

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



**NEWS RELEASE**

**Former Track Olympian Stephanie Hightower to Speak  
at NFHS Girls and Women in Sports Day Luncheon**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Bruce Howard**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (January 13, 2010) — Stephanie Hightower, a member of the 1980 U.S. Olympic track and field team and currently president and chairman of USA Track and Field (USATF), will be the special guest speaker at the NFHS Girls and Women in Sports Day Luncheon February 2 at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

The 11th annual event, hosted by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), is presented by the Oxley Financial Group of Raymond James & Associates.

Fox 59, WXIN-TV of Indianapolis will serve as media partner of the event, and the luncheon will be emceed by Angela Ganote, who anchors Fox 59's morning news and sports report. Other sponsors are Vincennes University, St. Vincent Sport

Performance, Citizens Energy Group, Sport Graphics, as well as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA).

NFHS Girls and Women in Sports Day is a part of the nationwide celebration of female sports pioneers and participants. The NFHS, which is the national leadership organization for high school athletic and fine arts activities, has hosted the Indianapolis event since its inception in 2000. Along with the NCAA and the IHSAA, the NFHS will celebrate the achievements of Indiana girls and women in sports and activities through the presentation of seven awards, including the IHSAA Sportsmanship Award and the NCAA Robert F. Kanaby Citizenship Award.

Hightower, a former world-class hurdler and sprinter, was a member of 12 national teams and held American and world records in the 60-yard dash and 100-meter hurdles. She also was a member of the USATF Athletes Advisory Committee.

Since her competitive days, Hightower has served the sport in a variety of positions, including USATF women's track and field chair, as well as team leader, team manager and chef de mission for Team USA at international competitions.

Hightower was elected president of USA Track and Field in December 2008 and was selected by the USATF Board as its chairman. She resides in Columbus, Ohio, where she is vice president for institutional advancement at Columbus College of Art

and Design. She recently completed a \$12 million comprehensive campaign for scholarships and facilities development.

Hightower is a active civic leader in her hometown of Columbus. For the past five years, she has been president of the Columbus Board of Education, a \$1.3 billion enterprise. She also is an advisory officer for U.S. Bank and is a member of several education and cultural boards.

Following are the five Indiana athletes who will be honored with special awards at the February 2 luncheon:

The **NCAA Robert F. Kanaby Citizenship Award**, given to the person who best exemplifies the ability to strive for excellence in athletics and academics, will be presented to **Hannah Amor** from LaVille High School, a consolidated school of Lakeville and LaPaz in northern Indiana. In addition to playing volleyball and basketball and participating in numerous clubs and activities, Amor started a library in the small town of LaPaz in order to develop a summer reading program for elementary school kids. The town of LaPaz agreed to allow Hannah to use the Community Building rent free for Hannah's Tuesday and Thursday Sizzlin' Summer Scholars reading program.

The **Leadership Award**, presented to an individual who demonstrates the ability to motivate others to accomplish a specific goal or objective, will be given to **Mackenzie Snyder**, a three-sport student-athlete at Hamilton Community Schools in

Hamilton, Indiana. In addition to being the top runner on the cross country team and participating in basketball and softball for four years, Snyder will be valedictorian of her graduating class. She also is president of the Student Council and student body, is a member of the Spanish Club and is highly involved in 4H.

The **Achievement Award**, given to a student or team that has overcome personal obstacles to achieve significant success, will be presented to **Morgan Merrill**, a senior at Center Grove High School in Greenwood, Indiana. Merrill, a member of the state-ranked volleyball team at Center Grove, overcame the death of her mother to leukemia to start her senior season, and a dislocated elbow in the middle of the season to return to the team prior to the IHSAA state tournament. Despite these obstacles, Merrill maintained a 3.6 grade-point average.

The **Courage Award**, presented to an individual who overcomes adversity through persistence and determination, will be given to **Sarah Keevil**, who earned four letters in soccer at Indianapolis Arsenal Technical High School. After overcoming difficult challenges at home, Keevil played soccer for the first time in 2006 and earned the team's Best Work Ethic Award in 2007, Most Valuable Teammate in 2008 and Best Work Ethic Award in 2009.

The **NFHS Positive Attitude Award**, presented to an individual who personifies the positive attitude of sport with his or her dedication to the promotion of sport

participation and by his or her inspirational actions, will be given to **Sydney West**, a four-year softball player and two-year volleyball player at Ben Davis High School in Indianapolis. She also participates in marching band, concert band, National Honor Society, key club and calculus club, and she is a senior mentor and senior class officer.

One high school coach and one high school athletic director also will be honored with special awards:

The **IHSAA Sportsmanship Award**, which acknowledges a person who has demonstrated responsible behavior in victory and defeat, will be presented to **Sandra Walter**. Walter has been athletic director at Lawrence Central High School in Indianapolis since 2002 after serving as assistant athletic director for two years. She directs the Athlete of Character Program at Lawrence Central, and also facilitates the State Leadership Conference. Walter has hosted a number of IHSAA tournaments and serves as treasurer of Conference Indiana. After earning her bachelor's and master's degrees from Ball State University, Walter started her career as a teacher and coach in Rushville, Indiana.

The **Outstanding Contribution to Sport Award**, presented to an individual (student or administrator) who has made significant contributions that advance, promote, assure and/or improve their sport or activity, will be given to **Denise McClanahan**, longtime girls basketball coach at Southport High School in Indianapolis

and currently assistant basketball coach at Franklin (Indiana) Central High School.

During her years at Southport, McClanahan directed the Lady Mac Summer League basketball program and was committed to making sure the players had a positive experience.

To order tickets (\$45 per ticket or \$450 for a table of 10), contact Kelly Russell at the NFHS at 317-822-5745 or [krussell@nfhs.org](mailto:krussell@nfhs.org). Doors open at 11 a.m. February 2, and the luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. and will conclude by 1:30 p.m.

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#### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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