

**NEW MEXICO
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**



News Announcement
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**ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY'S SHERIDAN JOHNSON RECEIVES
NFHS SECTIONAL SPEECH/THEATRE/DEBATE EDUCATOR AWARD**

Indianapolis, IN - The NFHS Speech, Debate and Theatre Association (NFHS SDTA) Outstanding Speech/Theatre/Debate Educator Award was first given in 1988 when seven individuals received sectional awards. Since that time, 238 sectional and 386 state awards have been presented. Added to those totals for 2021-2022 are eight sectional awards and fourteen state awards. An annual selection of a NFHS National Citation recipient began in 1989.

Albuquerque Academy's Speech & Debate Director, Sheridan Johnson, was selected not only as New Mexico's state award recipient, but also as the sectional honoree representing Arkansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Ms. Johnson has led the Albuquerque Academy Speech & Debate team to tremendous success, always as a model of humility, gratitude, and respectfulness. Her contributions to the state as a whole are unmatched:

She started the NMSDA Student Leadership Council, overseeing their efforts to run a scrimmage tournament and get involved in a political bid to raise money for NM debate. Moreover, she gave students from each competing school an avenue to voice their opinions, needs, and concerns. She formed the New Mexico Speech & Debate Foundation to support students' travel to the national tournament, and ran a fundraising gala. Through this foundation, she held a speech & debate tournament which was the first in the state to gain a bid to the UK Tournament of Champions in speech events, attracting significant competition from out of state for the first time. She included non-participating students in invitations to presentations during the tournament by professional actors, to bring a free and deeply educative experience to our state's students, and others.

In her role as the state speech & debate association's vice president, she has been an energetic mentor to new coaches, teaching the nuances of the events to build the level of competition in our state. She has helped behind the scenes at many local tournaments, and has been a leader in providing more judges for tournaments than she is requested to do. She has brought a thoughtfulness to all statewide decisions—crucial in the unprecedented year of the pandemic.

Finally, she has broken the decades-long drought of no National Champions from New Mexico, bringing home the NSDA's first place in Original Oratory in summer 2020, an accomplishment that very few coaches in the country will ever match.

Nominations for the NFHS SDTA Outstanding Speech/Theatre/Debate Educator Award are solicited from the NFHS's state contacts. All new nominations, plus selected past recipients, are considered for state, sectional or Citation awards. When reviewing the nominations, the NFHS Speech Committee looks at a number of criteria: 1) overall contributions, 2) years of service both curricular and co-curricular, 3) organization and continuance of an activity program, 4) significant and on-going contribution to the field, and 5) contributions to the profession both in and out of the state.

For additional information pertaining to this announcement, please contact Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director at (505) 977-5385 or dusty@nmact.org.