

The Elise Howard Debate Award

MIFA recognizes one debate coach, from all the debate disciplines, as the recipient of the annual Elice Howard award, named after the longtime coach from Petoskey High School.

Elice Howard, Petoskey High School Director of Debate and Forensics from 1967 to 1996, personified the best our competitive community offers. The Elice Howard Award honors directors of debate who strive for excellence in MIFA with their tireless efforts. They work to develop the debate community on the whole, not just their team. It is fitting to name such an award after someone who not only touched her students or her home town but educators and mentors throughout Michigan. She didn't merely judge, teach or coach. Instead, she influenced, enlightened and inspired. She did it all with a sense of humility and respect.

Elice Lou Howard graduated from Traverse City High School in 1959. From there, she earned her Bachelor of Arts from Central Michigan University by 1965 and her Master of Arts in Teaching from Michigan State in 1983. She began teaching and coaching debate and individual events for Petoskey High School in 1967 and was the sole coach of this award winning team until she was forced to retire in 1996 due to illness. In addition to coaching, she taught the very toughest English courses, chaired the English Department, and developed new classes at Petoskey High School to help students facing literacy challenges.

Elice took many teams to State Finals at both the Novice and Varsity level and the community learned to expect excellence from "her kids" as she accepted nothing less. She demanded the best from each one of her competitors, yet nurtured and supported each one unconditionally. She firmly stood her philosophical ground even when it wasn't at the height of popularity because to her, it didn't matter if her team won or lost, it was how they played the game. Many of her students carried that lesson with them and came back to thank her for it later. The fact that two of her students came back to coach debate and forensics at Petoskey High School is a glowing testimonial to her lessons on the value of persuasive communication.

Without a doubt, Elice had a rare gift for public speaking events but her treasure was in giving this gift to others. The importance of this award is that we never lose sight of her enduring commitment to excellence, her tireless efforts to preserve quality, and most of all her devotion to her students and colleagues.

Criteria for nomination:

- Coaches nominees must be currently coaching MIFA Debate Events in Michigan. (This may include coaches, assistant coaches and/or parent volunteer directors.) All forms of debate are eligible.
- Nominations are submitted only by coaches or assistant coaches in the field of Debate.

How to nominate:

- Go the link below to nominate a coach. Please be sure to fill out the nomination completely and accurately. <http://goo.gl/forms/GxNP835rzs>

How is a winner chosen?

- The Debate committee will choose a state winner from all of the nominees.
- The state winner will be announced at the State Debate Awards Ceremony in January.
****Deadline for nominations is December 31st**