INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 30, 2005) — Fourteen individuals who have made outstanding contributions to interscholastic athletics have been named recipients of the 2005 Distinguished Service Awards given by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

These individuals will be honored December 18 in Orlando, Florida, during the luncheon at the 36th annual National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics 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, as well as those outside the field of athletic administration, 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 director associations, screened by the NIAAA Awards Committee, and selected by the NIAAA Board of Directors.

This year’s award winners include 10 from within the NIAAA membership, and four outside the field of athletic administration who has contributed to interscholastic athletics in other ways.

Those from within the NIAAA membership who will be honored include Mark Armstrong, CMAA, athletic administrator, Kearney (Nebraska) High School; Bill Bowers, CMAA, executive director, Oregon Athletic Directors Association, Springfield, Oregon; Harold Erwin, CAA, executive director, West Virginia Athletic Directors Association, Eleanor, West Virginia; Holly Farnese, CMAA, director of athletics, Drexel Hill (Pennsylvania) Middle School; Marc Hunter, CMAA, athletic director, Sandy (Utah) Jordan High School; Richard Kemper, Jr., CMAA, director of athletics, St. Christopher’s School, Richmond, Virginia; Tracy Leinen, CAA, athletic director, Boise (Idaho) High School; Scott
Lindgren, CMAA, coordinator for athletics, activities, health, recreation, physical education and senior citizens, Kenosha (Wisconsin) Unified School District; Alice MacInnis, CMAA, director of K-12 physical education, health, family and consumer science, Melrose (Massachusetts) Public Schools; and George Phelan III, CAA, athletic director, Miami (Florida) Sunset Senior High School.

Those outside the field of athletic administration receiving the Distinguished Service Award include Walter Abbott, associate professor of kinesiology and physical education at the University of Maine, Orono, Maine; Frank Kovaleski, former director of the NIAAA, Coatesville, Indiana; Mary Pratt, former player, coach, teacher and official, Quincy, Massachusetts; and Ruth Rehn, assistant executive director of the South Dakota High School Activities Association, Pierre, South Dakota.

Following are biographical sketches on this year’s award winners:

Extremely involved at the local, state and national levels, Mark Armstrong has worked as an athletic administrator for the past 10 years. He currently works with more than 1,400 students at Kearney (Nebraska) High School, as well as two middle schools of more than 400 students each.

Armstrong currently serves on the Nebraska State Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Board of Directors and serves as the Nebraska State Leadership Training Program coordinator. He has taught more than 20 Leadership Training Courses and has presented mini-sessions at several state conferences.

As an athletic administrator at Kearney High School, Armstrong has been influential in the school’s hosting of numerous invitational and district meetings and tournaments. He also established the Kearney High School Booster Club Clinic and Convention, which is offered to booster clubs across Nebraska.

After serving on the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) District Managing Committee as vice chair for the past four years, Armstrong began a term as chair in August. He has served on the organizing committee for the NSAA state cross country championships, served as head timer, and hosted NSAA district competitions in football, volleyball, softball, cross country, golf, basketball, wrestling, soccer and track.

Before working at Kearney High School, Armstrong worked as a teacher and coach for the Bellevue (Nebraska) Public Schools, teaching science and physical education and coaching football, basketball and track. He worked as a high school official in football and basketball from 1983 to 1996 and currently serves on the Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce’s Sports and Recreation Committee.

After 31 years as an educator and 10 years as an athletic administrator, Bill Bowers has made many lasting impressions on high school athletics in Oregon. Bowers currently serves as the executive director of the Oregon Athletic Directors Association (OADA), and has previously served as secretary, treasurer, vice president, president and past president of the OADA. A member of the OADA Executive
Board for eight years and state leadership training coordinator for five years, Bowers has been influential in the work of athletic directors throughout Oregon.

Previously, Bowers served as an athletic and activities director at Springfield (Oregon) High School for 10 years, a head baseball coach for 14 years and an assistant football coach for 26 years. He received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics and education from Oregon College of Education and received a master’s degree in mathematics and education from the University of Oregon.

Bowers was the first athletic director from Oregon to complete the CMAA program and is certified as a teacher of the NFHS Coaches Education/Coaching Principles course. In addition, he has been instrumental in working to require new coaches to complete a basic training course before taking the statewide course.

A few of Bowers’ many honors include Midwestern League Baseball Coach of the Year, Midwestern League Athletic Director of the Year, OADA State Athletic Director of the Year and the NIAAA State Award of Merit. Bowers is a member of the National Executive Directors Council, is a Leadership Training Program state coordinator, and has taught more than 20 Leadership Training Courses at the state and local levels.

Throughout a career that has spanned 40 years, Harold Erwin has garnered many awards and a multitude of respect for his work as an educator, coach and athletic administrator.

Currently the executive director of the West Virginia Athletic Directors Association (WVADA), Erwin is a charter member of the association, and during his career has served as its regional representative, secretary/treasurer, annual conference chairman, award chairman and liaison to the NIAAA.

Erwin has been an active member of the NIAAA since 1978. He has attended 25 of the past 27 NFHS national conferences, and was a presenter at the 1988 Las Vegas conference. He served as a member of the NFHS Athletic Directors Advisory Committee in 1996-97, and was a member of the NIAAA Board of Directors from 1998 to 2000. Erwin has also served as the Leadership Training Program coordinator for West Virginia from 2001 to 2005.

Before becoming the WVADA’s executive director, Erwin was the athletic director at Buffalo (West Virginia) High School, a position he held for 29 years. While at Buffalo, Erwin also had several coaching stints. He was assistant football coach in 1966 and 1970-71, head football coach from 1972 to 1976, head track coach from 1972 to 1979 and 1984 to 2002, and head golf coach from 1994 to 2001. Erwin also served as assistant football coach at Glenville (West Virginia) State College in 1965, Parkersburg (West Virginia) Washington Junior High in 1967 and Staunton (Virginia) Robert E. Lee High School in 1968-69. He was also assistant track coach at Robert E. Lee from 1968 to 1970. In addition to coaching, Erwin was also an educator for 36 years.
Erwin, who earned his bachelor’s degree from Glenville State College and his master’s from Marshall (West Virginia) University, has earned many awards during his career. These awards include the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1990, National Council of Secondary Schools Athletic Director of the Year in 1986, an NFHS Citation in 1988, WVADA’s Athletic Director of the Year in 1988, West Virginia High School Coaches Association Athletic Director of the Year in 1989, Midwestern Conference Football Coach of the Year in 1975 and Midwestern Conference Track Coach of the Year in 1973.

Holly Farnese has been the athletic director at Drexel Hill (Pennsylvania) Middle School for 22 years. During her career, Farnese has made a name for herself as an award-winning athletic administrator, coach and educator.

Chairperson of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Directors Association (PSADA) Professional Development Committee, Farnese also serves on the PSADA Executive Council and the PSADA Strategic Planning Committee. She is also currently the PSADA past president. Farnese has also served on the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) District I Committee since 1986, and is currently the District I recording secretary. She also served a term as a member of the PIAA Board of Directors during 2003-04.

Within the NIAAA, Farnese has served as a Leadership Training Course instructor and an ASEP/NFHS instructor, and is also a member of the NIAAA National Faculty. She served on the Blue Ribbon Panel at the 2003 National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics in Indianapolis. Farnese has taught at Drexel Hill for 29 years. She has also coached track and field, field hockey and gymnastics in the Upper Darby District, and served as president of the Eastern Delaware County scheduling group.

During her career, Farnese received the NIAAA Award of Merit in 2002, and was named the Pennsylvania State Athletic Director of the Year in 2004. Farnese is a PSADA Registered Athletic Director and an NIAAA Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA).

In his 26 years with Sandy (Utah) Jordan School District, Marc Hunter has served as an athletic director, mathematics teacher and coach. Currently the athletic director at Jordan High School, Hunter formerly was a head coach in football, basketball, baseball, soccer and track.

Hunter, a lifetime member of the NIAAA, has served as Awards Committee chairman since 2004, after being a committee member since 2000. He was the NIAAA representative on an NFHS Strategic Planning Committee, and is LTC 590 co-chair. He served as a workshop presenter at NFHS national athletic directors conferences in 2000 and 2002, and was an NIAAA voting delegate from 1997 to 2004.

At the state level, Hunter served as the Utah Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (UIAAA) president in 1997-98, and as the UIAAA’s secretary in 1995-96. He was a presenter at UIAAA state conferences in 1997, 2000 and 2002. Within the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA), Hunter has served on many committees, including the executive, awards, out-of-season participation,
officials, sports medicine advisory, wrestling and transfer rule committees. Hunter was also the liaison for the UIAAA to the UHSAA Executive Committee from 1997 to 2003.

Earning his bachelor’s degree from the University of Utah and his master’s from Brigham Young University, Hunter has garnered many awards during his distinguished career. He received an NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1999, and earned the Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) designation in 2000. Hunter has also been named the AWA/Nike Athletic Director of the Year (2000), NCSSAD Athletic Director of the Year (2003), UAHPERD Athletic Director of the Year (2003) and UIAAA Athletic Director of the Year (2002). He also received the UIAAA Meritorious Service Award in 2005.

Richard Kemper Jr. has become a highly regarded athletic administrator and coach during his 40 year-plus career.

Kemper has served as the director of athletics at St. Christopher’s School Richmond, (Virginia) since 1990, after holding the assistant director of athletics post from 1969 to 1990. He is also currently the Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association NIAAA State Leadership Training coordinator, and an NFHS Coaches Education Program state instructor.

At the VIAAA, Kemper has served as treasurer and co-chair of the VIAAA state conference. He is also the current president of the VIAAAA, and was a speaker at the 1996 state conference. He has also served as the VIAAA’s Professional Development Committee chairman.

A 10-year member of the NIAAA, Kemper holds both the CAA and CMAA designations. He has served on the NIAAA Certification Committee since 2001, and is the co-author of Leadership Training Course (LTC) 518 (Managing Athletic Equipment). He has been an NIAAA Delegate Assembly member five times, and has taught LTC 515 at the National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics three times.

In addition to his athletic administration work at St. Christopher’s, Kemper served as head of the physical education program for grades K-7 from 1968 to 1990. He has also had stints as head football (1972-99) and basketball (1977-98) coach, and was director of the school’s summer camp from 1977 to 1998.

Kemper received his bachelor’s degree from Emory and Henry (Virginia) College, and has received many awards during his career. He was given the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1999 and the VIAAA Past President’s Award for Leadership Training in 2005. Kemper also earned the Booker Kilgore High School Equipment Manager of the Year Award in 2003, and the District 2 Equipment Manager of the Year Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Tracy Leinen has earned much praise and respect during her 22 years in education.
The athletic director at Boise (Idaho) High School for the past eight years, Leinen also spent eight years as the school’s assistant athletic director. She is also an educator, teaching physical education/health education and driver’s education, as well as the physical/health education departmental chairperson.

Within the Idaho Athletic Administrators Association (IAAA), Leinen was president-elect from 2000 to 2002 and president from 2002 to 2004, and currently serves as past president. From 1993 to 2000, Leinen served as the IAAA’s high school liaison.

Leinen is a lifetime member of the NIAAA, and has attended eight NFHS national conferences. She has been a member of the Credentials Committee for the past four years, and was a moderator at the 2001 NFHS national conference in Orlando, Florida. Leinen has also served as an Idaho delegate to the Delegate Assembly for several years, and has completed 17 LTC classes.

Before teaching at Boise High School, Leinen was an educator at St. Albert’s Junior/Senior High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa. She also coached softball for 10 years and volleyball for four years. She was an assistant coach in basketball for six years, in track for four years, and in volleyball for three years.

Leinen received her bachelor’s degree from Northwest Missouri State University, and her master’s from Idaho State University. She was named Idaho Athletic Director of the Year in 2000 and 2001, and received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2005. She also received the NIAAA Distinguished Service Award for Idaho in 2003 and 2004.

Scott Lindgren has been with the Kenosha Unified School District for 36 years, building a highly respected reputation during that time.

As the coordinator for athletics, activities, health, recreation, physical education and senior citizens in the Kenosha Unified School District, Lindgren is responsible for a large population. In athletics, Lindgren has overseen 193 coaches in nine different buildings for 19 years. He has been in charge of the district’s physical education program for eight years, and is responsible for 59 Kenosha physical education instructors.

As a lifetime member of the NIAAA, Lindgren has been a presenter and a member of the Certification Committee. He is also the author, national chair and instructor for LTC 500 (Administration of Middle School Athletic Programs: Philosophy, Concepts and Practices). Lindgren served on the Awards Committee and was the Section 4 representative on the NIAAA Board of Directors from 1999 to 2002. He has attended every NFHS national conference since 1988.

Within the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association (WADA), Lindgren has served as an instructor in NIAAA Leadership Training, and was the WADA’s representative to NIAAA section meetings in 1998, 1999, 2003 and 2004. He has also been the co-chair of WADA’s handbook publications since 1997, and a presider at WADA workshops. Lindgren was the WADA’s president in 1995 and vice president in 1993. He has attended all WADA conferences since 1987.
During his career, Lindgren has served as both a coach and official in addition to his work as an athletic administrator. He coached football for seven years, wrestling for two years and track for nine years, including seven at the Division III college level. Lindgren has also officiated football for 25 years (13 in the NCAA), wrestling for 12 years (five with the NCAA) and track for 12 years.

Lindgren received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and his master’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has received many honors during his career, including the Andy Anderson Award for outstanding service to the WADA in 2002 and the District VII Athletic Director of the Year Award from the WADA in 1998. He also received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 1996.

Alice MacInnis is the director of K-12 physical education, health, family and consumer science and athletics, and health grant coordinator for Melrose Public Schools in Melrose, Massachusetts. She has been at Melrose since 2000 after spending the first part of her career at Lexington (Massachusetts) Minuteman Regional, where she began in 1976 as a physical education teacher.

MacInnis has been an NIAAA member for 15 years and became a CMAA in 2001. Since 2000, she has been a CAA test administrator and state coordinator for leadership training. She also has served on the NIAAA Certification Committee since 2003.

At the state level, MacInnis is currently on the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Board of Directors, a position she has held since 1994. She also currently serves on the MIAA Girls and Women in Sports Equity Committee, the MIAA Field Hockey Committee and the MIAA Track and Cross Country Committee. MacInnis also is an MIAA Coaches Education instructor and serves on the MIAA Eligibility Review Board.

MacInnis’ service to the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA) includes a position on the MSSADA Board since 1999, and working as a banquet assistant and in conference registration since 2004.

A 1976 graduate of Boston State College, MacInnis was a successful field hockey, girls basketball, softball and volleyball coach while at Minuteman Regional. She is also active in the Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, serving as its president-elect in 2003-04. In 2003, MacInnis was honored by the association as an Honor Award Recipient and as the Secondary Physical Educator of the Year in 2000.

Stability has ruled George Phelan’s career in education, as he has spent his entire career at Miami (Florida) Sunset Senior High School. After coming to the school in 1971, Phelan became the school’s athletic director in 1984 and has remained there since.

During that time, he has led an athletic program that was named the Miami Herald Athletic Program of the Year in 1989, 2001 and 2002; the Miami Herald Women’s Major Sports Program of the

An NIAAA member for 21 years, Phelan served on the NIAAA Awards Committee from 1994 to 1999, was the Florida delegate to the NIAAA Delegate Assembly four times and served on the Florida Host Committee for the national conference four times. In 1995 Phelan earned CAA status and was awarded an NIAAA State Award of Merit.

At the state level, Phelan served on the Florida Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (FIAAA) Board of Directors from 1987 to 1992 and as its president in 1993-94. He returned to the board in 2000, ending his second term earlier this year. In 1993, Phelan was the FIAAA State Conference Coordinator, and he served as chairman of the FIAAA Higher Education Committee from 1987 to 1992.

Phelan has also hosted and directed many Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) district, regional and sectional tournaments since 1984. In 1996, he was appointed by the FHSAA Board as the state athletic directors representative to the FHSAA Public Liaison Advisory Committee, and he created and presented the model for the reorganization of the FHSAA.

With more than 45 years of dedicated athletic and academic service, Walter Abbott has been extremely influential in the lives of many students. Currently an associate professor of kinesiology and physical education at the University of Maine, Abbott has always been dedicated to high school athletics throughout the state of Maine.

Abbott is a member of the Sports Done Right Select Panel, the Maine Center of Coaching Education Select Panel and a board member of the Maine chapters of both the National Football Foundation and the College Hall of Fame. Throughout his tenure at Maine, Abbott has been involved with high school athletics – establishing strong partnerships and bringing necessary information to coaches, officials, athletic directors and students. His work with Sports Done Right has helped to build a national model for youth sports programs.

After receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Maine, Abbott was the university’s head football coach from 1966 to 1975. He has worked as an assistant professor and served as the Physical Education and Recreation Department chair for three years. He served as both the interim and acting director of athletics for a short period before assuming his current position as associate professor. He received the Contribution to Amateur Football Award from the Maine chapter of the National Football Foundation in May 1998.

As the former director of the NIAAA, Frank Kovaleski has more than 40 years of experience with high school athletics and administration – 16 of which are with the NIAAA.

As director, Kovaleski developed the NIAAA Leadership Training Program in 1996 and expanded the NIAAA Certification Program in 1999. More than 20,000 Leadership Training Courses have been completed by athletic directors at state, regional and national conferences since the program’s inception,
and two additional certification levels – the Registered Athletic Administrator (RAA) and Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) – have been added to the program.

Kovaleski was instrumental in the addition of a master’s degree in athletic administration through online courses at Ohio University, as well as with the success of the NFHS National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics. In addition, he was responsible for starting the NIAAA Endowment, which has raised $350,000 since its creation.

Before serving his NIAAA position, Kovaleski worked as an athletic director in three Indiana schools – Triton, New Castle and Richmond high schools. He also coached track, football and tennis. A graduate of Bicknell (Indiana) High School, Kovaleski earned his bachelor’s degree in 1963 from Indiana State University, and his master’s in 1969 from St. Francis (Indiana) College.

Prior to becoming NIAAA director, Kovaleski served on the NFHS Athletic Directors Advisory Committee, the NIAAA Resolutions Committee and NIAAA Professional Development Committee. He was president of the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association in 1979-80.

A true pioneer in the world of women’s sports, Mary Pratt has worked as a teacher, player, coach, mentor, official and true supporter of women’s sports ever since she began playing high school sports herself. After an accomplished high school athletic career, Pratt went on to play in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League for both the Rockford (Illinois) Peaches and Kenosha (Wisconsin) Comets, and her career was later incorporated into the film, “A League of Their Own.”

After playing, Pratt worked as a teacher and coach at the high school and college levels for more than 47 years. She coached basketball, softball and soccer in high school, and softball and tennis in college. In addition, she coached an out-of-school Amateur Softball Association team to the World Tournament in 1958. Pratt also officiated basketball and softball at the high school and college levels.

She is the co-founder of the New Agenda Northeast Women’s Hall of Fame and initiated Massachusetts’ recognition of National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Pratt serves on the Board of Directors of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League Players Association and on the Game Officials Committee and Women in Sports Equity Committee of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association. She has been inducted into both the National High School Hall of Fame and Boston University Hall of Fame.

Serving more than 30 years in her current position as assistant executive director of the South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA), Ruth Rehn has paved the way for girls sports in South Dakota, setting an example for the rest of the country to follow.

Since joining the SDHSAA in 1974, Rehn has been instrumental in the addition of basketball, volleyball and cross country for females around the state. Rehn helped lead South Dakota as the first state to advocate the use of a smaller basketball for girls as well as experimenting with the use of rally scoring and the libero player in volleyball.
Rehn assisted in the development of cheer safety guidelines and implemented the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors Safety Certification requirement for all stunting-squad coaches. She has served as a member of the NFHS Volleyball Rules Committee, the NFHS Equity Committee and the National Records Committee, and as the state chair for National Girls and Women in Sport Day.

After receiving her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from South Dakota State University, Rehn taught and coached track and field, gymnastics and volleyball in Minnesota from 1966 to 1973.

Rehn is the recipient of the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport Pathfinder Award, the South Dakota Girls and Women in Sports Service Award and the South Dakota Girls and Women in Sport Leadership Award, and has been inducted into the South Dakota High School Gymnastics Hall of Fame. She has received both an NFHS Citation Award and NFHS Officials Association Distinguished National Contributor Award.

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