

2025 HALL OF FAME IHSSA INDUCTEE



DEBBIE DEVORE Maquoketa Valley

Growing up on a farm outside of Gray, Debbie was educated in the Audubon Community School District. Though she was quiet and tried to blend into the cinder block walls for the first two years of high school, curiosity and Steve Casey eventually nudged her onto the stage and into the world of the IHSSA.

Debbie attended Buena Vista University, where she initially dreamed of becoming the next Joan Lunden; however, that path shifted when she changed her major to speech and drama. There, Dr. Michael Whitlatch mentored her in acting, directing, and the art of theatre. His influence helped the stage feel like home. During her college experiences, she was blessed to collaborate with and learn from many talented IHSSA directors—Brad Nesbitt, Larry Untiet, and Cindy Cone. They modeled what it meant to light the way for others.

Debbie began her teaching and coaching career at Algona High School. In 1999, she married her biggest cheerleader, Matthew. After teaching at Farragut and coaching alongside Mark Hopkins, she stepped into the world of human relations and was blessed to coach speech and theatre with Matthew at Villisca. Eventually, they began teaching at Maquoketa Valley. Debbie collaborated with an incredible team of amazing coaches in contest speech and theatre. One of Debbie's greatest joys was coaching her son Noah.

Alongside their coaching team, Debbie and Matt have hosted multiple district IE contests and are excited to be hosting the State IE contest this March for the first time. Debbie has continued to grow through leadership roles in the IHSSA, serving on the IE All-State Committee, Judge Certification Committee, Coaches Convention Committee, and the IE Task Force. In 2020, she was humbled to receive the National Federation State Speech, Debate, and Theatre Award.

For Debbie, the quote "Where we love is home" rings true—not only for the spaces she's created, but for the people who've filled them. From the students she's encouraged to the mentors who saw something in her before she saw it in herself, she has found home again and again—in the laughter backstage, the quiet courage of a first-time performer at an IHSSA contest, and in the shared stories that connect all of us. Debbie feels deeply honored and humbled to be inducted into the IHSSA Hall of Fame.



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MATTHEW DEVORE Maquoketa Valley



While growing up on a farm outside of Estherville, many foundational characteristics were instilled into Matthew DeVore. His mom, a teacher, provided lessons in loyalty, faith, and creativity. His dad, a farmer, showcased hard work and dedication. His two younger, incredibly talented sisters *allowed* him to sharpen his sarcastic sense of humor. Matthew was blessed with a plethora of inspiring teachers, a nurturing church family, an encouraging group of neighbors, and a surplus of devoted friends and family members. The fine arts were a vital part of his high school years, including large group and individual contest speech, stage productions, show choir, and vocal music. All of these, along with 80's music filling in the cracks, laid the foundation and set everything in motion.

Matthew began his collegiate journey at Iowa Lakes Community College and finished it at the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in Mathematics Education. He began his teaching career at Villisca High School, where he also coached large group and individual contest speech, directed drama productions, and participated in community theatre. Matt then taught one year at Clear Lake High School, where he also helped direct a stage production. His last stop for teaching high school mathematics took him to Maquoketa Valley High School in Delhi. In his 23 years at MV, Matt has coached both LG and IE contest speech, as well as directed numerous stage productions.

While at these stops along the journey, unwavering support has been standing right next to him: his rockstar wife, Debbie, devoted coaches, and his talented son, Noah. Matt and Debbie have worked together, along with some absolutely amazing coaches by their sides. Matt has been a contest manager for numerous conference and speech contests, served as a NE District Officer, was a member of the Coaches Convention Committee, and worked on the IE Task Force. In 2019, Matt received the National Federation State Speech, Debate, and Theatre Award.

If Matthew were to sum everything up with one word, it would be BLESSED. Blessed by his students, by his school district and all staff members, by his community, and by the relationships garnered from his fellow IHSSA coaches. Matthew feels very humbled beyond belief with the honor of being inducted into the IHSSA Hall of Fame!

**Debbie and Matthew will be honored at a reception and banquet
Friday evening during the IHSSA Coaches Convention.**

