

Wayne E. Brown

You'll get no argument on whether Wayne Brown is worthy of Hall of Fame status. A member of Smith-Cotton's Class of 1957, Brown devoted much of his life to the art of speech and debate, first as an S-C student and later as an educator and entrepreneur. He became a national influencer in the field, receiving four National Forensics League Diamond Key Awards and earning induction into the league's Hall of Fame in 1994.



Even as a young boy, Brown found debate and competitive speech to be a fun and challenging activity. He was an active debater and thespian through high school, serving as president of the Smith-Cotton National Forensics League chapter, which at the time was the largest in Missouri. He continued his education at Central Missouri State University, now the University of Central Missouri, earning a bachelor's degree in economics and later a master's degree in Education and History. He also did post-graduate work at the University of Missouri's Columbia and Kansas City campuses, and at Ottawa University and Rockhurst University in Kansas City. Brown taught debate and public speaking at Center High School in Kansas City for 30 years, leading his students to success at local, state and national competitions. He also served as adjunct faculty at CMSU, UMKC, Rockhurst and in the Metropolitan Community College district. He provided insights on high school debate in textbooks and films, and was recognized as the 1985 Teacher of the Year by the Speech & Theater Association of Missouri; he also served on that group's board of directors.

In 1978, Brown founded the Midwest Debate Institute at Rockhurst, which started as a summer debate camp for students. The camp focused on motivating and instructing high school students in the use of research, logic and oral persuasion. As a high school debate coach, he had 45 students compete in 17 national tournaments, earning two leading chapter awards and three district trophies. He also produced the National Forensic Library of videotapes.

Brown retired from teaching at Center in 1993, and passed away on July 30, 1995. He is survived by his wife Carla, and their four daughters, Lisa Miller, Wynne D. Demas, Katie Nagus, and Jenny Barth.

Inducted in Smith-Cotton Activities Hall of Fame, 2019