



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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NIAAA to Present Distinguished Service Awards to Nine High School Athletic Directors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 30, 2015) — Nine individuals who have made outstanding contributions to interscholastic athletics have been named recipients of the 2015 Distinguished Service Awards given by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

These individuals will be honored December 15 in Orlando, Florida, during the banquet at the 46th annual National Athletic Directors Conference conducted jointly by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the NIAAA.

The Distinguished Service Award is presented annually to individuals from within the NIAAA membership in recognition of their length of service, special accomplishments and contributions to interscholastic athletics at the local, state and national levels. Nominations are submitted by state athletic directors associations, screened by the NIAAA Awards Committee and selected by the NIAAA Board of Directors.

This year's winners include Arthur Ballard, CAA, director of transportation, building and grounds, and athletics, Estill County Schools, Irvine, Kentucky; Sean Dowling, CMAA, director of athletics, Madison (New Jersey) High School; Jim Dorman, CAA, assistant principal/athletics,

Lincoln High School, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Ray Ebersole, CMAA, athletic administrator, Hudson (Ohio) High School; James Gagen, CMAA, retired activities director, St. Louis (Missouri) Marquette High School; Deborah Ofcky, CMAA, assistant athletic director, New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois; Ronald Richards, CAA, athletic director/assistant principal, McNary High School, Keizer, Oregon; Jaime Sherwood, CMAA, director of athletics and activities, Wayzata High School, Plymouth, Minnesota; and Todd Sobrilsky, CMAA, associate principal, Brookfield (Wisconsin) Central High School.

Following are the biographical sketches of this year's award winners:

Arthur Ballard, CAA, Irvine, Kentucky

Arthur Ballard has spent most of his life and his professional career in Estill County, Kentucky, where he is currently the director of transportation, building and grounds, and athletics for Estill County Schools. During his 31-year career in education, Ballard has worked as an athletic director, activities director, assistant principal and coach. At Estill County, Ballard coached football for 17 years and spent time as coach for both boys and girls basketball.

In addition to serving the students of Estill County Schools, Ballard is heavily involved at the state level as well. An 18-year member of the Kentucky High School Athletic Directors Association (KHSADA), he has represented Regions 10 and 14 on the KHSADA Board of Directors and has served as president-elect, president and past-president of the organization.

In 2004, Ballard was named KHSADA Athletic Director of the Year and has served as its conference program director for the past 13 years.

At the national level, Ballard has been a member of the NIAAA for 18 years and is a member of the national faculty for Leadership Training Institute classes 504, 506 and 508. He is also currently serving a four-year term on the NFHS/NIAAA National Athletic Directors Conference Advisory Committee representing Section 2. Among his honors, Ballard was given the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2011.

Sean Dowling, CMAA, Madison, New Jersey

Since becoming an athletic administrator in 2006, Sean Dowling has been one of the most active leaders in the state of New Jersey. He is currently the director of athletics of

Madison (New Jersey) High School, where he also oversees the district's physical education, health and driver education programs.

In his 10 years at Madison, Dowling has implemented several programs and initiatives, including a student-athlete mentoring program, a student-athlete leadership council, an athletic code of conduct and a community service program for all athletic teams.

Dowling has also worked cooperatively with the local community to open Madison's athletic facilities for recreation departments. He also oversees the Morris County Indoor Track Relays and Championships and has hosted the county's tournaments for field hockey, volleyball, girls lacrosse and track. In addition, he is currently president of the Northwest Jersey Athletic Conference.

Before becoming an administrator, Dowling coached several sports, including head lacrosse coach at Summit High School and Morristown-Beard High School from 1995 to 2005. He led Morristown-Beard to five consecutive New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Prep B championships and was named Newark Star Ledger Coach of the Year in 1997 and the Daily Record Coach of the Year in 2004. His lacrosse involvement continues today as the current chair of the NJSIAA Boys Lacrosse Tournament.

As a member of the Director of Athletics Association of New Jersey (DAANJ), Dowling has been a workshop presenter at four DAANJ state conferences and at the DAANJ's new athletic directors workshop. In 2014, he earned the DAANJ Sectional Award of Merit.

For the NIAAA, Dowling is a CAA test administrator and has twice been a workshop presenter at the National Athletic Directors Conference. A leader in leadership training, Dowling has taken 21 NIAAA Leadership Training Institute (LTI) courses and is an LTI instructor of 501, 502 and 626.

Dowling is a former football offensive lineman, who played at C.W. Post College in Greenvale, New York, and later appeared in three games for the Buffalo Bills in 1987. He was inducted into the American Football Hall of Fame in 2013.

Jim Dorman, CAA, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Jim Dorman has spent his entire career serving the students of South Dakota, where he is the assistant principal in charge of activities at Sioux Falls (South Dakota) Lincoln High School.

Before coming to Lincoln in 2005, Dorman was assistant principal and athletic and activities director for five years at Madison High School. His administrative career began in 1997 at Hamlin High School.

Dorman also spent 25 years coaching track and field, football and basketball, and he continues to be a coaching leader in the state. He currently is executive director of the South Dakota High School Coaches Association and represents South Dakota in the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. In addition, Dorman served a term as president of the South Dakota High School Coaches Association in 2001-02 and the South Dakota Cross Country and Track and Field Coaches Association from 1996 to 1998.

At each of Dorman's administrative stops, his school has regularly hosted tournaments in track and field, basketball, golf, wrestling, volleyball and gymnastics. In all, he has overseen 23 district tournaments, 32 region tournaments and five state tournaments.

Dorman is very active in the South Dakota Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (SDIAAA), where he has served as executive director since 2000. From 2000 to 2008, he was the SDIAAA newsletter editor and website coordinator. He has also been the SDIAAA's representative to the NIAAA Delegate Assembly 11 times.

Dorman has also served the South Dakota High School Activities Association as a member of the Track and Field and Cross Country Advisory Committee and the Sportsmanship Ad Hoc Committee.

Among his many honors, Dorman was named SDIAAA State Athletic Director of the Year in 2003 and 2012, and earned the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2002.

Ray Ebersole, CMAA, Hudson, Ohio

Ray Ebersole has enjoyed a unique and diverse career in athletic administration since he graduated from Ohio State University. He began his career as the director of community relations for the Cleveland Cavaliers for five years before moving to public administration with the City of Cleveland Parks and Recreation Department. It was during this stop that he had his first foray into interscholastic administration as program liaison to the Cleveland Public Schools Athletic Department.

In 1991, Ebersole was named athletic coordinator of Lakewood (Ohio) City Schools. From there, he worked as an athletic administrator at Fairview Park and Lorain High Schools before taking his current position at Hudson High School in 2004.

At each school, Ebersole has successfully overseen major facility improvements using private funds or corporate sponsorships. Under Ebersole's direction, Hudson High School has completed four major renovations or construction projects, including a \$5 million campaign to build a new stadium and \$2 million to establish an athletic center.

Throughout his career, Ebersole has been active at the local, state and national levels. He has managed numerous Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) sectional, district and regional tournaments in boys basketball, field hockey, football, boys and girls soccer, volleyball and baseball, and most recently served on the OHSAA Division I Evaluation Committee.

Also at the state level, Ebersole served on the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA) Professional Development Committee and as state chair for LTC 520.

On the national level, Ebersole was the chair of the NIAAA Sports Turf Education Committee from 2000 to 2007, and assisted in the content development for LTC 615 and 619, both dealing with turf management.

This year, Ebersole was named athletic director of the year by both the Northeast Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NEOIAAA) and the OIAAA. The NEOIAAA also honored him with its Citation in 2012 and its Meritorious Service Award in 2014.

James Gagen, CMAA, Licking, Missouri

James Gagen retired in 2002 from interscholastic administration after a career that spanned four decades. After starting as a teacher and football coach at East St. Louis (Illinois) Assumption High School in 1971, Gagen was an assistant football coach at Washington University in St. Louis for two years before returning to the high school scene in 1974 as a teacher and coach at Wildwood (Missouri) Lafayette High School in the Rockwood School District.

Gagen began his administrative career in 1978 as athletic director at Lafayette High School and remained in that position until 1989 when he assumed the North Region athletic administrator position for the Rockwood School District. In 1993, the Rockwood School District opened St. Louis (Missouri) Marquette High School and Gagen joined the staff as the school's activities director (and head football coach for one season) and served there until he retired in 2002.

Since he retired, Gagen has served as a sales associate for Daktronics and since 2005, he has been the regional program coordinator and an adjunct faculty member at William Woods University, working with athletic/activity administration curriculum.

During his career, Gagen was active in several local organizations. In 1986, he served as president of the Greater St. Louis Athletic Association, and from 1994 to 1996, was president of the Suburban South/West Athletic League. He was also active in the St. Louis Suburban Public High School Athletic Conference, serving as recording secretary from 1992 to 1994 and as president from 1996 to 1998.

Gagen also served the Missouri Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA) as treasurer (1992-97), state leadership training coordinator (1998-2002) and a term as president from 1997 to 1999. Since 2005, he has been the MIAAA retired member coordinator.

Gagen was a member of the NIAAA Certification Committee for seven years, and also served on the NIAAA Awards Committee from 2000 to 2005.

In 1999, he earned an NIAAA State Award of Merit, and in 2001, was awarded an NFHS Citation. In 2009, Gagen was honored with the Gerald Linneman Lifetime Achievement Award from the MIAAA.

Deborah Ofcky, CMAA, Winnetka, Illinois

From the start of her career in athletics, Deborah Ofcky has proven herself to be a driving force for constant improvement in all aspects of athletic administration. She is currently the assistant athletic director of New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, but her influence is felt far beyond her school.

At New Trier, Ofcky is involved in several committees, including the All-School Wellness Team Committee, the New Trier Spirit Committee, the Bullying/Harassment Prevention Committee and the Concussion Oversight Committee. She also continues to coach badminton and girls golf, and led the school's girls badminton team to a Illinois High School Association (IHSA) state championship in 2010.

One of Ofcky's major responsibilities at New Trier is coordinating the Student-Athlete Leadership Training (SALT), which serves juniors across all sports who participate in a wide variety of experiences and activities that encourage them to become lifelong learners and leaders.

Locally, Ofcky is a member of the Central Suburban League Leadership Conference Committee and is chair of the League's Sportsmanship Committee. She is also heavily involved at the state level, serving on the IHSA Golf Rules Committee and the IHSA State Badminton Seeding Committee. She previously served on the IHSA Advisory Board for badminton and volleyball.

Ofcky has been a member of the Illinois Athletic Directors Association (IADA) since 2002, and has served as the IADA state certification chair since 2006. In 2008, she was co-chair of the IADA state conference and in 2006 and 2007, Ofcky was the IADA registration co-chair.

At the national level, Ofcky has been a strong proponent of NIAAA certification and has been a CAA exam administrator since 2006. From 2006 to 2014, she was a member of the NIAAA Certification Committee, working as the lead mentor for CAA and CMAA readers. In addition, Ofcky was a member of the NIAAA Professional Development Academy in 2013 and 2014 and has been a regular presenter and moderator at the National Athletic Directors Conference.

Ronald Richards, CAA, Keizer, Oregon

Ronald Richards began his career in education more than 40 years ago as a football coach, teacher and basketball official in Butte, Montana. It is a career that has taken him to the collegiate level as a coach and back to McNary High School in Keizer, Oregon, where he is athletic director/assistant principal.

Richards was football coach at Butte High School for 11 years and at three colleges for the next 16 years before beginning his administrative career in 2001. Since 2010, Richards has been athletic director and assistant principal at McNary High School after nine years in a similar role at McKay High School in Salem, Oregon.

Richards also has continued to learn through continuing education. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in 1973, Richards earned his master's degree in education from the University of Montana Western in 1985. He then earned an administrative license from the University of Montana-Missoula in 2001 and, most recently, completed his continuing license for administration in 2012 from George Fox (Oregon) University.

As the assistant principal in charge of athletics at McNary, Richards oversees the department's fiscal operations, including developing and implementing fiscal control systems for accountability and cost-reduction. Locally, he is past president of the Salem Area School Administrators and the Greater Valley Conference.

Richards is active at the state level as well. He currently serves the Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA) as the state's leadership training coordinator. In addition, he served terms as OADA president, past president, treasurer and conference chair. Richards was also the chair of the first OADA Strategic Plan and was the first chair of the OADA Hall of Fame.

For the NIAAA, Richards currently serves on the Hall of Fame Committee, and in 2014, presented a workshop at the National Athletic Directors Conference entitled "Keeping your Sanity When the Demands of the Job Continue to Grow."

In addition to his administrative accomplishments, Richards is a veteran contest official. He officiated interscholastic and intercollegiate basketball for 23 years and previously evaluated and assigned officials.

Jaime Sherwood, CMAA, Plymouth, Minnesota

Since 1996, Jaime Sherwood has been the director of athletics and activities at Wayzata High School in Plymouth, Minnesota. At Wayzata, Sherwood oversees a department with 170 coaches and advisors, 2,000 student participants and a budget of more than \$1.5 million. During his tenure, he was involved in the design and construction of the new high school and a current addition to the largest high school in Minnesota.

Sherwood is very active at the state level, having served numerous times as a Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) tournament host and manager for boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, wrestling, softball and one-act play. In addition, Sherwood served two terms on the MSHSL Representative Assembly, one term on the MSHSL Softball and Baseball Advisory Committee and 12 years on the MSHSL Athletic Directors Advisory Committee. From 2003 to 2007, Sherwood served on the MSHSL Board of Directors, including a term as president in 2006-07.

Sherwood is equally involved in the Minnesota Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MnIAAA). In 2003, he was the association's second vice president, before serving a term as first vice president and eventually as president in 2005-06. Since 2005, Sherwood has been the MnIAAA's state leadership training coordinator and served as the MnIAAA Professional Development Committee chair from 2005 to 2013.

Sherwood has been an NIAAA member since 1993 and is a current member of the NIAAA Accreditation Committee. He is very involved in leadership training at the national level and currently serves on the national faculty for LTC 616, and in 2013, was a part of the NIAAA Professional Development Task Force Study Committee. For his accomplishments, Sherwood was honored with the NIAAA Section 5 Frank Kovaleski Professional Development Award in 2014.

Sherwood's NIAAA involvement includes serving as a Delegate Assembly voting member from 2003 to 2006 and as a member of the Third Strategic Planning Committee in 2009.

Todd Sobrilsky, CMAA, Brookfield, Wisconsin

Todd Sobrilsky's career in athletic administration in Wisconsin began in 2000 as assistant principal/activities director of Mount Horeb Area School District. In 2002, he moved to Beaver Dam Unified School District, and after five years there, became associate principal at Green Bay Area Public Schools. In 2010, he moved to his current position as associate principal of the Elmbrook School District and Brookfield Central High School.

At Brookfield, Sobrilsky oversees 26 sports programs and more than 100 coaches, as well as more than 60 student activity groups and clubs. In 2011, he initiated and developed the Brookfield Central High School Hall of Fame, coordinated a fundraising campaign to retire long-

term booster club debt and oversaw the building of a new turf baseball facility. Sobrilsky also has been a site coordinator for more than 25 Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) State Sectional Finals.

In addition, Brookfield High School has served as host to the largest girls basketball event in the state, in which 38 teams participate in 50 games on Thanksgiving weekend.

At the state level, Sobrilsky served on the WIAA Sports Advisory Committee from 2006 to 2010, including a term as chair from 2007 to 2009, and currently serves on the WIAA Advisory Council.

For the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association (WADA), Sobrilsky has been the state's LTI Coordinator since 2005 and a member of the state's leadership training teaching faculty since 2002. In 2012, he initiated WADA's "On the Road" LTI series, traveling across the state to teach LTI courses to athletic directors. Since 2012, Sobrilsky has been the WADA state certification chair, and has coordinated and taught the WIAA's New Athletic Director's Workshop since 2005.

At the national level, Sobrilsky, an NIAAA lifetime member, has completed 27 NIAAA Leadership Training Institute (LTI) courses. He has been a member of the National Conference Faculty since 2007 and is a presenter for Leadership Training Course 502. Sobrilsky has been LTI state coordinator since 2005 and LTI state certification coordinator since 2012. He also is state coordinator of the NIAAA Professional Development Academy.

Among his honors, Sobrilsky was named WADA Athletic Director of the Year in 2012-13, and in 2013 was honored with the WADA Andy Anderson Award for Exemplary Service.

About the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)

The NIAAA is the largest national organization for high school athletic administrators with more than 8,500 individual members. The NIAAA consists of athletic directors organizations in the 50 states plus the District of Columbia and provides an efficient system for exchange of ideas between the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and state athletic administrators organizations as well as individual athletic administrators. The NIAAA, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, strives to preserve the educational nature of interscholastic athletics and the place of these programs in the curricula of schools. The NIAAA is a full and equal partner with the NFHS. For more information, visit the NIAAA website at www.niaaa.org.

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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 16 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 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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