

The Tony Bernacchi Forensics Scholarship

BACKGROUND

Anthony Bernacchi, lovingly known as 'Tony', competed at San Francisco State University between 2000-2004, maintaining a love for both debate and interpretation events throughout his competitive career.

He became a coach after graduating and worked with both university and community college students. To his students, he was an endless source of encouragement, emotional support, and laughter. He gave his students the courage to set ambitious goals for themselves, both in forensics and in their lives, and gave them constant reassurance that they were good enough to achieve them.

To his colleagues, he was a social magnet, bringing people from across the speech and debate dichotomy together. Most often seen running the ballot table at tournaments, Tony's lightning-quick wit and razor-sharp tongue made for hilarious encounters with anyone unfortunate enough to wear the wrong sports team's clothing or ask a question that was answered on a sign at the table.

In his time as a coach in the NCFA, Tony was recognized with the NCFA Coach of the Year award, the CCCFA President's Award, and he is memorialized by the NCFA's Anthony N Bernacchi Distinguished Service Award. After his untimely death the NCFA community, along with Tony's family, raised funds to begin this scholarship fund.

ELIGIBILITY AND HOW TO APPLY

Current forensics competitors in the CCCFA are eligible for this one-time scholarship of \$750.

Students who 1) have demonstrated an interest in forensics, 2) have performed community service, and 3) have a financial need are encouraged to apply. These three criteria will be weighted equally. All applicants must also provide two references from a coach, judge, or peer.

Students should submit a letter with the intent to apply for the Bernacchi Scholarship to the NCFA, which should include their contact information and a short essay (500-1000 words) describing their interest in forensics, their service to their community, and their financial need. Application packets should be emailed to the CCCFA Secretary – rpetrello@vccd.edu

One competitor from each regional organization (PSCFA & NCFA) will be awarded a \$750 scholarship each year at the CCCFA tournament.

The current Executive Board -in consultation with a representative of the Bernacchi family - will determine who receives the annual scholarship.

The scholarship money will be sent directly to the student (a check will be sent to an address they provide).

Deadline for Applications – March 6th, 2026