as Kansas Debate Coach of the Year and with prestigious Diamond Awards from the National Speech & Debate Association, Cook's impact reaches her teams, statewide organizations, camps, and committees.

Missouri, Jackson Senior High School - Bobby Clubbs

Under Bobby Clubbs' leadership, the speech and theatre programs have flourished, securing numerous district championships and earning him accolades like the Second Diamond Coach recognition from the National Speech & Debate Association. Beyond coaching, Clubbs' commitment to fostering talent is evident through his initiation of summer school programs and innovative online competitions, ensuring continuous engagement and growth opportunities for students in the southeast Missouri region. His dedication to education and the arts has been recognized with esteemed titles such as the Excelsior Chapter DeMolay Educator of the Year and the Jackson Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year.

Minnesota, Robbinsdale Cooper & Robbinsdale Armstrong High Schools - DJ Brynteson

DJ Brynteson's dedication to speech and debate began immediately after his high school graduation in 1994. He revitalized the debate program at Robbinsdale Cooper High School and expanded its reach to Robbinsdale Armstrong High School, reinvigorating debate programs that had been dormant for decades. Brynteson's commitment to leadership and innovation, such as creating the "QMS Classrooms" tool for online debating, has played a pivotal role in the entire state of Minnesota.

Arkansas, Cabot Junior High School North - Tiffany Tucker

Tiffany Tucker, an esteemed educator from Cabot Junior High North in Arkansas, stands out for her commitment to fostering speech and debate talent. She has guided her students to impressive accolades at the National Speech and Debate Tournaments and was honored with a prestigious Diamond coaching award. Tucker also actively contributes to various committees such as the State Tournament Committee, Ethical Practice Committee, and more.

Oklahoma, Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School - Brett Young

Brett Young, hailing from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma, boasts an extensive career spanning over two decades in Speech & Debate coaching. At Bishop McGuinness, his leadership has been instrumental in fostering a robust team that consistently excels at regional and state levels. Young's accolades, including multiple NSDA Diamond Coach recognitions and numerous state champions under his tutelage, reflect his commitment to excellence as a coach and educator.

Colorado, Air Academy High School - Renee C. Motter

Renee C. Motter has dedicated 27 years to nurturing the next generation of communicators. Her vast contributions span coaching state champions and NSDA qualifiers to serving on national committees, earning her numerous accolades such as National Speech and Debate Educator of the Year and multiple NSDA Leadership Awards. Motter's profound impact resonates both locally and nationally, shaping the future of speech and debate while advocating for student success and equity.

Arizona, Phoenix Country Day School - Brittany Stanchik

Brittany Stanchik's passion for speech and debate began at 13, leading to a remarkable career in the field, most notably as Director of Forensics at Phoenix Country Day School. Her extensive contributions include roles at Desert Vista High School and various institutes, coaching numerous state and national champions while earning accolades like the NSDA Two Diamond Award for Coaching Excellence.

Alaska, Service High School - Adrian Schnyder

Adrian Schnyder's journey in speech and debate began as a competitor at Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School and evolved into a coaching role at multiple Anchorage institutions. Currently teaching at Service High School, Schnyder's coaching has contributed to notable achievements, including state championships and top placements across various speech and debate categories.

Outstanding Theatre Educator Awards

SECTION WINNERS

Section 1 - Scott Schulte - Waterbury, Connecticut

Scott Schulte is a distinguished theatre educator with an illustrious career spanning nearly 25 years within the Waterbury Public Schools system. His journey in theatre education commenced at Wallace Middle School, where he laid the foundation for his impactful career. In 2004, Schulte transitioned to the newly established Waterbury Arts Magnet School, where he has since been a cornerstone of the institution, teaching a diverse range of classes tailored for both Middle School and High School students.

Schulte's commitment to fostering theatrical talent extends beyond the academic year. For the past decade, he has spearheaded the Theatre Department's role in the Arts Summer Program, enriching the lives of students during the summer months and collaborating with colleagues for the betterment of many.

His impact on the Waterbury theatre community is evident in the numerous accolades garnered by his students at the annual Halo Awards hosted by Seven Angels Theater. Many of his former students have gone on to achieve success in the film and television industry, as well as in professional theatre productions, a testament to Schulte's mentorship. He has actively served as a Union Representative and Executive Board Member for the Waterbury Teachers Association for over 12 years, contributing to the broader educational community.

In addition to his extensive production and teaching repertoire, Schulte is praised for creating a welcoming environment for students, emphasizing the importance of belonging. His positive influence and care as an educator tap into students' potential, influencing their lives in profoundly positive ways.

Section 2 - Spence White – Lynchburg, Virginia

Spence White emerges as an exceptional figure in the world of theatre education, having sculpted a career that spans decades and is marked by remarkable achievements. His journey began as a determined student at E. C. Glass High School, where his passion for drama prevailed over other pursuits. White continued his pursuit of theatre education at Southern Methodist University, graduating from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in 1993. His professional credits include a stint on Broadway in Hamlet with Ralph Fiennes and lead roles at prestigious theaters such as The Guthrie Theater, Dallas Theater Center, and Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

Choosing to anchor himself in New York, White's professional trajectory encompassed a diverse range of experiences, from television appearances to bartending. His professional theatre background became the bedrock for his philosophy as an educator and director. In 2010, he seized the opportunity to join Jefferson Forest, accepting a part-time position four days before the school year began. White's determination to provide students with numerous opportunities manifested in three full-scale main stage productions and a competition one-act play annually.

Under White's leadership, Cavalier Theatre at Jefferson Forest has flourished, with extracurricular participation exploding in tandem with yearly enrollment growth from 57 to well over 200 students. The theatre program's expansion has led to a theatrical product considered among the best in Central Virginia. Notable accolades include multiple VHSL One-Act Play District, Region, and State championships, as well as recognition at the Virginia Theatre Association High School Theatre Festival and Southeastern Theatre Conference Secondary School Theatre Festival.

Beyond the stage, White's drive to foster a vibrant theatre community extends to the establishment of the Cavalier Improvathon, a successful monthly comedy club fundraiser that has seen 107 iterations to date. His impact is not only evident in the accolades garnered but also in the growth of the program, attracting students with no prior interest in theatre.

Section 3 - Mark E. Weaver – Milledgeville, Georgia

Mark E. Weaver stands as a beacon of inspiration in the realm of theatre education, having dedicated 29 years to nurturing the talents and passions of countless students. Throughout his illustrious career, Weaver's impact is reflected not only in the numerous awards and accolades garnered by his students but also in the transformative experiences he has provided for those facing challenges.

Weaver's tenure at Baldwin High School saw his One-Act play and literary teams consistently achieving excellence from 2002 to 2010, with an impressive array of state championships and individual awards. His move to Georgia Military College marked the beginning of an extraordinary period, witnessing 12 consecutive Region Literary Team Championships, 8 consecutive State Literary Team Championships, and 6 State Championships for One-Act Plays. The combined awards for GHSA Literary and One-Act Play over the past decade have rivaled the best in the state.

Weaver's humility and passion for education shines through in the numerous awards he has received, including being selected as Teacher of the Year multiple times. His journey from Southside Elementary School to Oconee Valley Alternative School and later to Georgia Military College is marked by commendations for his work with challenging students and contributions to the Fine Arts Center Project.

In the words of those who have witnessed his transformative work, Weaver's productions transcend the norm, delighting audiences and providing enriching experiences for students. His inclusive approach ensures that each student finds a place to contribute and participate, fostering a love for the arts. In the state of Georgia, Weaver's legacy is one of unwavering passion, dedication, and constant improvement in theatre education.

Section 4 - Dr. Marie Wojdelski – Chicago, Illinois

Celebrating her 20th year in education with an impressive array of roles at Thornton Township High School, Dr. Marie Wojdelski has dedicated herself to enriching the lives of students through theatre. Over her 18 years at Thornton, Dr. Wojdelski has showcased her versatility by teaching various theatre courses, including Stagecraft, Theatre Arts, and Speech communication. Notably, she has undertaken the role of the International Baccalaureate Theatre teacher for the past four years, consistently guiding students to earn college credit. As the theatre manager for 15 years, she actively engages with school productions and community rentals, contributing as a director, technical director, or assistant director.

Dr. Wojdelski is a dedicated co-head coach of the Speech team, overseeing students in 14 different events and ensuring they gain valuable experience in public speaking. Serving as Thornton's Activity Director

for 16 years, she maintains the quality of extracurricular programming, keeping students engaged and involved. Dr. Wojdelski's most notable achievements include multiple state final appearances, with cast members consistently earning awards at IHSA Drama/GI State Finals. Her commitment to students is recognized through Thornton's Five, Ten, and Fifteen-Year Service Awards, alongside the prestigious District 205 Student Board of Education Recognition Award.

A true artist and educational leader, Dr. Wojdelski's influence extends from her involvement in the creative process of stage productions to her role as a mentor shaping the lives of students. Her dedication to providing students with emotional support and helping them realize their potential has left a lasting impact, fostering a deep appreciation and connection with many. As an advocate for the transformative power of the performing arts, she instills in her students the belief that their craft can be a vehicle to transform their lives and achieve success.

Section 5 - Jessica Chipman – Alexandria, Minnesota

As a visionary director and educator of nearly 45 years, Jessica Chipman's brilliance shines through in every aspect of her work. Whether she's helming a newly devised work, reimagining a classic, staging a published script, or using improvisation to explore conceptual possibilities, colleagues claim that Chipman's approach is nothing short of extraordinary.

Her tenure has been marked by transformative contributions as a Theatre Director, not only at Alexandria Area High School but also in previous roles at Mount Pleasant High School (IA) and Algona High School (IA). Beyond her teaching commitments, Chipman is the Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Dynamo Creative, a female-led theatre company dedicated to telling women's stories.

With an impressive repertoire of over 35 plays and musicals directed and more than twenty full-length and one-act plays written, Chipman's impact extends far and wide. Notable productions include "Trousers," recognized with the Wells Fargo Award of Excellence and a "Star" rating at the MSHSL State One-Act Play Festival in 2022, and "The Lovely Bones," which received accolades and moved both audience and critics alike in 2023.

Chipman has received a plethora of achievements, such as the Minnesota Theatre Educator of the Year in 2021 and recognition as a National Finalist for the Heideman Award at Actors Theatre of Louisville in 2010. Her dedication to educating and the arts is further highlighted through various accolades, including her selection as a Minnesota State High School League One Act Play State Judge, recipient of the Lakes Region Arts

Council Individual Legacy Arts and Cultural Grant, and her status as a finalist for the Educator of the Year at the Iowa Governor's Scholar Recognition Luncheon in 2007.

Section 6 - Roshunda Jones-Koumba – Houston, Texas

With an exemplary tenure spanning over two decades as a Theatre teacher, Roshunda Jones-Koumba has left a mark on the world of arts education. For 20 years, Jones-Koumba has been a dedicated force at George Washington Carver Magnet High School in Houston, Texas. Her outstanding contributions recently garnered her the prestigious 2022 Excellence in Theatre Education Award presented by the Tony Awards and Carnegie Mellon University.

As the director of Carver's Panther Players Texas Thespian Troupe #6753, Jones-Koumba has overseen the troupe's resounding success at both the state and national levels, earning acclaim at the Texas Thespians State Festival, International Thespian Festival, UIL One-Act Play contest, and the Tommy Tune Awards. Notably, the troupe made history by being the first high school in the nation to premiere "Summer: The Donna Summer Musical" in 2023, securing multiple Tommy Tune Awards, including Best Musical.

Jones-Koumba's actively serves on the chapter board for Texas Thespians, the UIL OAP Advisory Committee Chair-Elect, and as the president for the C. Lee Turner's Black Theatre Educators' Caucus. Her impact is felt not only in Texas but also nationally, as evident from her position as a Texas Thespians State Thespian Officer Advisor since 2010.

A recipient of the Tony Award for Excellence in Theatre Education in 2022, Jones-Koumba's accolades further include being named in the Ebony Magazine Power 100 in 2022, receiving the Stephen Schwartz Musical Theatre Teacher of the Year in 2021, and being inducted into the Texas Thespians Hall of Fame in 2020. Her leadership roles and honors, such as serving as the Chair Elect for the UIL Theatre Advisory Committee, demonstrate her commitment to advancing the field of theatre education. Described by students and colleagues as "sensational," "nurturing," "inspirational," and "amazing," Jones-Koumba is a model educator and human being, worthy of the highest accolades in the realm of theatre education.

Section 8 - Ben Stuart – Seattle, Washington

Ben Stuart stands as a paragon of excellence in theatre education, with a rich history of contributions that have shaped the landscape of drama programs. Stuart took the helm at Roosevelt High School in 2015, becoming only the fifth person to hold the Co-Director position since the school's opening in 1922.

Under Stuart's guidance, Roosevelt Theatre celebrated its 100th Anniversary Season, marking a century of continuous theatre classes and school productions. Graduates from his program have ventured into film, television, Broadway, and national tours, showcasing the profound impact of his mentorship. His students have earned degrees from top institutions such as Carnegie Mellon University, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and Boston Conservatory.

Stuart has been an invaluable leader in Washington State Thespians, serving as Co-Chapter Director, Co-Vice Chapter Director, NW Region Director, and College Auditions Director. His commitment to recognizing student achievement in theatre and organizing events like the Washington State Thespian Festival underscores his dedication to fostering a vibrant theatre community in the state.

Stuart's colleagues and students describe him as a passionate advocate, skilled educator, and nurturing mentor. Stuart's generosity, both in time and resources, has created an inclusive environment that has left an enduring mark on theatre education.

STATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Iowa, Pella Community High School - Suzanne Sheldon Jones

Suzanne Sheldon Jones, deeply rooted in theatre since her childhood, has dedicated her life to theatre education in Iowa. Her impactful contributions at Pella Community High School have led to numerous recognitions, including Iowa High School Speech Association honors and Iowa High School Musical Theatre Awards. Beyond Pella, Jones's leadership extends to state-level organizations, such as the Iowa Department of Education and Iowa Alliance for Arts Education.

Wisconsin, Appleton North HS - Ron Parker

For over three decades, Ron Parker has been a cornerstone of theatre education in Appleton, Wisconsin. While leading the theatre program, Parker's students consistently excel, evidenced by a remarkable 24 consecutive years of top honors at the State Theatre Festival. Parker's dedication shines in his outreach efforts, curricular innovations, and commitment to mentoring fellow educators.

Missouri, Republic Schools - David Krudwig

David Krudwig has tenures at both Parkview High School and Republic High School and has produced an impressive repertoire of shows, garnered numerous accolades, and mentored students who have excelled in both acting and technical theatre across the nation. Beyond his classroom achievements, Krudwig's multifaceted career spans rigging, lighting, and fabrication, showcasing his extensive expertise and commitment to the theatrical arts.

Nebraska, York High School - Rebecca "Becky" J. Stahr

Rebecca “Becky” J. Stahr of York High School has brought innovative leadership that has propelled her students to numerous accolades, including state championships and individual honors. Stahr’s influence spans statewide through her positions with various educational and arts organizations and committees, like the NFTA Education Committee, NSAA, and NSCTA.

South Dakota, Rapid City Central High School - Joey Lore

Joey Lore, initially an English teacher, found his passion in theatre when he assisted a new theatre educator at Rapid City Central High School in 2004. By 2005, Lore embraced the role of technical director, immersing himself in professional development across cities like New York and London. Over the years, he expanded the school's theatre program, introducing new courses, leading international trips for students, and fostering a community where students thrived both artistically and academically.

Oklahoma, Alva Public Schools - Nick Bradt

Nick Bradt specializes in competitive theatre, speech, and debate coaching with Alva Public Schools in Oklahoma. His commitment to excellence has been recognized with several awards, including the 2023 OSSAA Theatre Teacher of the Year. Under Bradt’s guidance, Alva High School has achieved success in various competitions, including multiple OSSAA One-Act Play State Championships and Regional Speech and Debate titles.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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