



## NEWS RELEASE

### NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

9100 Keystone Crossing, Suite 650, Indianapolis, IN 46240

317-587-1450, FAX 317.587.1451/[www.niaaa.org](http://www.niaaa.org)

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

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mike Blackburn

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 25, 2019) — Ten individuals who have made outstanding contributions to interscholastic athletics have been named recipients of the 2019 Bruce D. Whitehead Distinguished Service Awards given by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

These individuals will be honored December 17 in National Harbor, Maryland, during the banquet at the 50<sup>th</sup> annual National Athletic Directors Conference conducted jointly by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the NIAAA.

The Bruce D. Whitehead 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 award winners include **John Frizzell**, CMAA, athletic director, Wisconsin Rapids (Wisconsin) Lincoln High School; **Todd Gilkey**, CAA, athletic director, St. Maries (Idaho) High School; **Jeff Morris**, CMAA, director of athletics and head of school, Gray Stone Day School,

Misenheimer, North Carolina; **Mike Mossbrucker**, CAA, Mooresville (Indiana) High School; **Tom Nerl**, CMAA, athletic director, Mariemont High School, Cincinnati, Ohio; **Robert Palazzo**, CMAA, director of athletics, Classical High School, Providence, Rhode Island; **Mark Rerick**, CMAA, director of athletics, Grand Forks (North Dakota) Public Schools; **Annette Scogin**, CMAA, former assistant director of athletics, Dallas (Texas) Independent School District; **Dory Smith**, CMAA, former director of athletics, Villa Duchesne and The Principia Schools, St. Louis, Missouri; and **Jim Wright**, Ed.D., CMAA, supervisor of health, physical education and athletics, South Huntington (New York) Union Free School District.

Following are biographical sketches on this year's award recipients:

### **John Frizzell, CMAA**

#### **Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin**

John Frizzell, CMAA, has been a teacher, coach and athletic director at several schools in central Wisconsin and has made a tremendous impact at the local, state and national levels.

Frizzell has been the athletic director at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School since 2016, and he also serves the Wisconsin Rapids community as a member of the Youth Sports Commission.

At Wisconsin Dells High School, Frizzell was a co-founder of the Football Booster Club, and he was an Athletic Hall of Fame Committee member from 2003 to 2009. He was then part of the executive board and Fundraising Committee for Chippewa Falls High School's Athletic Booster Club from 2009 to 2016, and a co-facilitator of CFHS's Strategic Plan Development Committee from 2014 to 2016.

In addition to being a former social studies, English and special education teacher, Frizzell coached baseball, basketball, football and softball at the middle school and high school levels, and has been involved as a youth sports coach for 25 years.

Nationally, Frizzell has been a member of the NIAAA Awards Committee since 2013, serving as its vice-chair in 2018 before being elevated to chair this year. He has also served as an NIAAA state delegate on two separate occasions, been active in the organization's Professional Development Academy and taught Leadership Training Institute (LTI) courses at National Conferences.

An athletic administrator for 17 years, Frizzell has been a key leader with the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association (WADA), where he currently serves as board liaison, Leadership Training state coordinator and state certification coordinator. He is also a 16-year veteran on the WADA Constitution and By-Laws Revision Committee and a 10-year member of the WADA Mentoring Program Development Committee, where he has guided 15 rising athletic directors. He is a fixture at WADA state conferences, having attended the past 17 years. He has been the conference presider three times, given five different presentations and administered 18 Leadership Training classes.

This year, Frizzell was selected WADA District 2 Athletic Director of the Year.

### **Todd Gilkey, CAA**

#### **St. Maries, Idaho**

Todd Gilkey, CAA, is a prominent figure among high school athletic administrators in Idaho, having served as athletic director at St. Maries High School and activities director at Coeur d'Alene High School for 19 years.

Starting in 1999, Gilkey spent eight years at St. Maries before moving to Coeur d'Alene in 2007. He returned to St. Maries in 2014 for a second stint as athletic director and remains in that role.

At the national level, Gilkey has been a member of the NIAAA Endowment Committee since 2008 and currently serves as its chair. He has been the NIAAA's liaison for Idaho since 2011, and he was selected to serve on the fourth NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee in 2014. Gilkey's professional contributions earned him the NIAAA State Award of Merit for Idaho in 2008 and an NFHS Citation in 2014. He was also the NFHS coach education liaison for his state in 2011.

Gilkey has played vital roles in both the Idaho Athletic Administrators Association (IAAA) and the Idaho High School Activities Association (IHSAA). He is currently serving his second four-year term as president of the IAAA and was also co-president in 2007-08. He has been the organization's Section 8 secretary since 2009 and was previously the NIAAA Leadership Training chair and co-chair. Gilkey has completed 25 Leadership Training classes.

With the IHSAA, Gilkey has hosted several state tournaments and more than 40 regional and district tournaments. He has been the chair of the IHSAA Classification Committee since 2017 and served as an executive board member from 2011 to 2014.

Locally, Gilkey has been a district tournament manager for more than 40 additional events since 1998 and has held positions for multiple athletic conferences, including president of the Intermountain League, secretary of the Inland Empire League and president of the Central Idaho League.

Gilkey, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Idaho, was selected Idaho 3A Athletic Director of the Year in 2005, Idaho 5A Athletic Director of the Year in 2009 and 2012 and Idaho 2A Athletic Director of the Year in 2017 and 2019.

### **Jeff Morris, CMAA**

#### **Misenheimer, North Carolina**

Jeff Morris, CMAA, has nearly 25 years of experience in high school athletics and has spent the past 14 as an athletic administrator, holding both the director of athletics and head of school positions at Gray Stone Day School in Misenheimer, North Carolina. Previously, he spent nearly 10 years as a physical education teacher and head soccer coach at Colquitt County High School in Moultrie, Georgia.

Morris built the program at Gray Stone from the ground up including the establishment of athletic policies and a culture of character and success. As head of school (principal) since 2015, Morris is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, including staff and student supervision.

Morris has been affiliated with the NIAAA for the past 12 years and is now a lifetime member. He currently serves on the organization's Accreditation Committee and is heavily involved with the Leadership Training program as the North Carolina state coordinator and a national faculty member and content contributor for four different courses. Since 2009, he has taught more than 30 courses at the National Conferences.

Morris is a leader in his state as well, having served as secretary, vice president and president of the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association (NCADA). Additionally, he is the

NCADA's Professional Development Committee chair and is a past recipient of the Rusty Lee Professional Development Award.

As the state Leadership Training coordinator, he has taught more than 30 courses at state conferences and the NCADA's Summer Leadership Academy since 2008. He also is the NCADA's representative to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) Board of Directors and has previously served on the state conference planning committee.

At the local level, Morris has been the president of the Yadkin Valley 1A Conference seven different times in the past 15 years, has hosted multiple conference and state tournaments and owns more than 300 wins as a coach.

Morris earned his bachelor's degree from Berry College in Rome, Georgia, and his master's from the United States Sports Academy.

### **Mike Mossbrucker, CAA**

#### **Mooreville, Indiana**

Mike Mossbrucker, CAA, is in his 38<sup>th</sup> year in high school athletics and education, starting as a teacher and coach at Mooreville High School in 1982. He became the athletic director at Mooreville in 1997 and served in that role for 14 years before taking the same position at Bloomington North High School in 2011. Five years later, he returned to Mooreville as athletic director and remains there today.

Prior to his 22 years as an athletic administrator, Mossbrucker coached wrestling at Mooreville for 15 years. He was a standout wrestler at Bloomington North High School and led his team to the state title in 1977.

Mossbrucker currently serves on the Endowment Committee and has been the NIAAA state delegate representative for Indiana for the past seven years. He has completed 11 Leadership Training courses, and has attended 20 National Athletic Directors Conferences.

At the state level, the Indiana University alum has contributed to both the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (IIAAA). Mossbrucker has served on the Sportsmanship Task Force, the Officials Summit Committee, the Technology Summit Committee, the Participation Committee and the

basketball and football realignment committees for the IHSAA and has hosted 103 sectional, regional and semi-state tournament events.

Mossbrucker currently serves as state conference chair, District III membership chairman and wrestling representative for the IIAAA, and was IIAAA president in 2014-15. During his term as president, he instituted the "Partnership Through Trust," a program that brings the IIAAA Executive Board and the IHSAA commissioners together for bi-annual meetings. His service to the IIAAA earned him the Charles F. Maas Distinguished Service Award for District III and the 2015 Section V Athletic Director of the Year award.

Mossbrucker was inducted into the Mooresville High School Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013, which he established at the school in 2000. He has served as president, secretary and treasurer of the Mid-State Conference, and he was secretary and treasurer of Conference Indiana.

### **Tom Nerl, CMAA**

#### **Cincinnati, Ohio**

Tom Nerl, CMAA, has 33 years' experience in high school athletics as an administrator, coach and official, with the past 15 years as athletic director at Mariemont High School in Cincinnati. During his time, he has instituted sportsmanship awards, been involved in facility renovations through fundraising projects, developed a coaches handbook and negotiated sponsorship deals. He served three years as math teacher at Mariemont before assuming the athletic director duties.

Prior to joining the Mariemont staff, Nerl served at his alma mater, Purcell Marian High School, as head baseball coach and assistant football coach for 14 years and athletic director for three years.

Nerl is currently in his sixth year as a member of the NIAAA Hall of Fame Committee and was named vice chair in 2019. He has served as a National Conference workshop moderator for the past five years.

Nerl, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Xavier University (Ohio), has completed 25 Leadership Training courses as a participant and has led additional courses as an instructor and faculty member. In 2012, he received the NIAAA State Award of Merit.

Nerl's service to the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA) includes roles as state mentoring chair, state conference tri-chair, Summer LTI Leadership Committee member, LTI instructor for five different courses since 2016, state conference round table panelist and state conference district delegate. Nerl has also hosted and managed numerous district, sectional and regional tournament events for the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA).

In his own community, Nerl has been president and secretary of the Southwest Ohio Athletic Directors Association (SWOADA) and treasurer of the Southwest Ohio Baseball Coaches Association, and he created the SWOADA Mentoring Program for new athletic directors in 2017. Through SWOADA, Nerl was named Southwest Ohio Athletic Director of the Year in 2010, and he received several other awards as well. He is currently serving his third term as SWOADA president, and functions as scheduling chair for the Cincinnati Hills League.

### **Robert Palazzo, CMAA**

#### **Providence, Rhode Island**

Robert Palazzo, CMAA, is in his 24<sup>th</sup> year as an athletic administrator and has spent his entire tenure at Classical High School in Providence, Rhode Island, where he currently serves as director of athletics and as a coach of multiple sports.

As the head coach of the track and field program at Classical for the past 29 years, Palazzo has won 300 dual meets and 59 Rhode Island Interscholastic League (RIIL) Class B state and divisional championships, and has mentored four national track and field champions, 47 individual state champions, 18 New England champions, 30 all-Americans and one national record-holder in track and field. He is a five-time Rhode Island Track Coaches Association (RITCA) Coach of the Year, an NFHS Coach of the Year, and a member of both the RITCA and Classical High School Hall of Fame.

He is also the meet coordinator for two of the largest track and field championships on the East Coast – the Rhode Island Classic and the East Coast Invitational Indoor Track and Field Championship.

Palazzo has been a member of the NIAAA for the past 23 years. In that time, he has attended the past 14 National Conferences, serving as the state delegate for Rhode Island six times and as a conference moderator three times. He has also been the state's Leadership Training coordinator for the past 20 years and is currently helping rewrite material for the Turf and Field course as a part of the NIAAA's Leadership Teaching Team. He received the NIAAA State Award of Merit for Rhode Island in 2005.

At the state level, Palazzo has served on the Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (RIIAAA) Executive Board for 26 years. He was RIIAAA president from 2004 to 2006, and vice president and chair of the Awards Committee from 2008 to 2018. In 2003, he was named RIIAAA Athletic Director of the Year.

Palazzo has mentored and led 22 athletic directors to complete their Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) certification the past 20 years. He currently serves the RIIL as well, holding positions on the Track and Field Sports Committee and the Swimming Sports Committee.

## **Mark Rerick, CMAA**

### **Grand Forks, North Dakota**

Mark Rerick, CMAA, has worked as a teacher, coach, assistant principal and activities director in North Dakota for almost 20 years, and has spent seven of those years in his current role as the director of athletics for Grand Forks (North Dakota) Public Schools.

After earning his bachelor's degree in education from Valley City State University in 2001, Rerick's first position came at Hillsboro High School, where he started as a teacher and head football coach. He moved into athletic administration in 2006 and has been affiliated with the NIAAA ever since.

Rerick has been a member of the NIAAA Publications and Strategic Plan committees since 2016. He has also been a Leadership Training national faculty member since 2015 and has



served as a workshop moderator and the North Dakota state delegate at the National Conferences. He has completed 41 Leadership Training courses.

An accomplished writer, Rerick has had several articles published in *Athletic Management*, *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* and on the NFHS website. His blog, “Youth Sports Stuff” has more than two million reads in just over five years of existence.

At the state level, Rerick has been a significant part of the North Dakota High School Activities Association (NDHSAA) and the North Dakota Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NDIAAA). He is a current member of the NDHSAA Board of Directors, and has been involved with the Tournament Committee and the Athletic Review Committee since 2012 and 2015, respectively. He has also been a tournament manager for more than 60 district, regional and state tournaments. For the NDIAAA, Rerick is the Strategic Plan chair and a seven-year Leadership Training faculty member.

Locally, Rerick is a member of the Advisory for Safe Kids of Grand Forks, Advisory for Global Friends Coalition – a committee to help the integration of immigrants into the Grand Forks community – and the Advisory for Safer Tomorrows – a committee designed to improve the quality of life for the city’s children. Additionally, he has instituted two well-received mentorship programs – Coaching Boys into Men and Athletes as Leaders – that are designed to teach athletes how to respect their friends, community and significant others.

### **Annette Scogin, CMAA**

#### **Montgomery, Alabama**

Annette Scogin, CMAA, has worked as an athletic administrator in Arkansas and Texas for more than 22 years. She was district athletic director for the largest school district in Arkansas – Springdale – prior to her recent position as assistant director of athletics for the Dallas (Texas) Independent School District (DISD).

Scogin, who has been a member of the NIAAA since 1999, served as president in 2011 after being named an at-large board member in 2009. She has attended National Conferences as the state delegate for Arkansas and Texas many times and has been a member of several

NIAAA committees, including the Strategic Planning Committee, Endowment Committee and the Resolutions Committee, for which she was the chair from 2016 to 2018.

Scogin has also been a speaker or moderator at six different National Conferences, served as a Leadership Training instructor on numerous occasions and represented the NIAAA at section meetings across the country. She has also been published several times in *Interscholastic Athletic Administration* and received an NFHS Citation in 2007.

At the state level, Scogin served as the NIAAA state committee member for the Texas High School Athletic Directors Association (THSADA). Scogin, who earned her bachelor's degree from Henderson State University and her master's from Harding University, led many NIAAA grant classes and hosted CAA test sites for athletic directors.

During her time in Arkansas, Scogin was highly active in the Arkansas High School Athletic Administrators Association (AHSAAA), serving as president, vice president, secretary, Hall of Fame Committee chair, board member and liaison to the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA). She is a past AHSAAA Class 7A Athletic Director of the Year and a 2002 State Award of Merit recipient. She was the first female president of the AHSAAA.

In the DISD, Scogin oversaw more than \$1 billion in bond money for new athletic facilities within the district and was the lead in starting the DISD Athletic Hall of Fame.

Scogin recently moved to Montgomery, Alabama, and now works to educate athletes, coaches and parents on proper nutrition, performance and healthy supplements as a consultant for schools through her new health and wellness company, PURE.

## **Dory Smith, CMAA**

### **St. Louis, Missouri**

Although she retired from high school administration five years ago, Dory Smith, CMAA, has remained a notable figure in athletics leadership throughout the state of Missouri and nationally with the NIAAA.

After retiring from her high school position in 2014, Smith became the head women's basketball coach at Principia College in Elsah, Illinois, in 2017, and is currently entering her third season at the helm. Additionally, she served three years as a mentor coordinator for new

athletic directors for the Missouri Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA), and she works as a vocal advocate for high school sports through her company, Athletic Principles.

Prior to retiring in 2014, Smith spent a total of 15 years as athletic director at Villa Duchesne and The Principia, a pair of private schools in St. Louis. Before occupying the athletic director role at The Principia, she was a physical education instructor at the school for five years and coached softball, basketball, soccer, field hockey and swimming and diving.

Smith served on the NIAAA's Strategic Plan Committee in 2014-15 and the Credentials Committee from 2003 to 2009. She also was a member of the Board of Directors from 2009 to 2012, and taught multiple Leadership Training courses at National Conferences. Smith has spoken on a variety of topics at national and state conferences and has also facilitated workshops and published articles in *Interscholastic Athletic Administration*. Her service efforts won her an NFHS Citation in 2014.

Smith was a member of the MSHSAA Board of Appeals from 2005 to 2014 and the Investigative Committee from 2003 to 2006, and has previously addressed the Missouri State Legislature on behalf of the MSHSAA to discuss eligibility and transfer issues, as well as home-school issues. She has taught Leadership Training classes and given presentations at MSHSAA and MIAAA state conferences, workshops and the MSHSAA Sportsmanship Summit, and was chosen MIAAA president-elect in 2013.

In the St. Louis area, Smith spent two years as president of the Metro League from 2012 to 2014 and was also a four-year member of the St. Louis Officials' Fees Committee, which worked to set a fair, equitable pay scale for officials.

### **Dr. Jim Wright, CMAA**

#### **Huntington Station, New York**

Jim Wright, Ed.D, CMAA, has spent 18 of his 20 years in high school athletic administration in his current role as the supervisor of health, physical education and athletics for the South Huntington Union Free School District in South Huntington, New York.

Additionally, he has served as the associate executive director of the New York State Athletic Administrators Association (NYSAAA) since 2017.

Wright has been a member of the NIAAA for 18 years and has been New York's delegate to the NIAAA Delegate Assembly four times. An NIAAA national faculty member for LTC 707, Wright has presented various courses on technology, social media and concussion management throughout the country. He is a member of the NIAAA's fifth strategic planning committee and the Mentoring Committee.

As the associate executive director of the NYSAAA, Wright works with the National Executive Directors Council (NEDC). He is also a past president of the NYSAAA and served as a Leadership Training instructor, conducting courses on sports law, personnel evaluations and emergency event management. He has previously been the Section 11 representative to the NYSAAA board, and continues to serve Section 11 as a member of several committees.

Wright, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from C.W. Post University and his doctorate from Dowling College, has been a leader in professional development. He created a comprehensive, nine-course program for health and physical education directors and earned the Dr. John Foley Award for Professional Development from the NYSAAA in 2014.

Wright's additional accolades include the New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NYSAPERD) Physical Education Director of the Year (2011); New York State Council of Administrators Physical Education Director of the Year (2013); NYSAAA Athletic Administrator of the Year (2013); Section XI Wrestling Coaches Association Administrator of the Year (2013, 2017); the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2019; and the Ellis H. Champlin Award – the highest honor given in the state for administration in physical education.

###

#### **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 19,500 high schools and 12 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).

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900  
Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[bhoward@nfhs.org](mailto:bhoward@nfhs.org)

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900  
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[cboone@nfhs.org](mailto:cboone@nfhs.org)

Mike Blackburn, 317-587-1450  
Executive Director  
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association  
[mblackburn@niaaa.org](mailto:mblackburn@niaaa.org)