



## NEWS RELEASE

### NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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## **NIAAA to Present Distinguished Service Awards to Eleven High School Athletic Directors**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 14, 2017) — Eleven individuals who have made outstanding contributions to interscholastic athletics have been named recipients of the 2017 Distinguished Service Awards given by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

These individuals will be honored December 12 in Phoenix, Arizona, during the banquet at the 48<sup>th</sup> 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 **Steve Bridge**, CMAA, former athletic director, Elma (Washington) School District; **Andy Chiles**, CMAA, athletic director, Lake Nona High School, Orlando, Florida; **Brent Cook**, CMAA, assistant principal for activities/athletics, Dubuque (Iowa)

Senior High School; **Lane Green**, CMAA, district director of athletics and activities, Blue Valley School District, Overland Park, Kansas; **Lawrence Johnson**, CAA, retired athletic director, Alamogordo (New Mexico) High School; **Everett Kelepolo**, CMAA, principal, Springville (Utah) High School; **Mike McGurk**, CMAA, activities director/assistant principal, Lee's Summit (Missouri) North High School; **D. Scott Morris**, CAA, director of student activities, Fluvanna County High School, Palmyra, Virginia; **Paul Pendleton**, assistant principal, Tennessee High School, Bristol, Tennessee; **Trish Witkin**, director of athletics, Glastonbury (Connecticut) High School; and **Steve Young**, director of athletics, New Rochelle (New York) City School District.

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

### **Steve Bridge, CMAA, Elma, Washington**

Steve Bridge's commitment to Washington's student-athletes dates to 1972, when he served in his first role as a coach and teacher at Federal Way (Washington) High School. Retired since 2012, Bridge remains involved with his athletic community as a consultant for Clear Risk Solution, which serves as the insurance company for many of the state's school districts.

From 1992 to 2012, Bridge was the athletic director for the Elma School District. During this time, he was a leader in Evergreen 1A, a league of public and private high schools in the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) Southwest District 4. Bridge was league president four times and District 4 president twice.

Bridge's previous duties included a vice principal/athletic director position at Montesano (Washington) High School from 1988 to 1992. His second – and most extensive – role as a coach and teacher took place at Ocosta High School in Westport, Washington, from 1975 to 1988. He also was the school's activity director during this period. The 1981 and 1985 seasons culminated in Bridge earning the honor of Far West League Football Coach of the Year.

After earning his bachelor's degree from Central Washington University (CWU), Bridge earned his master's degree in educational administration at CWU in 1986. Bridge was an adjunct faculty member at Seattle Pacific University for nine years and became a Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) in 1998.

In his combined 17 years at Federal Way and Ocosta High Schools, Bridge served in multiple coaching roles. In that time, Bridge spent two years as a track head coach, two years as

boys basketball head coach, four years as a girls basketball head coach, and 12 years as a football head coach.

Bridge's service at the state level was highlighted by his 2002-03 term as the president of the Washington State Secondary Athletic Administrators Association (WSSAAA). Bridge has been a WSSAAA board member since 1996 and, in 2007, was named to the Washington Athletic Directors Hall of Fame. Additionally, he was honored with the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2002 and the NFHS Citation in 2001, and he has been active as member of the NIAAA National Faculty for two Leadership Training Institute (LTI) courses.

### **Andy Chiles, CMAA, Orlando, Florida**

Andy Chiles, CMAA, is the athletic director of Lake Nona High School in Orlando, Florida, a position he has held since the school opened its doors in 2009. Chiles began his career in athletic administration in 2000 as the athletic business manager at Felix Varela High School in Miami, Florida. In 2004, he became the school's athletic director and served in that role for five years before moving to Lake Nona.

Chiles began his career in secondary education in 1987 as a teacher and coach at Miami (Florida) Sunset High School. He coached basketball and golf at Sunset, and then moved to the collegiate level as an assistant basketball coach at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. During his time at Felix Varela and Lake Nona, Chiles has hosted numerous Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) district and regional tournaments.

After joining the Varela High School staff, Chiles quickly became active in state and national organizations. Since 2001, Chiles has served on the Florida Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (FIAAA) Board of Directors and as state coordinator for the NIAAA's Leadership Training Institute. In 2007, Chiles was elected FIAAA president-elect and served as its president in 2008-09. Also at the state level, Chiles served on the FHSAA Athletic Directors Advisory Committee from 2006 to 2009, including two years as its chair. He is currently serving his second term on the FHSAA Board of Directors and has been selected president-elect.

Chiles' service to the NIAAA is extensive. He served a five-year term on the NIAAA Board of Directors, including a year as president in 2014. He was a member of the NIAAA LTI National

Faculty for six years, and he was the course chair for NIAAA LTC 705 from 2008 to 2011. He also served on the NIAAA Awards Committee from 2005 to 2011, including five years as vice-chair.

In 2005 and 2010, Chiles was a member of NFHS/NIAAA National Athletic Directors Conference Host Committee, and he was a workshop presenter at the 2007 National Athletic Directors Conference. In 2009, he was a member of the NIAAA Blue Ribbon Panel, and he received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2007 and the NFHS Citation in 2012.

### **Brent Cook, CMAA, Dubuque, Iowa**

Brent Cook launched his career in high school athletics in 1994 as a teacher and coach at Pekin (Illinois) High School. Twenty-three years later, Cook's mission to serve student-athletes continues at Dubuque (Iowa) Senior High School, where he has been the assistant principal in charge of activities and athletics since 2012.

In addition to managing all athletic events and evaluating all head coaches, Cook has been chairperson of the Dubuque Senior High School Athletics Hall of Fame, a planning committee member for the high school's renovation projects, and the manager for state series events sponsored by the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union (IGHSAU).

Equipped with a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa and a master's degree from Illinois State University, Cook spent two years at Pekin before moving to Flanagan, Illinois, in 1996. Cook started his administrative career as the high school and junior high school athletic director at Flanagan Unit #4 Schools. While at Flanagan, Cook was the head coach for the boys and girls golf teams, and the Flanagan Education Association (FEA) president during the 1998-99 school year.

In 1999, Cook became assistant principal and activities director at Olympia High School in Stanford, Illinois, for three years, before moving to Iowa in 2002. Cook then served for 10 years as assistant principal and athletic director at Central Clinton/DeWitt (Iowa) High School, where he was responsible for starting the Central High School Hall of Fame.

Cook has been a leader in the Iowa High School Athletic Directors Association (IHSADA) since 2004 when he was named to the IHSADA Executive Board. He was the organization's president in 2008-09 and serves as the state's NIAAA liaison and NIAAA certification

coordinator. Earlier this year, Cook was elected to the Iowa High School Athletic Association Board of Control.

Nationally, Cook was a member of the NIAAA Publications Committee for six years, and he currently serves on the NFHS/NIAAA Athletic Directors Advisory Committee. He also was a workshop presider at two National Athletic Directors Conferences.

Cook received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2010 and the 20-year IHSADA Service Award in 2016.

### **Lane Green, CMAA, Overland Park, Kansas**

After switching from business to education in the early part of his career, Lane Green, CMAA, earned a certificate in secondary education nearly 20 years ago and has remained focused on education-based athletics and activities ever since.

Following his graduation from the University of Kansas in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in public relations, Green was hired by the Dallas Mavericks. Green's stint with the Mavericks was brief, as he departed for Kansas City, Missouri, the site of his next two professional stops with Hunt Midwest Entertainment (1986-90) and Boasberg Valentine-Radford Public Relations (1990-92). In 1993, Green received his certification in secondary education from Kansas City's Avila College, and embarked on a 13-year run as a teacher, director of athletics and varsity girls basketball coach at Shawnee Mission East High School in Prairie Village, Kansas.

In 2006, Green became the assistant principal and director of athletics and activities at Olathe (Kansas) North High School and, in 2009, was promoted to district director of athletics, activities, transportation, and safe and drug free schools. Green left Olathe District Schools in 2014 to take his current position as district director of athletics and activities with the Blue Valley School District in Overland Park, Kansas.

Green served on the NIAAA Board of Directors from 2012 to 2015, and on the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) Board of Directors from 2005 to 2007. During his time on the NIAAA Board, he was liaison to the NIAAA Coaches Education Committee. Green also was president, treasurer, vendor coordinator and 6A representative during his 15 years on the Kansas Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (KIAAA) Board of Directors.

Green has taken 21 Leadership Training Courses and had several articles published in the *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* magazine. He served on the NIAAA Publications Committee for three years, the LTI National Faculty for two years and was a CAA test administrator.

Green is a 2009 NIAAA State Award of Merit recipient and was recognized with an NFHS Citation in 2015. In 2013, he was named the KIAAA District III Athletic Director of the Year.

### **Lawrence Johnson, CAA, Alamogordo, New Mexico**

Lawrence Johnson's legacy at Alamogordo Public Schools began in 1972 after he graduated from Western New Mexico University. He later earned his master's degree in 1976 and his administrative license in 1995 from the same school.

After teaching and coaching at the middle school level to begin his career, Johnson transferred to Alamogordo High School in 1982, where he coached basketball and track for five years, followed by six years as the school's guidance counselor. During this time, he became the sponsor of the BSU Club and started the Martin Luther King Jr. recognition program.

Johnson moved into athletic administration in 1993 as assistant athletic director and became the school's athletic director in 1994. He retired in 2013 after 41 years at Alamogordo, including the final 21 years as athletic director.

Within the state, Johnson was a significant contributor to both the New Mexico High School Coaches Association (NMHSCA) and the New Mexico Athletic Directors Association (NMADA), including serving on the NMHSCA Board of Directors.

Johnson's contributions to the state AD association opened the door for NIAAA LTI courses, when as state coordinator, he planned New Mexico's first classes. Johnson continues to teach numerous LTI courses even in retirement. He was the state's LTI coordinator for 10 years.

Johnson was a member of the NMADA Board of Directors from 1996 to 2016, including a term as president in 1998-99. He was New Mexico's liaison to the NIAAA and was a voting delegate to the Delegate Assembly during those years. Within the New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA), Johnson served on the NMAA Commission from 1998 to 2013, including the final 11 years as chair and representative to the NMAA Board of Directors.

At the national level, Johnson was a member of the NIAAA Board of Directors from 2007 to 2010. He also was a member of the NIAAA Hall of Fame Committee and Credentials Committee, and served on the first NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee. Johnson has served as the National Emergency Network contact for the state of New Mexico, and he has attended 22 National Athletic Directors Conferences.

### **Everett Kelepolo, CMAA, Springville, Utah**

Springville (Utah) High School Principal Everett Kelepolo, a native of Hawaii and raised in Arizona, began his career coaching football, wrestling, track and a host of other sports at Spanish Fork High School (1995-99) and Lehi High School during the first decade of his career.

Prior to taking over as Springville High School principal, Kelepolo was the coordinator of athletics in the Nebo School District. That position served five high schools and seven junior high schools. Kelepolo was instrumental in creating the Nebo School District Captains Academy. The academy, which consists of captains and leaders from each of the Nebo School District's 12 secondary schools, features speakers presenting ways in which schools can conduct leadership and sportsmanship traits. Kelepolo's notable accomplishments for the school district include implementing a stipend payment for athletic administrators who earn CAA and CMAA certification from the NIAAA.

Kelepolo graduated from Southern Utah University in 1991 with a bachelor's degree in education and earned his master's from Brigham Young University in 2001. In 2011, he completed his doctoral dissertation through the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on "The Relationship Between Participation in Extracurricular Activities and Utah's Proficiency Assessments of Students in a Suburban School District." Kelepolo has presented his dissertation on multiple occasions to address the value of athletics in aiding academic performance. He has served on a city recreation board and currently serves on a hospital board to further the cause of health, fitness and participation for youth.

Since 2014, Kelepolo has been a member of the Utah Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (UIAAA) Athletic Director Executive Committee. He has been an LTI instructor at several UIAAA state conferences as well as a workshop moderator and presenter.

Nationally, Kelepolo, a 2015 NIAAA State Award of Merit recipient, served on the NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee (2014-2015) and is currently a member of the NIAAA Awards Committee. He has completed 21 LTI courses and, for the past 10 years, been an instructor of the NFHS Learning Center's "Fundamentals of Coaching" course.

### **Mike McGurk, CMAA, Lee's Summit, Missouri**

After 16 years in Virginia to begin his career in secondary education, Mike McGurk has spent the past nine years in Missouri as assistant principal and activities director at two schools. Since 2013, McGurk has been the activities director and assistant principal at Lee's Summit (Missouri) North High School after five years as the activities director at Jefferson City (Missouri) High School.

At Lee's Summit North, McGurk serves more than 1,900 students in grades 9-12. In four years, he has developed a student activity advisory council to assist in the implementation of a student leadership program, designed a "Rising Freshman Preview Night" and managed multiple district and sectional tournaments. At Jefferson City High School, McGurk implemented a drug-testing policy for all high school athletes and developed a district-wide website.

During his time in Virginia, McGurk was the director of student activities at James W. Robinson Secondary School in Fairfax, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria. While at James W. Robinson, McGurk helped coordinate a \$200,000 facility improvement plan and directed the Virginia High School League (VHSL) AAA state gymnastics, lacrosse and wrestling tournaments.

McGurk, who holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from George Mason University (Virginia) and a master's degree in education leadership, was a teacher and basketball coach at Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, Virginia, from 1992 to 2002, to begin his education career.

McGurk served on the Missouri Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA) Board of Directors and recently concluded a term as president. In that role, he began a mentoring program and led the first state association strategic plan.



Nationally, McGurk has been on the NIAAA Awards Committee since 2013 and vice-chair since 2015. McGurk co-developed LTC 726 on student leadership development, has been a workshop presenter at the National Athletic Directors Conference and has had one article published in *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* magazine.

#### **D. Scott Morris, CAA, Palmyra, Virginia**

For the past 18 years, Scott Morris has loyally served the students of Fluvanna County High School in Palmyra, Virginia. He started as a teacher in the social studies department, and he has coached and been director of student activities since January 2004. Fluvanna County currently features 26 varsity sports or activities, all of which Morris helps manage and schedule.

In 13 years as director of activities, Morris has implemented seven new sports at Fluvanna County, including soccer, lacrosse and swimming for boys and girls, and wrestling for boys. He also has created a Student-Athlete Handbook and a Coaches Handbook, and he helped open a new high school five years ago.

Before he joined the Fluvanna County staff, Morris began his career as a teacher and coach at schools in Madison and Charlottesville. He coached baseball, softball, basketball and football. Morris is a 1990 graduate of Radford (Virginia) University, and he received his master's degree in 2004 from Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia.

An active member of the Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (VIAAA) for 11 years, Morris was VIAAA president in 2014-15 when he implemented the first Mentoring Committee to help new activity directors. He also was co-chair of the 2010-11 VIAAA Strategic Plan, chair of the 2017 VIAAA State Conference and chair of the VIAAA Professional Development Committee.

On the national scene, Morris has completed 25 LTI courses and facilitated multiple sessions for the NIAAA. He is currently a member of the NIAAA National Faculty and is the acting instructor for LTC 630, as well as LTC 631. For the past three years, Morris has also served as Virginia's state delegate to the NIAAA. Morris has been a CAA test administrator and has had an article published in *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* magazine.

Among his awards, Morris received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2015 and was named Virginia State 3A/4A Athletic Director of the Year this year.

### **Paul Pendleton, CMAA, Bristol, Tennessee**

During his 16 years as an athletic administrator in Tennessee, Paul Pendleton has become one of the state's top leaders in education-based athletics and activities. In his role as assistant principal/athletic director at Tennessee High School in Bristol, Pendleton displayed a thorough commitment to students at the local, state and national levels. Although he relinquished his duties as the school's athletic director this year, Pendleton still remains as assistant principal and plays a role in supporting the high school athletics program.

Locally, Pendleton has served as president and vice president of the Big 7 Conference four times. Since 2009, he has served as the conference's secretary/treasurer. Pendleton has been district coordinator for baseball, basketball, boys soccer, softball and volleyball on multiple occasions as well as regional and sectional tournament director for basketball and volleyball. From 2004 to 2015, he was the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) Athletic District I AAA State Coordinator.

Pendleton, who has been state liaison for the Tennessee Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (TIAAA) since 2011, served as secretary/treasurer for the TIAAA Board of Directors (2011-2017), and he has been a member of the TIAAA/TSSAA State Conference Planning Committee since 2004. He previously served three years as a co-LTI state coordinator, and he has taught several Leadership Training Courses at the state level. Pendleton has attended 13 TIAAA/TSSAA State Conferences.

In 2007 and 2016, Pendleton was a member of the Host Committee for the National Athletic Directors Conference in Nashville. He is a former member of the NIAAA Board of Directors and NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee, and he has been a workshop presenter at the National Athletic Directors Conference on two occasions. He has completed 28 Leadership Training Courses and has attended 12 National Conferences.

Among his previous awards, Pendleton was recognized with the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2009, and received the Athletic Director of the Year award in Tennessee.

### **Trish Witkin, CMAA, Glastonbury, Connecticut**

Trish Witkin has become one of the top leaders in athletic administration in Connecticut – and nationally – the past 10 years as director of athletics at Glastonbury High School, where

she oversees more than 30 varsity athletic programs. She previously served in similar roles at Granby Memorial High School (2006-07) and Enfield (Connecticut) Public Schools (1998-2006) before joining the Glastonbury staff.

Witkin graduated in 1993 from the University of Hartford, where she was a four-year starter on Hartford's women's softball team. After earning her master's degree in 1996, she coached softball and volleyball at Simsbury (Connecticut) High School for two years before beginning her administrative career.

Locally, Witkin has been a key contributor to the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) and still serves on three committees.

At the state level, Witkin has been a key contributor to the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). As part of the CAAD, Witkin has been the CAAD representative to the CIAC since 2012, and CAAD liaison to the NIAAA since 2012. She was secretary (2006-08) and president (2010-12) of the CAAD and chair of the CAAD Strategic Planning Committee.

Within the CIAC, Witkin is the CAAD consultant to the CIAC Board of Control as well as the CAAD consultant to the CIAC Softball Committee. She has previously served on the CIAC Field Hockey, Swimming and Diving and Gymnastics Committees.

Witkin served on the NIAAA Board of Directors from 2012 to 2016, including a term as president in 2015. She was the NIAAA state delegate at the National Athletic Directors Conference from 2008 to 2011, and she is LTI instructor in Connecticut for six Leadership Training Courses.

Witkin was recognized in 2010 with the NIAAA State Award of Merit, and she was inducted into the Wappinger Central (New York) School District Hall of Fame in 2000.

### **Steve Young, CMAA, New Rochelle, New York**

Steve Young is currently in his fifth year as director of athletics for the City School District of New Rochelle, providing oversight for more than 70 teams and 100 coaches. He previously spent 10 years with the Chappaqua Central School District as its director of physical education and athletics. Young's path to New Rochelle also included five years as the director of athletics at The Dalton School in New York (1997-2002).

Young earned his bachelor's degree from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, and his master's degree in physical education and sport management from Western Illinois University. He also holds his certification in education administration and supervision from Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York.

Young is currently assisting in the development of a new track, gym floor, tennis courts and lights, and two turf fields in his district. He has also developed a sportsmanship workshop in Section 1 for athletic directors, coaches, parents and student-athletes, and has worked to improve the area as a member of the Section 1 modified sport, safety and sportsmanship committees, respectively.

Young was president of the New York State Athletic Administrators Association (NYSAAA) in 2012-13 and is currently chair of Leadership Training in the state of New York. Since 2006, Young has been a member of the NYSAAA Representative Board. He was the 2014 recipient of the Dr. John Foley Professional Development Award and, in 2015, was honored with the Apple Appreciation Award.

Young has been actively involved in the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute. He is chair of LTC 709 and has been a member of the NIAAA National Faculty since 2008. Young has completed 33 LTI courses, and he has taught 20 courses at local, state and national levels. Young previously served on the NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee, and he's currently a member of the NIAAA Accreditation Committee.

Young, an adjunct instructor in the Sports Management program at the Tisch Institute for Sports Management, Media and Business at New York University, is co-director of the NIAAA Section 1 Summer Institute, a professional development program for athletic administrators to enroll in Leadership Training courses.

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#### **About the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA)**

The NIAAA is the professional organization for interscholastic athletic administrators. The association is accredited by AdvancED and North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, the NIAAA promotes and enhances the profession of athletic administration for high school and middle school athletic administrators. Since 1977, the NIAAA has served those who lead education-based athletic programs in the nation's schools. With current individual membership of nearly 11,000, the NIAAA consists of members from athletic administrator associations in the 50 states, and the District of Columbia, as well as over 40 international countries. Through its 48-course curriculum, and four levels of certification, the NIAAA is the

national leader in providing professional development for athletic administrators, directors, coordinators, and supervisors, as well as those serving in assistant principal/athletic director, or activity/athletic director combined roles that lead school-based sports programs. While providing best-practices and serving as a resource for safe and plentiful participation opportunities for student-athletes, the NIAAA places further focus on member benefits, standards, communication, outreach, and recognition, while emphasizing the exchange of ideas among athletic administrators throughout the nation and the world. NIAAA champions the profession of athletic administration through education opportunities, advocating ethics, developing leaders and fostering community. The NIAAA, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, is a full and equal partner with the NFHS. For more information, visit the NIAAA website at [www.niaaa.org](http://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 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 7.9 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](http://www.nfhs.org).

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