



## NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (November 19, 2012) — Nine individuals who have made outstanding contributions to interscholastic athletics have been named recipients of the 2012 Distinguished Service Awards given by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA).

These individuals will be honored December 18 in San Antonio, Texas, during the banquet at the 43<sup>rd</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 director associations, screened by the NIAAA Awards Committee, and selected by the NIAAA Board of Directors.

This year's winners include **James (Jim) Brown**, CAA, athletic director, Fishers (Indiana) High School; **Dr. Ted D'Alessio**, CMAA, district athletic director, Millburn (New Jersey) Township Public Schools; **Michael Hart**, CAA, athletic director, Salesianum School, Wilmington, Delaware; **Karen Higel**, CAA, district athletic director, Denver (Colorado) Public Schools; **Cliff Hill**, CAA, district director of activities, Campbell County (Wyoming) School District; **Tommy Marshall**, CMAA, director of athletics, Marist School, Atlanta, Georgia; **Dr. Bob Reznicek**, CMAA, assistant principal/athletic director, Boys Town (Nebraska) High School; **Susan Robbins**, CMAA, athletic director, Yarmouth (Maine) High School; and **Kendra Tomsic**, CAA, athletic director, Rowland Hall–St. Mark's School, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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

### **James Brown, CAA, Fishers, Indiana**

A 27-year athletic director in Indiana, **James (Jim) Brown**, CAA, took on a new challenge six years ago when he helped start a new school – Fishers (Indiana) High School – in the greater Indianapolis metropolitan area.

Since 2006, Brown has served as an athletic director at Fishers, where he supervises 19 head coaches and 63 assistant coaches. He also handles purchasing and maintenance of equipment, developing and maintaining the budget, scheduling transportation and facilities for all athletic teams, and evaluation of coaches.

Prior to joining the Fishers staff in 2006, Brown served in a variety of capacities at Triton Central High School in Fairland, Indiana, for 25 years. In addition to his teaching roles, Brown was boys track coach for 13 years, assistant principal for 18 years and athletic director for 21 years.

Throughout his stints at Triton Central and Fishers, Brown has given yeoman service to the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) and the Indiana Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (IIAAA). He has been assistant director of the IHSAA State Boys Basketball Championships for 18 years, and he has directed the IHSAA State Soccer Championships for five years.

Brown was IIAAA president in 1996–97 and has served as treasurer of the organization since 1998. He has attended 26 IIAAA state conferences and has served as IIAAA Conference chairman since 1998.

At the national level, Brown has been the Indiana delegate to the NIAAA Delegate Assembly since 1994. He has attended 25 National Athletic Directors Conferences and has completed 12 Leadership Training Institute courses. Brown was co-chairman of the Indiana Host Committee for the National Athletic Directors Conferences in Indianapolis in 2003 and 2011.

Brown earned his bachelor's degree from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and his master's from Indiana State University in Terre Haute. He later obtained his administration license from Butler University in Indianapolis. He received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2001.

### **Ted D'Alessio, CMAA, Short Hills, New Jersey**

**Dr. Ted D'Alessio, CMAA**, has been employed by the Millburn (New Jersey) Township Public Schools for the past 37 years, including the past 19 years as the district athletic director. Previously, he coached football and track for more than 10 years.

D'Alessio, who earned his bachelor's degree from Springfield (Massachusetts) College, his master's from Montclair State (New Jersey) University and his doctorate from New York University, is responsible for 29 sports at Millburn. Known as the

consummate educator, D'Alessio started a "breakfast club" several years ago for athletes who needed extra guidance and support.

Among his other accomplishments as Millburn athletic director, D'Alessio created an athletic handbook for all student-athletes/parents, initiated CPR training for coaches and enacted a concussion protocol for coaches and athletes. In 2008, D'Alessio was appointed co-president of the new 36-school Super Essex Conference, and he remains on the Executive Committee after a three-year term as president.

The 2012 Athletic Director of the Year in New Jersey, D'Alessio has been a member of the Directors of Athletic Administrators of New Jersey (DAANJ) Board of Trustees since 2002 and is currently the organization's treasurer. He also has assisted the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) on numerous occasions, including hosting NJSIAA championships in volleyball, soccer, basketball, wrestling and track.

Nationally, D'Alessio has been involved in the NIAAA for many years and has completed 21 Leadership Training Institute courses. One of the first athletic directors in New Jersey to earn his CMAA (2002), D'Alessio has served on several NIAAA committees including Communications/Issues/Resolution (2000-01) and Certification (2001-09). He currently is a member of the NFHS/NIAAA Athletic Directors Advisory Committee and the NFHS Coach Education Ad Hoc Committee. He also is a certified instructor of the Fundamentals of Coaching Course in the NFHS Coach Education Program, and recently has become an Accredited Interscholastic Coach (AIC).

### **Michael Hart, CAA, Wilmington, Delaware**

One year after graduating from St. Vincent's College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in 1974, **Michael Hart, CAA**, accepted a position as social studies teacher at Salesianum

School in Wilmington, Delaware. The following year (1976), he became the school's athletic director and continues in that role today – an amazing 36 years later.

During Hart's career at Salesianum, teams in the school's 14 varsity sports have won 4,146 of the 5,797 contests – a stellar winning percentage of .730. The school has registered 131 state championships – almost four a year – and 62 runner-up finishes in that time period.

Throughout his tenure at Salesianum, Hart has been a leader in both the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) – the state's governing organization for high school sports – and the Delaware Association of Athletic Directors (DAAD).

Hart has served on the DIAA State Swimming Tournament Committee since 1977 and been chair since 1981. In addition to serving on the DIAA Board of Directors for six years, Hart has been involved with the DIAA State Baseball Committee, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and the Audit Committee. Since joining the DAAD in 1978, Hart has served five separate terms as president totaling 17 years.

At the national level, Hart has been a member of the NIAAA since 1978 and served on the NIAAA Board of Directors from 2003 to 2006. He also was a member of the Membership Committee and Awards Committee and has served as Delaware's delegate to the National Athletic Directors Conference 16 years. In addition, Hart was a member of the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute National Faculty from 1999 to 2006.

Among his awards, Hart has received the NIAAA State Award of Merit four times and was the 1996 recipient of the NFHS Citation for athletic directors. He was State Athletic Director of the Year in 1993 and 1996 and Nike State Athletic Director of the Year in 1998.

## **Karen Higel, CAA, Denver, Colorado**

Karen Higel, CAA, who has served the Denver Public Schools (DPS) since 1987, has been DPS district athletic director for the past four years. She is responsible for athletic programs at 11 high schools and 37 middle schools.

Higel was a special education teacher for 15 years and district athletic manager for six years prior to assuming her current position in 2002. During her time as a special education teacher, Higel's focus was on autistic students with severe needs.

Higel joined the DPS staff after graduating from Regis (Colorado) University in Denver, where she played on the school's varsity volleyball team. She later earned her master's (specializing in severe affective needs) from the University of Colorado in Denver.

In her relatively short tenure in athletic administration, Higel has provided numerous contributions to the Colorado Athletic Directors Association (CADA) and the Colorado High School Athletic Association (CHSAA). She has served on the CADA Board of Directors and the 2009 Middle School Athletic Panel.

Higel has served on several CHSAA sports committees, including volleyball, spirit, football and soccer. She also has been site director for numerous CHSAA championships, including softball, baseball, volleyball, basketball and field hockey. A member of the CHSAA State Legislative Council since 2003, Higel is chair of the CHSAA Tournament and Finance Committee and was appointed to the CHSAA Board of Directors last year.

At the national level, Higel served on the Blue Ribbon Panel at the 2009 National Athletic Directors Conference in Dallas. She also is an NIAAA Leadership Training Institute state coordinator and a member of the NIAAA Hall of Fame Committee.

In addition to teaching special education for the first 15 years with the DPS, Higel also was a Special Olympics coach and varsity volleyball coach.

### **Cliff Hill, CAA, Gillette, Wyoming**

Since 1981, Cliff Hill, CAA, has served the Campbell County (Wyoming) School District in exemplary style.

Beginning as a physical education and health instructor and coach in the sports of football, wrestling and track, Hill advanced to associate principal/activities director in 1993. Six years later, he became an elementary school principal, and the following year, he was named district director of activities, the position he still holds today.

Hill has been highly involved in leadership roles at the local level, where he served as secretary/treasurer and president of the Northeast District Junior High/Middle School Conference during the 1990s. He has been secretary/treasurer of the Northeast District Athletic Administrators Association since 2000, and he served on the Campbell County Parks and Recreation Department Recreation Center/Sports Facility Committee that was responsible for planning and building a new \$55 million facility. Since 2011, he has served on the Field of Dreams Task Force, which is responsible for a \$165 million/320-acre sports complex.

At the statewide level, Hill has been highly involved with the WHSAA, where he has been a member of both the Executive Council and the Board of Directors, and served as president in 2004-05. Hill has worked with the WHSAA State Swimming and Diving Championships since 2000, the WHSAA State Indoor Track Championships since 2010 and the WHSAA State Tennis Championships since 2011.

Within the Wyoming Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (WIAAA), Hill served five terms on the Board of Directors and currently is the organization's president.

A leader in the area of professional development, Hill was a WIAAA NFICEP/ASEP certified instructor from 1998 to 2004, and was a WIAAA Leadership Training Institute (LTI) instructor at Wyoming Coaches Association state clinics in 2004 and 2005.

An NIAAA lifetime member and NIAAA liaison, Hill received the 2004 NIAAA State Award of Merit and the 2007 NFHS Citation, has attended 14 National Athletic Directors Conferences and has completed 34 LTI courses.

### **Tommy Marshall, CMAA, Atlanta, Georgia**

Before taking his current position as director of athletics at Marist School in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996, **Tommy Marshall, CMAA**, coached high school and college football for 17 years and taught social studies at Redan High School in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and Walton High School in Marietta, Georgia.

Marshall was defensive coordinator at Redan High School in 1979 when it won a state championship, and received a teacher-of-the-year award the same year. As head football coach at Walton High School from 1980 to 1984, Marshall was the Cobb County coach of the year three of the five years.

In 1985, Marshall moved to the collegiate level as assistant head coach at Mars Hill (North Carolina) College for one season. He then moved to his alma mater - Furman (South Carolina) University - where he was an assistant football coach for eight years and assistant athletic director for two years. The 1988 Furman team won the NCAA Division I-AA Football Championship.



Since 1996, Marshall has been instrumental in building the athletic program at Marist School, which was ranked the nation's No. 15 high school athletic program by *Sports Illustrated* in 2005.

Marshall is a past president of the Georgia Athletic Directors Association (GADA) and has been selected GADA Region Athletic Director of the Year seven times, most recently in 2011, and GADA State Athletic Director of the Year in 2002 and 2007. Thanks to Marshall's leadership, Marist was awarded the Directors Cup 13 consecutive years as the best overall athletic program in Georgia.

Marshall, who was an all-Southern Conference defensive back at Furman, has extensive involvement with the NIAAA. He served a term on the NIAAA Board of Directors (2008-10) and is currently a member of the NIAAA Sports Turf Committee. He is an NIAAA Leadership Training Institute instructor and was Georgia's NIAAA liaison for six years. Marshall received the 2004 NIAAA State Award of Merit and the NFHS Citation in 2009.

### **Bob Reznicek, CMAA, LaVista, Nebraska**

Currently the assistant principal and athletic director at Boys Town (Nebraska) High School, **Dr. Bob Reznicek, CMAA**, has served almost 40 years as a high school athletic director, teacher and coach in Nebraska and Kansas.

Reznicek is beginning his third year at Boys Town after 18 years as athletic director at Westside High School in Omaha, Nebraska. Prior to his position at Westside, Reznicek was special services director for the Belleville (Kansas) Unified School District and activities director for the Geneva (Nebraska) Public Schools.

A graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University, Reznicek earned his master's (1984) and doctorate of education (1995) from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. His

leadership in the profession of athletic administration at the state and national levels has been remarkable.

Reznicek has served on the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) Board of Control since 2000 and currently is serving his third one-year stint as NSAA Board president. From 1994 to 2001, he was a delegate to the NSAA Representative Assembly, and he has hosted numerous NSAA district and state playoff games and tournaments for football, volleyball, softball, golf, basketball, wrestling, baseball and soccer. Reznicek also served on the Nebraska State Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NSIAAA) Board of Directors from 1996 to 2000 and was the Nebraska liaison to the NIAAA those same years.

At the national level, Reznicek was a member of the NIAAA Board of Directors from 2001 to 2004 and was NIAAA president in 2003. He served on the NIAAA Publications Committee for three years and was a member of the NIAAA Leadership Training Institute National Faculty for nine years. Reznicek, who earned his Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) status in 1997 and Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) status in 2001, was one of the original co-chairs of Leadership Training Course 504.

Among his awards, Reznicek received the NIAAA State Award of Merit in 2000 and the NFHS Citation in 2003. He is the only athletic administrator in Nebraska to be elected to the NIAAA Board of Directors and the NSAA Board of Control.

### **Susan Robbins, CMAA, Yarmouth, Maine**

Susan Robbins, CMAA, is a 15-year veteran of high school administration in the state of Maine – the past eight years at Yarmouth High School and Harrison Middle School in Yarmouth. During that time, she has become one of the state's leaders in

athletic administration and more than 30 Yarmouth teams have claimed state championships.

Prior to joining the Yarmouth staff, Robbins was an athletic administrator at Poland (Maine) Regional High School for five years and the MacDuffie School in Springfield, Massachusetts, for two years. Robbins also coached field hockey and softball at both schools.

Robbins, who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Springfield (Massachusetts) College, has served several local leagues and conferences. She was president of the Western Maine Conference (WMC) and Campbell Football Conference, and was soccer liaison of both the WMC and the Triple C Conference.

At the state level, Robbins has held leadership roles for both the Maine Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (MIAAA) and the Maine Principals' Association (MPA). She is the Leadership Training coordinator for the MIAAA and chair of the Awards Committee and Certification Committee. As an assistant director of the MIAAA, Robbins' duties include awards, certification and leadership training.

Robbins is chair of the MPA Field Hockey Committee and was the site director for the 2009 and 2011 MPA Field Hockey State Championships. She also serves on the MPA Volleyball and Technology Committees.

Robbins has made significant contributions to athletic administration at the national level as well. She is vice chair of the NIAAA Awards Committee and serves on the Leadership Training Institute National Faculty and is an instructor for Leadership Training Course 710. She has attended every National Athletic Directors Conference since 2001 and was a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel at the 2004 conference in New Orleans.

Among her awards, Robbins received the MPA “Unsung Heroine in Maine Sports Award” and the MIAAA “Keith Lancaster Professional Development Award” – both in 2010. Last year, she was the recipient of the Gerry Durgin Leadership Award.

### **Kendra Tomsic, CAA, Midvale, Utah**

As the athletic director at Rowland Hall–St. Mark’s School in Salt Lake City, Utah, **Kendra Tomsic** has been helping student–athletes excel in interscholastic athletics for the past 35 years.

After missing that athletic opportunity herself as a 1973 graduate of Price (Utah) Carbon High School, Tomsic was a standout athlete at the College of Eastern Utah, where she was named all–conference in volleyball and softball, and was a member of the gymnastics and swimming teams. She was named the school’s Outstanding Female Athlete in 1975 and was inducted into its athletic hall of fame in 1996.

After graduating in 1977 as valedictorian of the College of Education from Utah State University, Tomsic returned to Eastern Utah to begin her career in education, serving as head volleyball, basketball and softball coach and teaching physical education courses. In 1981, she chose to continue her coaching and teacher career at the high school level, taking a position in the Grand County School District in Moab, Utah. In 1987, she was named athletic director of Grand High School and led its volleyball team to a state championship that same year. Later, she coached the softball team to back–to–back state titles in 1990 and 1991.

In 1992, Tomsic was named athletic director at Rowland Hall–St. Mark’s and continued her coaching career, earning the NFHS Utah State Volleyball Coach of the Year award in 2003. She was also named athletic director of the year in 2004 by the

Utah High School Activities Association. In 2007, she received the NFHS Citation award for athletic directors.

Tomsic is very active in the Utah Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (UIAAA). She was the first woman to serve as UIAAA president in 2004–05 after being chosen president–elect in 2003–04. She also served on the Executive Board as the NIAAA liaison for three years. As a result of these efforts, in 2007 she received the NIAAA State Award of Merit and the UIAAA Athletic Director of the Year award.

Nationally, she is a member of the NFHS/NIAAA Athletic Directors Advisory Committee, and she served on the 2005 NIAAA Strategic Planning Committee. Tomsic has completed 21 Leadership Training Institute courses.

Active in community service, Tomsic is the co–founder of the statewide fund–raiser “Swing for Life,” which has raised more than \$950,000 for breast cancer research at the Huntsman Cancer Foundation.

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*Biographical profiles for this press release were written by Bruce Howard, NFHS*

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#### **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 director 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.

## **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 7.6 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 Web site at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

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