

Wayne Carney

New  
Information



**South Dakota High School Activities Association**

804 North Euclid, Suite 102 • P.O. Box 1217 • Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Phone: (605) 224-9261 • Fax: (605) 224-9262

**NFHS National High School Hall of Fame  
Supplementary Letter  
Nominee Wayne Carney- South Dakota**

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a supplementary letter to accompany the nomination of Wayne Carney of South Dakota to the National High School Hall of Fame. I believe this is Wayne's final year of consideration and I hope this letter serves to expand on his initial nomination form. It is based upon feedback received from prior years consideration.

You will note that Wayne's involvement in NFHS rules committees and other national level committees is rather limited. During his 16 years as SDHSAA Executive Director, Wayne held the philosophy of wanting to provide opportunities of national service for the three Assistant Executive Directors in the SDHSAA office. This, however, should not indicate that he did not any national-level contributions or impacts.

Wayne's legacy in South Dakota heavily revolves around providing additional equity and inclusion of Native American Students and schools who serve a primarily Native American Student population. South Dakota is home to nine Native American Reservations, and nearly 30% of the SDHSAA membership has a student population with 50% or more Native American students, many of which are 90%-100% Native American.

For nearly 100 years, no school who served primarily Native American students ever held a seat on the SDHSAA Board of Directors, nor had Native American individual held a seat on our Board of Directors. During Wayne's tenure and under his leadership, the SDHSAA membership overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment to provide a permanent seat on our Board of Directors and on every advisory committee for representation from schools whose population is primarily students of Native American descent. In addition, Wayne instituted a Native American Advisory Council, whose sole purpose is to discuss matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion among the Native American Students in our membership.

Wayne's accomplishments in this area will live on forever in South Dakota, and I've done my best to expand on what he started. However, those accomplishments are not limited to South Dakota. Following his lead, many other states have explored similar arrangements to provide representation for Native American students, and several have adopted similar models. Wayne has spoken to and worked with leaders in states with large Native American populations of students, such as North Dakota, Montana, and Idaho. In 2018, I asked Wayne to present at the NFHS Section V meeting in Deadwood, South Dakota, along with members of the SDHSAA Native American Advisory Council, and that presentation led to conversations and action in the states that were present.

I appreciate your consideration of this supplementary information. I hope it provides additional context to Wayne's nomination. I believe Wayne is worthy of this distinction. His actions improved the high school experience for tens of thousands of Native American students in South Dakota and across the United States. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Swartos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Dr. Daniel Swartos  
SDHSAA Executive Director

**SDHSAA - Serving Students Since 1905**

Board President – Mr. Kelly Messmer  
Assistant Director – Ms. Jo Auch  
Assistant Director – Mr. Brooks Bowman

Executive Director – Dr. Daniel Swartos  
Assistant Director – Mr. Randy Soma  
Finance Director – Mr. Ryan Mikkelsen

Prior  
Information

# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

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Name of Nominee: Wayne Carney  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Daniel Swartos, SDHSAA Executive Director

Phone: 605-924-0361

Street Address: 20485 Homestead Place

City, State, Zip Code: Pierre, SD 57501

Signed: *Daniel Swartos*

Date: 06 October 2021

Email: daniel.swartos@sdhsaa.com

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete    Coach    Official    Administrator    Performing Arts    Others

Name of Nominee: Wayne Carney  
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 205 N. Harvest Circle  
(street address)

Sioux Falls, SD 57110  
(city, state, zip)

Email: wwcarney48@gmail.com

Phone: 605-222-8685      Date of Birth: 10/17/1948

School Affiliation (if any) SDHSAA

City: Pierre      State: SD

Place of Birth: [Tab here]      Date of Retirement: 6/30/2017

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?    Yes    No

If yes, please explain:

Still serves the SDHSAA as an officials observer in football and basketball.

If deceased, date of death:

[Tab here]

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Carol Carney

Address: 205 N. Harvest Circle Sioux Falls, SD 57110

Phone: 605-222-8685

## Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Pine Island High School	Pine Island, MN	1966	High School
College/University: University of South Dakota	Vermillion, SD	1976	B.S.- Education
Post Graduate School: South Dakota State University	Brookings, SD	1995	M.Ed.- Education Admin

- Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Attached
- Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

Coach- 24 years (1970-1994), Agar (SD) High School and Hamlin (SD) High School  
Athletic Director- 31 years (1970-2001), Agar (SD) High School, Hamlin (SD) High School, Sioux Falls Washington (SD) High School  
SDHSAA Executive Director- 16 years (2001-2017)

## Special Honors and Achievements

South Dakota Sports Hall of Fame (2019)  
South Dakota Coaches Association Hall of Fame (1993)  
South Dakota Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Shrine (2007)  
NHSACA - Hall of Fame (2004), Distinguished Service (2011), Casey E. McDonald Award (2010)  
NIAAA- Award of Merit (1993)  
SDIAAA- Hall of Fame (2011)  
SDHSAA- Distinguished Service Award (2000)  
Pine Island High School Athletic Hall of Fame (2016)  
Washington High School Athletic Hall of Fame (2016)  
Eastern South Dakota Conference Lifetime Appreciation Award (2017)

Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

South Dakota High School Coaches Association 1970-Present  
NHSACA 1970-Present  
NIAAA 1973-Present  
SDIAAA 1973-Present  
NEA/SDEA 1980-1994  
FCA 1977-Present  
SD Basketball Coaches Association 1983-Present  
NFIOA 1984-1994  
Friends of SD Public Broadcasting 2012-Present  
Make-A-Wish Foundation of South Dakota Board Member 1993-1995  
SDHSAA Foundation Board of Directors 2017-Present  
NFHS Summer Meeting Advisory Committee 2013-2017

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Wayne's impact on the SDHSAA cannot be adequately described. During his 16 years as SDHSAA Executive Director, Wayne ushered in a host of initiatives that greatly impacted the SDHSAA, including establishment of the SDHSAA Foundation, implementation of the SDHSAA Corporate Partner Program, passing a membership resolution ensuring Native American representation on the SDHSAA Board of Directors and Advisory Committees, and establishment of the Bigfoot Conference to increase the number of Native American officials in South Dakota.

Of his legacies, the relationships that he repaired and built between the SDHSAA and member schools with predominantly Native American student populations are perhaps the most impactful and long-lasting. When Wayne came to the office, he entered an office with a fractured relationship with those schools, to the extent that they were prepared to break away from the SDHSAA and form their own activities association. Wayne listened and committed to addressing the needs of those schools. He pushed for establishment of a permanent seat on our Board of Directors for administrators from those schools, in addition to seats on all of our advisory committees and the establishment of a Native American Advisory Committee, to meet annually and discuss specific needs. Prior to this, a representative from a Native American school had never been elected to the SDHSAA Board of Directors. Under his guidance, the proposal to add the seat easily passed a full vote of the membership.

Wayne sought to celebrate Native American culture, holding a Board of Directors meeting at Pine Ridge High School on the Pine Ridge Reservation, with the Board taking part in a traditional Lakota sweat lodge. Additionally, Wayne worked closely with those schools and attended Lakota functions, such as the Lakota Nations Invitational basketball tournament. His efforts repaired and enhanced the relationship between those schools and the SDHSAA.

Wayne Carney belongs in the NFHS Hall of Fame, and I am honored to write a letter of recognition in his name.

# Letters of Recommendation



**South Dakota High School Activities Association**

804 North Euclid, Suite 102 • P.O. Box 1217 • Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Phone: (605) 224-9261 • Fax: (605) 224-9262

10 November 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is one of recommendation regarding Wayne Carney's nomination to the NFHS Hall of Fame. Wayne's impact on the SDHSAA, as well as NFHS Section V, is deep and he is well deserving of this honor. I recommend him fully and without hesitation.

Wayne's impact on the SDHSAA cannot be adequately described. During his 16 years as SDHSAA Executive Director, Wayne ushered in a host of initiatives that greatly impacted the SDHSAA, including establishment of the SDHSAA Foundation, implementation of the SDHSAA Corporate Partner Program, passing a membership resolution ensuring Native American representation on the SDHSAA Board of Directors and Advisory Committees, creation of the SDHSAA Transgender Policy, and establishment of the Bigfoot Conference to increase the number of Native American officials in South Dakota.

Of his legacies, the relationships that he repaired and built between the SDHSAA and member schools with predominantly Native American student populations are perhaps the most impactful and long-lasting. When Wayne came to the office, he entered an office with a fractured relationship with those schools, to the extent that they were prepared to break away from the SDHSAA and form their own activities association. Wayne listened and committed to addressing the needs of those schools. He pushed for establishment of a permanent seat on our Board of Directors for administrators from those schools, in addition to seats on all of our advisory committees and the establishment of a Native American Advisory Committee, to meet annually and discuss specific needs. Prior to this, a representative from a Native American school had never been elected to the SDHSAA Board of Directors. Under his guidance, the proposal to add the seat easily passed a full vote of the membership. Since then, he has discussed

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Dr. Daniel Swartos  
SDHSAA Executive Director

**SDHSAA - Serving Students Since 1905**

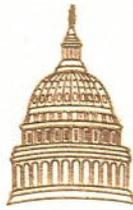
Board Chairperson – Mr. Tom Culver  
Assistant Director – Ms. Jo Auch  
Assistant Director – Mr. Brooks Bowman

Executive Director – Dr. Daniel Swartos  
Assistant Director – Mr. Randy Soma  
Finance Director – Mr. Ryan Mikkelsen

## **Additional information for Wayne Carney Hall of Fame packet.**

### **From Dan Swartos, current executive director, South Dakota High School Activities Association:**

He was our Exec for 16 years and it never lined up for him to be on the NFHS Board. He also gave the committee opportunities to assistant directors rather than taking them himself, so his national impact is less obvious. However (and I say this with a huge however), we are (rightly) all about diversity, equity, and inclusion right now. He walked that walk almost 20 years ago (2003-04) and got the membership in a state with a terrible history on Native American issues to overwhelmingly approve a dedicated spot on our Board of Directors and every single advisory committee specifically for Native American Administrators at Native American Schools. They'd never had a seat on our board in our 100-year history prior to that, and he made it happen. A number of states (Montana, North Dakota) have attempted to implement the same thing, based on our model, since and they haven't been able to do it. Following retirement, he spoke at our Section V meeting in 2018 about those efforts. He also led the formation of the Bigfoot Conference, which was a K-12 officiating program on our Reservations to both offer badly needed employment to Native Americans as sports officials and get more Native American representation in our high school officiating ranks so it mirrored our membership makeup. Our Native American Schools (about 20% of the schools in our membership) were ready to leave our association when he got on the job and by the end they gave him his own Native American name. He took our Board to Pine Ridge (the seat of Oglala Lakota County, the poorest county in the United States) for a sweat lodge session and held a board meeting there so our Board could get a better understanding of the issues facing Native American kids and to see where they live. Most had never been there and never would have otherwise. He is a model of diversity, equity, and inclusion for a population who desperately needed a voice. I'm doing my best to continue his legacy there, but it is nothing without the things he did to establish it.



UNITED STATES SENATOR  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

JOHN THUNE  
SOUTH DAKOTA

October 29, 2021

Bruce Howard, Hall of Fame Director  
NFHS  
PO Box 690  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Bruce:

I am writing in support of Wayne Carney's induction into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame. Wayne is a sterling example of service to others and devoted his life to making a positive impact on our state.

In South Dakota, high school activities are oftentimes the fabric holding our communities together. Whether from a small town or larger city, these events are social gatherings for many, where school spirit and community pride can be felt throughout our state. For several years, one of the most recognizable advocates concerning the importance of high school activities was Wayne Carney.

Wayne's commitment to excellence throughout his career resulted in a number of statewide and national awards and recognition for his dedication and achievements. He devoted decades to serving students across South Dakota, whether as a coach, athletic director, or as Executive Director of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. His advocacy on behalf of young people changed the landscape of high school activities in our state.

I have known Wayne for many years and am lucky to count him as a friend. He is a man of character and conviction. He tirelessly worked to improve access to extracurricular activities for students, while also providing the leadership to ensure a unique and memorable experience for all.

I strongly support Wayne Carney's induction into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame. His contributions and commitment to serving and bettering the state of South Dakota render him worthy of this honor.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Kindest regards,



Senator John Thune

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
ARMED SERVICES  
BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
INDIAN AFFAIRS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

October 20, 2021

Mr. Daniel Swartos  
804 North Euclid Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501-1735

Dear Mr. Swartos,

I am writing to support the nomination of Wayne Carney for the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Hall of Fame.

Wayne has a long list of achievements during his four decades in education and administration, ending with 16 years as the executive director of the South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA).

During his tenure with the SDHSAA, Wayne always kept the students at the center of every issue. He balanced the concerns of larger and smaller school districts and he was never afraid to take on the tough issues. You always could count on Wayne to get the job done.

Wayne was responsible for adding corporate sponsors and establishing a foundation to make sure there would always be funding for high school activities in South Dakota.

His most memorable accomplishment is the strong relationship he built with the Native American schools and students. He didn't just talk about the need for inclusion, he took steps to make sure our state's tribal schools were represented on the board and on the court.

I believe Wayne would make an excellent addition to the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KRISTI NOEM | GOVERNOR

November 15, 2021

Hall of Fame Director, NFHS  
PO Box 690  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

I am honored to submit this Letter of Recommendation for Wayne Carney's admission to the NFHS Hall of Fame. Wayne has already earned his place in the South Dakota Sports Hall of Fame. His contributions to high school sports is so significant that he is deserving of national recognition and consideration for a coveted place in the NFHS Hall of Fame

Throughout his storied career, Wayne has found numerous roles in which to define excellence. As a fresh graduate from the University of South Dakota, Wayne got his start as a prep basketball coach, winning more than 300 games over his 24 years coaching. He also supported student excellence off-the-court as an assistant principal for seven years.

He was more than a coach and an educator. He also was a referee, a tournament director and, finally, executive director of the South Dakota High School Activities Association. On the national level, he served as president of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association. From 1970 until his retirement in 2017, Wayne Carney did all he could to play a pivotal role in supporting students and athletes around our state and the nation.

Both I and my husband, Bryon, were coached by Wayne Carney in our high school careers. Coach Carney was instrumental in developing us as young men and women, not to mention the thousands of students he encountered in his career. He taught us hard work, team work, and how to prepare for life's battles. Most importantly, Bryon says Coach Carney taught him the importance of doing the little things right. Carney was a tremendous coach for Bryon and me. We feel blessed to have played for him. Coach Carney and his wife Carol will always be special to Bryon and me.

NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee

Page 2

November 15, 2021

Coach Carney has earned his place in the SD Sports Hall of Fame, as well as the SD Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Hall of Fame. He also earned a collection of awards from other state and national organizations.

I know that you will read through many letters of recommendation. When you look at Wayne's background and service to the National Federation of State High School Associations, it is indeed beyond impressive. I firmly believe his leadership created a true "Culture of Excellence," emulating the goals of the NFHS.

Thank you for your consideration of the nomination of Wayne Carney.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristi Noem", with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the page.

Kristi Noem  
Governor

Mike Colbrese

New  
Information

## ***NFHS Hall of Fame Summary: 37 Years of NFHS Involvement***

### **State Association Work**

5 Years as Assistant to the Director of Montana HS Association 1982-1987

- Appointed Lead to develop equal opportunity education and training in Montana- Later expanded to assisting other state associations

6 Years as Commissioner of Wyoming HS Activities Association 1987-1993

26 Years as executive Director of Washington Interscholastic Activities Association 1993-2019

- Assisted in writing & lobbying for passage of the nation's first concussion management law (Zachary Lystad Law)
- Developed the first ever model for participation for transgender students which became a national model
- Developed a process to require people of color and female representation on WIAA Executive Board
- Developed a WIAA Native American Advisory Committee with representation on the WIAA Executive Board

### **NFHS Involvement**

- 2 Term member of NFHS Board of Directors
- 26 year member of Football Rules Committee- 8 years of which served as Chair of Football Mechanics Manual Committee
- 2 year member Basketball Rules Committee
- 8 year member Track and Field Rules Committee-4 years of which served as Chair
- 8 year member Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity Committee-4 years as Chair
- Served as Chair (1987) of Coaches Education Selection & Development Committee
- Served 4 years as Chair of Coaches Education Review Committee
- 2 times served as a member of NFHS Strategic Planning Committees
- Member of NFHS 2017 Sanctioning Committee
- 4 year member of Summer Meeting Advisory Committee
- Multiple times served as speaker at NFHS Winter or Summer Meetings
- Assisted in bringing both Winter Meeting and 2023 Summer Meeting to Seattle.

### **Awards/Honors**

- Washington Interscholastic Activities Association Hall of Fame
- NFHS Service Citation Award 2019
- Selected to the Washington Officials Association Hall of Fame , Washington Athletic Directors Hall of Fame and Washington Music Educators Hall of Fame
- Selected to both Wyoming Music Educators Hall of Fame and Wyoming Athletic Directors Hall of Fame
- Inaugural recipient of ACEP Pat McSwegen Award

### **Post Retirement**

Currently, I am officiating youth and school football, basketball, baseball, and softball. I also lead the development of the Washington State Football Coalition to promote the positive benefits of high school and youth football. I currently serve as their Director.



# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

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Name of Nominee: [Michael Alan Cilbrese]  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Mick Hoffman

Phone: 425-988-6156

Street Address: 435 Main Ave. South

City, State, Zip Code: Renton, WA 98057

Signed: [Tab here]

Date: [Tab here]

Email: mhoffman@waaa.com

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete    Coach    Official     Administrator    Performing Arts    Others

Name of Nominee: Michael Alan Colbrese  
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 42 Edgewater Court  
(street address)

Port Hadlock, WA 98339  
(city, state, zip)

Email: colm2712@gmail.com

Phone: 425-306-1590      Date of Birth: July 3, 1949

School Affiliation (if any) [Tab here]

City: [Tab here]      State: [Tab here]

Place of Birth: Glendive, Montana      Date of Retirement: August 31, 2019

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?     Yes     No

If yes, please explain:

Mike restarted his hobby of officiating, a past time from which he had to retire when he went to work for the Montana High School Association in 1982.

If deceased, date of death:

[Tab here]

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: [Tab here]

Address: [Tab here]

Phone: [Tab here]

## Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
Dawson County High School	Glendive, MT	1967	NA
Eastern Montana College/Montana State, Billings	Billings, MT	1971	BA
University of Montana	Missoula, MT	1980	MA

Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)  
Letters of Recommendation Attached  
Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

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# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the year in which the nomination is completed.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

High school English Teacher 1971-1982

College and secondary school Football and basketball official  
1968-1984, 2021-to present

State Association Work

Assistant to the Executive Director of the Montana High  
School Association 1982-1987

Commissioner of the Wyoming High School Activities  
Association 1987-1993

Executive Director of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association 1993-2019

Member of Football Rules Committee **1982- 2008**

Member Football Manual Committee 13 years

Chair Football Manual Committee 8 years

Recipient of NFHS Football Award 1995 and 1997

Member Basketball Rules Committee 1991-1993

Member Track and Field Rules Committee **1990-94**

Chair Track and Field Rules Committee **2003-07**

Member Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity

Committee **1989-93**

Chair Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity

Committee **1993-97**

Chair Coaches Education Selection and

Development Committee 1987

Chair Coaches Education Review Committee **1991-95**

Member of two NFHS Strategic Planning

Committees **1996-99** and **2005-08**

Member of NFHS Sanctioning Committee

Two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors- **1987-88** and **2006-12**

Speaker at several NFHS meetings

Co developed the initiative to address concerns

about the future of Interscholastic football 2019

Sponsored Interscholastic basketball events to assist with protecting the recruiting process 2019

Special Honors and Achievements

**Inductee**

**Wyoming Music Educators Hall of Fame  
Wyoming Athletic Directors Hall of Fame**

**Washington Music Educators Hall of Fame  
Washington Athletic Directors Hall of Fame  
Washington Officials Association Hall of Fame  
Washington Interscholastic Activities  
Association Hall of Fame**

**Honors**

**NFHS Citation Award 2019  
ACEP Pat McSwegan Award**

Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

**Seattle 4 Rotary from 1999 until retirement in 2019**

**Chair of Service Committee for two terms and Board for one term**

**NIAAA beginning in 1982**

**NASO beginning in 2020**

Other information *(not previously listed)*

Assisted in writing and lobbying for the passage of the Zachary Lystad Law, the nation's first concussion management law

Developed the model policy for transgender participation

Developed a process to require people of color and female representation on the WIAA Executive Board

Developed a WIAA Native American Advisory Committee, which included a representative on the WIAA Board

National Leader in equal opportunity education and training starting in 1983 to present

Published author

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# Letters of Recommendation



WASHINGTON INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

October 31, 2022

Dear NFHS National Hall of Fame Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Mike Colbrese for the NFHS Hall of Fame. Mike committed 26 years of his life to serving students, schools and communities throughout Washington State, while he shared his time and expertise as a participant and leader of several NFHS committees. The list of Mike's contributions to the NFHS is extensive and makes him an extremely deserving candidate.

Not only did Mike provide his time at the national level, Mike led work that was progressive and trendsetting in the state of Washington. His work with physicians and legislators in the state of Washington led to the first traumatic brain injury legislation that became a model for the entire country. In addition to the traumatic brain injury legislation, Mike led the work to create a system to allow transgender students to compete as they identify. Over the years, the process for implementing the aforementioned concepts have been modified, adjusted and enhanced but the foundation set under Mike's leadership paved the way. The results of Mike's leadership have influenced other state associations to adopt similar policies and impact hundreds of thousands of young people.

Mike was also a strong advocate for activities. His intentional efforts to enhance the experience of students that choose activities allowed the Association to serve and positively impact thousands of students not directly served by athletics. The blending of athletics and activities is a shining example of how educational-based activities can bring community to schools by being more inclusive and less restrictive. Performing arts thrive in the state of Washington due to Mike's leadership.

Some may assume that Mike's longevity alone should qualify him for the NFHS National Hall of Fame. I disagree. Mike is a deserving candidate due to his tireless efforts and leadership over the 26 years he served the state and the NFHS. The results of his leadership have outlived his tenure and students that have not yet entered middle school will reap the benefits of Mike Colbrese's leadership. For this, I humbly recommend Mike Colbrese.

Sincerely,

Mick Hoffman





# SOUTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Dr. Jerome P. Singleton, Commissioner  
P. O. Box 211575  
Columbia, South Carolina 29221-6575  
803-798-0120 ♦ www.schsl.org

**JASON WARREN**  
President  
Greenville

**CARLOS CAVE**  
Vice President  
Seabrook

**DR. SAM BARFELL**  
Simpsonville

**DR. KANDACE BETHEA**  
Marion

**KYLE BOCZKOWSKI**  
Summerville

**COBY BRANDYBURG**  
Allendale-Fairfax

**SONYA BRYANT**  
Batesburg-Leesville

**ADRIAN BUSCH**  
Dorchester

**DAVID BYRD**  
Cheraw

**TONY FOLK**  
St. George

**DR. JR GREEN**  
Winnsboro

**DR. ADAM LANFORD**  
Greenville

**JULIEANNE LANG**  
Hollywood

**HEZEKIAH MASSEY**  
Rock Hill

**DR. DARRYL OWINGS**  
Spartanburg

**NICHOLAS PEARSON**  
Sumter

**DEREK PHILLIPS**  
Columbia

**ANDY ROGERS**  
Boiling Springs

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee:

Please consider this as a letter of recommendation for Mike Colbrese as a member of the National Federation of State High School association's Hall of Fame.

Mike has worked for over 50 years for our youth through the classroom, officiating, and 37 years in state association work including the Montana, Wyoming, and Washington associations.

I first met Mike at the 1996 NFHS Summer meeting after joining the South Carolina High School League staff. During my 27 years career with the League, I have come to know him as a valued colleague and trusted advisor and mentor, someone who took time with everyone and would provide insight whenever asked.

Throughout that time, he was also actively involved with the NFHS at the national level, presenting at various conferences, being a part of two strategic planning teams, and being a member of various NFHS committees, in particular the football, basketball, and track and field rules committees. He also served twice on the NFHS Board of Directors.

During our working with our respective state associations, I worked with Mike directly when we were members of the NFHS track and field rules committee during his time as the chair of the committee. In 2018, I worked with Mike as he and other state association administrators spearheaded the efforts to promote and protect school football.

I found that whether the chair or a member of a committee, Mike was engaged. His leadership was about inclusion- actively engaging everyone and encouraging participation.

Mike was never afraid to take a stand, which included challenging the NFHS insurance programs and tackling such issues as concussion management and transgender participation. In both concussion management and transgender issues, the Washington association developed a model for the rest of the country.

For those reasons, I enthusiastically provide my support for Mike's induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Jerome Singleton



October 19, 2022

National High School Hall of Fame Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for the nomination of Mike Colbrese, administrator category, to become a member of the National High School Hall of Fame.

I first got to know Mike when we both served on the National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Education Program (NFICEP) committee, charter members – late 90s. I served as the representative from the National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Association Board of Directors (NFICA). Our committee put together a Request for Proposal (RFP) and those results have, over the years, evolved into the current NF Coaches Education Program.

I also served with Mike on the NF Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity committee, early 90s. This was a committee of 14 members from across our country charged with providing direction for the National Federation in these three areas of concern. These three areas, in the arenas of competition, continue today to need the NFHS' championing.

Mike and I have continued to cross paths over the years, usually at the NF Summer Meetings. Those are special paths. I have admired Mike for his ease and inclusiveness in a variety of leadership roles for the National Federation. As a committee member, he came prepared - willing to listen, willing to discuss, willing to support the decision-making process and the decisions made. He was truly a respectful team player.

Mike Colbrese – a difference-maker and definitely worthy of induction into the National High School Hall of Fame. I highly support Mike's nomination. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ginny Honomichl', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Ginny Honomichl

Kansas Coaches Association Executive Director/Treasurer

Kansas State High School Activities Association Hall of Fame inductee – Class of 2012

National High School Hall of Fame inductee – Class of 2019



**Mr. Mike Burton, National Director of Division II Football Officials**

**May to October**

12604 132<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Court East  
Puyallup, WA 98374-4866  
Phone: (206) 660-4720

**November to April**

111 S. Greenfield Road #285  
Mesa, AZ 85206  
Phone: (206) 660-4720

[xxcoach@sprintmail.com](mailto:xxcoach@sprintmail.com) (USE EITHER EMAIL) [xxcoach7@gmail.com](mailto:xxcoach7@gmail.com)

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**Hall of Fame Administrator Nominee – Mike Colbrese**

Mike Colbrese came to Washington in 1993 and reformed and changed the WIAA for the better from the day he arrived until his retirement. Mike was not just an administrator but he was an active innovator in activities as well as athletics. He took on tough choices such as changing formats and locations for state championships that were not always popular. Mike was an early advocate for equal opportunity and training and was one of the authors of the Zachary Lystad Law for concussion management.

The great administrator is out of the office and in the field. You saw Mike everywhere from sports playoff games to speech and debate championships. His involvement and support can be seen in that he has been inducted into five halls of fame in the state of Washington from our affiliated groups.

My time with Mike in both the administration of game officials and the speech and debate gave me a true insight into his skills. He was willing to listen to ideas to improve activities as well as athletics. Listening, thinking about and then acting on issues was a key part of his success. Mike could handle the heat when a decision had to be made. He would give everyone a say but he was the decision maker.

Being a speech and debate instructor and coach for 39 years I know communication is the key to success and Mike Colbrese communicated. You were never unsure of where he was coming from and his logic behind a decision. He served on numerous NFHS committees and chaired many. Mike was someone you wanted to be around.

This state of Washington under Mike was the leader on concussion management, transgender participation, and have created a more consistent, fair eligibility process and

the same with the way of handling rules violations. People knew that he respects people regardless of their opinion and even if they did not agree with him understood he was doing what he felt was best for kids. The divide that we once had between parts of the state closed with his leadership. Listening to all and then moving forward was Mike Colbrese. He did not stand still and would take the heat for decisions he made without trying to pass them on. He was a great boss.

Mike Colbrese is a friend, boss and companion in our journey together and more than anyone deserves induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

### **Michael W. Burton**

Mike Burton

NFHS Hall of Fame 2015

National Speech and Debate Hall of Fame 2013

NCAA National Director of Division II Football Officials 2019

Support  
Data

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## Article

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Mike Colbrese <colm2712@gmail.com>  
To: Mike Colbrese <colm2712@gmail.com>

Fri, Oct 21, 10:55 AM

RENTON — All those days as a teenager working at the family-owned gas station in rural Glendive, Mont., Mike Colbrese got used to hearing his father's signature farewell line with customers.

"He would say, 'Be good, be careful and hurry back,' " Colbrese said.

And that is exactly how Colbrese has approached his work with many of his member schools, athletic directors, coaches and student-athletes as the longtime executive director of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association.

On Monday, Colbrese announced to the WIAA executive board that he will be retiring at the end of the 2018-19 school season.

At that time, when he steps down, he will have served 27 years in that position, making him the third-longest tenured executive director in the country behind Michigan's Jack Roberts (31 years now) and Minnesota's Dave Stead (29 years now, stepping down next February).

Colbrese, 68, said the executive board had asked him to give 18 months advance notice on his retirement plan so it could conduct a proper national search for his replacement, which won't begin until next year.

He also noted that 2019 is when the WIAA will finish up its revamped strategic plan in creating a healthier culture for all of its interscholastic programs.

Colbrese came to the WIAA in 1993 after serving as the executive director in Wyoming for six years.

"I felt it was time to move to a bigger challenge," Colbrese said. "When I moved here, I knew a few things that needed to be accomplished, but I also knew this is where I wanted my family to grow up.

"I wanted to be able to basically get things in motion, and then do some fine-tuning after the hard work has been done."

If there is one thing to know about Colbrese, he hates sitting behind a desk at the WIAA office.

Colbrese said he regularly puts 20,000 miles on his car in a year, visiting member schools for league and district meetings, and rotating through all of the state championships as they are being held in all corners of the state.

"I like being around people," Colbrese said. "I pride myself in listening, and trying to articulate where the membership is, and trying to move that collective voice forward."

One of the first issues Colbrese tackled when he arrived was overhauling an outdated classification system that had stood since 1968. It went from four classifications (B, A, AA, AAA) to the six levels presently (1B, 2B, 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A).

"Equalizing opportunities for schools to get into postseason play has been important," Colbrese said.

Of all the things the WIAA has accomplished under his watch, Colbrese pointed to two start-up programs he is especially proud of creating in 2009: Concussion management and setting up a transgender participation policy.

Colbrese said he has plenty of work remaining over the next 18 months, including refining ways to reach competitive balance among schools, continuing to upgrade a satisfactory playoff system, and continuing to guide the WIAA's growing diversity and governance committees.

"It has been a good 25 years, and it will be a really good next year and a half," Colbrese said. "The (WIAA) board and I have some goals, and we are arm in arm in trying to address those topics."

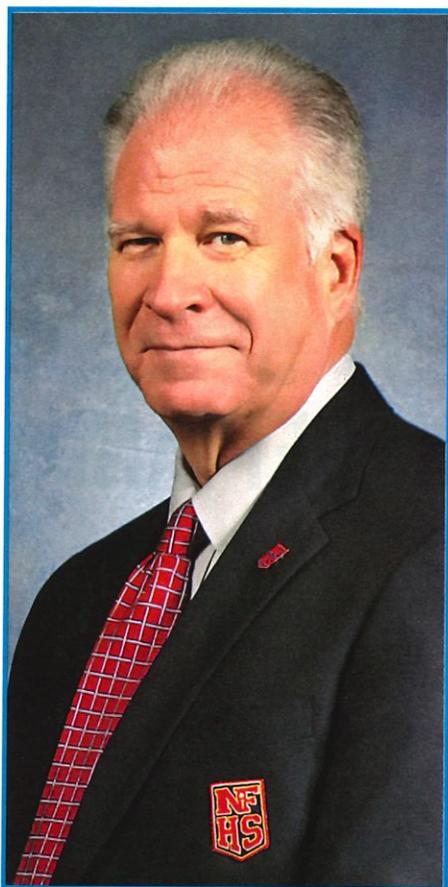
Todd Milles: 253-597-8442, @ManyHatsMilles

On Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 10:38 AM Lauren Smith <smithlm12@gmail.com> wrote:

# I TOOK MY OW

By John Torsiello

**He said his state needs officials. So retired exec Mike Colbrese answered the call himself.**



**M**ike Colbrese learned some valuable and lasting lessons while getting his hands dirty and greasy at his father's gas station in eastern Montana.

"Working at my dad's station and watching how he handled his customers instilled in me how to treat people," the 71-year-old Washington state resident said. "We did everything back then — pump gas, wash windows, check the oil and we had a service bay. For my dad, it was all about customer service. I never forgot that." His dad would tell customers, "Be good, be careful and hurry back."

Colbrese used the people skills learned from the late John Colbrese during his long career as an educator, sports administrator with three state high school organizations and as an official.

Colbrese lives with his wife, Jan, in the small town of Port Hadlock, across Puget Sound from Seattle. From 1993 to 2019, he was executive director of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA). The WIAA is responsible for all middle school and high school sports and fine arts activities in the state.

Before moving to Washington, Colbrese served as the commissioner of the Wyoming High School Activities Association for six years and worked five years as assistant director for the Montana High School Association. From 1971-82, he was a high school English teacher and librarian. During that time he was also a high school and college football and basketball official.

What goes around, comes around for Colbrese. After taking a bit of time "to figure things out" after he retired from the WIAA, he decided

to get back into officiating, and he has in a big way. He launched his second career as a member of the Peninsula Officials Association this spring, umpiring baseball ("My first love," he calls it) and softball and officiating football. He was working a football game on May 1 (a scheduling oddity made possible because the pandemic caused Washington high school seasons to shift) when a player rolled into him and injured his knee. The injury meant he couldn't referee basketball later in the spring as he had planned.

"I tore my MCL and am now rehabbing it with no surgery," Colbrese said. "I'll be back and officiating football in the fall."

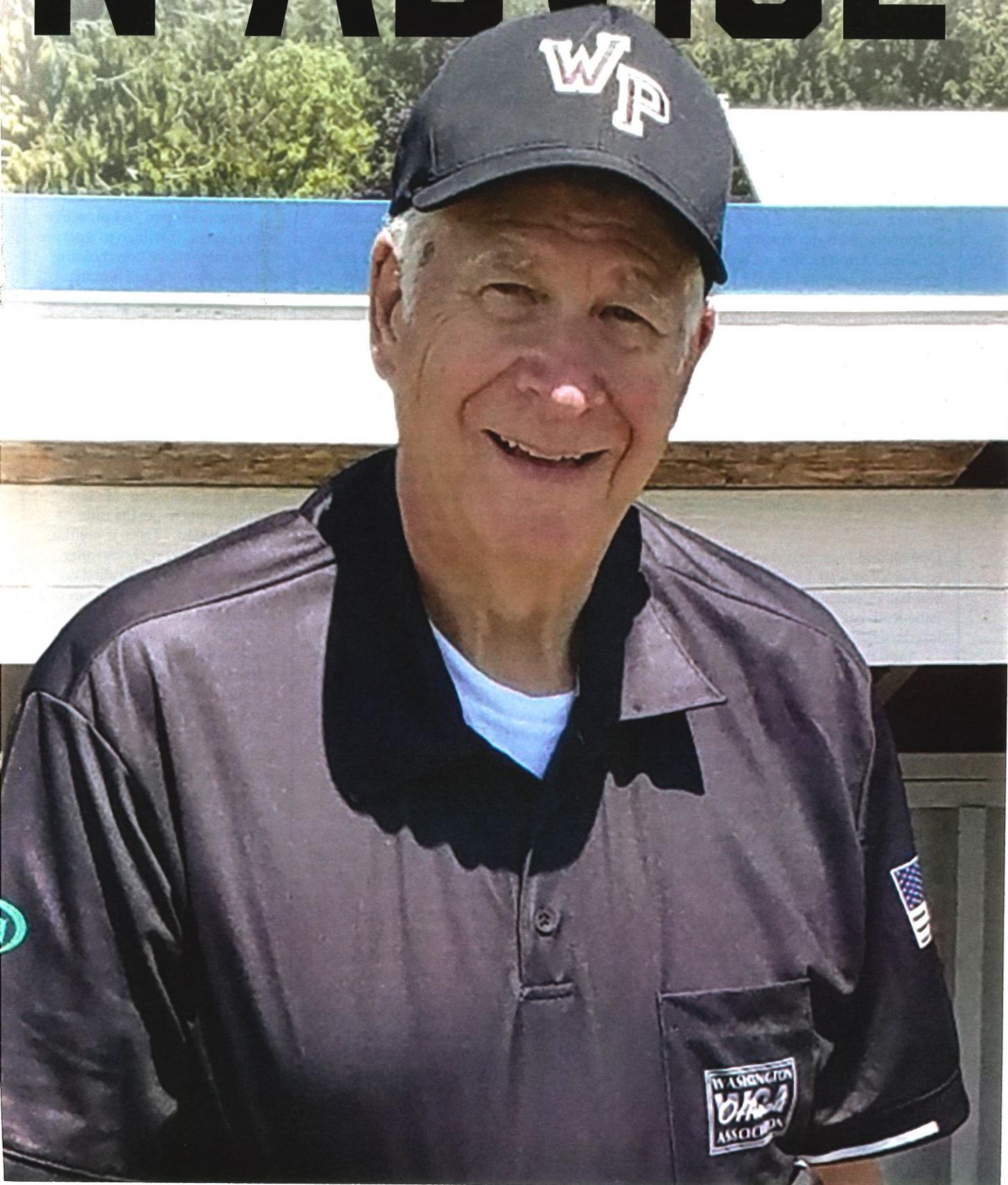
Colbrese had significant influence as an administrator. During his time with the WIAA, he was responsible for the implementation of the Ridgeway Settlement Agreement requiring equal opportunities for boys and girls, and developed the first-in-the-nation policy outlining procedures and paths for transgender students to participate in middle school and high school sports. Colbrese also helped author the draft of the Zackery Lystedt Law, the first return-to-play law in the United States, which has since been the model for concussion-management laws adopted by all the states.

Colbrese has also served on numerous NFHS committees, including chairing the football manual and track and field rules committees as well as the Coaches Education Committee. He has also been inducted into several halls of fame, and has served on the Washington State Special Olympics Board.

Colbrese said he returned to officiating out of a passion for

COURTESY OF MIKE COLBRESE

# WIN ADVICE



sports and a desire to help young athletes. "It's all about the kids. The coach isn't the only teacher on the field," he said. "Officials have to be teachers, too, and we are responsible for growing players as people. If I can get across to them my sense of camaraderie with coaches, players and other officials, perhaps I can be a role model for young people and they might want to become officials themselves one day. We certainly need more young people getting into officiating."

A joke made from behind a podium when he retired from administration came true for Colbrese. "I don't know if I was entirely serious when I said I was going to get back into officiating, but we live in an area where we need officials. I feel at 71, I can still referee

**Colbrese worked the spring football season until a knee injury put him on the sidelines.**



**"NOT MANY PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED BOTH SIDES, SO WE NEED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY."**

**TODD STORDAHL**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WASHINGTON OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

football and I was asked to referee basketball as well. I hadn't umpired baseball or softball much, a little Babe Ruth ball in Montana, but I love baseball and said, 'Why not?'"

Todd Stordahl, executive director of the Washington Officials Association, has known Colbrese for almost 20 years. "I hadn't talked to Mike in a while, but then he called and said he wanted to get back into officiating," Stordahl said. "It has been great being involved in his return to the field. We keep in regular contact and he has been able to provide valuable feedback since he has the (administrative) experience of what we want to accomplish, but is seeing it put to action. Not many people have experienced both sides, so we need to take advantage of this unique opportunity."

Stordahl believes Colbrese brings the same strengths to officiating that he did to being an administrator. "He cares about the

participants and wants to be part of creating lifelong memories for all participants — and that includes the officials."

"Earlier this year," Stordahl said, "someone asked me if I was concerned that Mike might not be up to the task since he had been off the field for so long. My answer was quick and to the point: not at all. Mike is officiating for the right reasons. He has the passion to do right by the game. If you go into officiating with that at the core, you will be just fine."

Colbrese is a guy who likes to be in the middle of things. "I was a catcher in baseball and I like being a linesman in football," he said. "In basketball, I enjoy the challenge of being in the right place at the right time, where the action will occur.

"People ask me where I want to go with officiating and I say I don't have any ambitions," he said. "I don't care if I work a state tournament game. Let the young officials have those opportunities. I see myself more as a mentor at this stage in my life. One of the things we have missed as officials is learning how to deal with confrontational situations, whether it is with kids, coaches or even the fans. I'm a guy that will walk over to fans and explain something between innings or during timeouts."

For example, Colbrese talked about an incident that occurred while umpiring a softball game. "A girl hit a home run and her teammates gathered around the plate and did a little pre-arranged celebration. Because of that I had to (restrict) the coach to the dugout. It is a rule. The fans

didn't know what was going on, so I went over and explained what I had to do and the matter was clear to them."

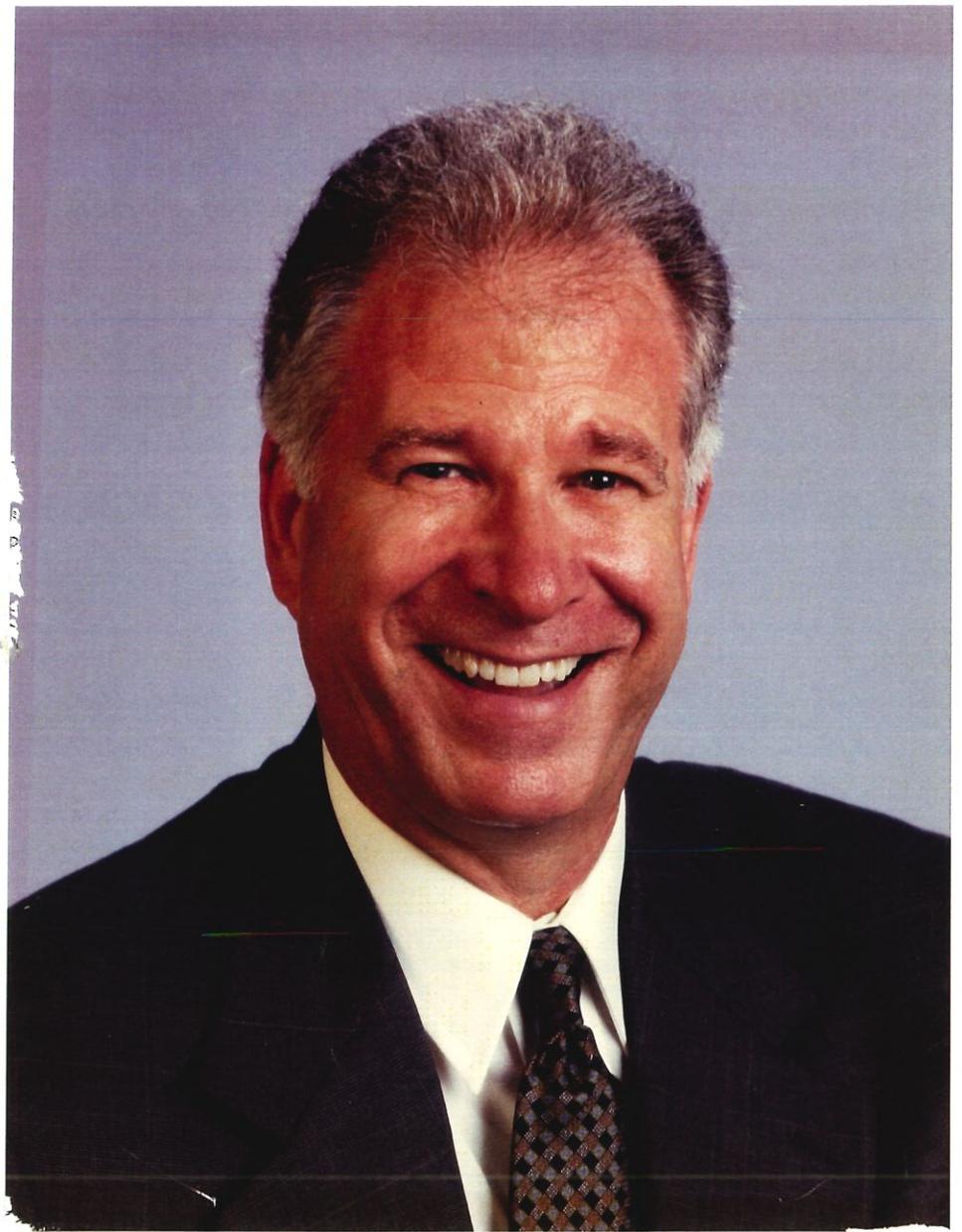
He also is open and proactive with players. "I will go to a player I think might have been holding during a play and tell him that I didn't call it because I didn't see it entirely but to watch what he is doing. They always say, 'Thank you,' or 'Yes, sir.' Or I might hear an F-bomb and I will tell the player 'No more of that' and they say, 'OK, sir.' I believe that is the way you teach kids the right way to play and also sportsmanship."

One of Colbrese's worst fears is having a bad game. "Every official wants to get the calls right," he said. "There is nothing worse than driving home after a game and saying, 'I called an awful game.' No coach or fan can tell an official he had a bad game; he or she knows it. I take a lot of pride in getting the calls right and doing the right thing."

As he tells it, Colbrese has come full circle. "I love officiating and I owe so much to it. I like being on a team and I guess that is also a main reason I came back. I missed being a part of a team. That and making sure kids have a chance to play the game the right way."

From his dad's gas station to the playing fields and courts of Montana and Washington, Colbrese still carries his dad's philosophy of how to treat people in his front pocket, not far from his rulebook.

*A former Little League umpire, John Torsiello is a veteran sportswriter from Torrington, Conn. □*



7

Evan Excell

New  
Information



**PRESS RELEASE:**

**OGDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Contact: Jessica Haro, Communication Specialist

Phone: 801 737 7334

Twitter: @ogdensd

[haroj@ogdensd.org](mailto:haroj@ogdensd.org)



**Ben Lomond High School Athletic Center To Honor Coach Evan K. Excell**

**Ogden, Utah – July 7, 2022** – The Ben Lomond High School Alumni Association has come together to honor Coach Evan Excell’s legacy by naming *Evan Excell Court* in the state-of-the-art Ben Lomond High School Athletic Center.

Evan Excell was the Ben Lomond High School Boys Basketball coach and athletic director from 1978-1994 and led the team to a 3A championship in 1986. The next year in 1987, his girls track team won a 3A championship. After 16 years of teaching, coaching, and serving at Ben Lomond High School, Coach Excell went on to serve as the fourth Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association.

“To even be considered for such an astute honor among hundreds of other most capable coaches, players, and contributors is humbling indeed,” Coach Excell said in response to the proposal to name the court in his honor. “My plan is to fully represent my wonderful family and those who have formerly been involved with the marvelous game of basketball. Special gratitude to all my players and coaches over the span of 16 tremendous years at Ben Lomond, to the best high school fans on the planet, and to those responsible for this action, a huge and heartfelt thank you. Go Scots!”

Along with the plan to formally name the main gym court in his honor, the Ogden School Foundation has created *The Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund*. This fund will provide ongoing support to the athletics and extracurricular programs at Ben Lomond High School. These donations will be used to support Scots in the pursuit of extracurricular excellence for generations to come.

Ben Lomond High School is hosting a *Gathering of the Clans* event to promote the fund on August 12, 2022 from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. All alumni and community members are invited to attend for free. Current students will be leading tours of the new, state-of-the-art athletics facilities and the school. Following the Gathering of the Clans, the Scots will host Providence Hall in the 2022 football endowment game at 7:00 p.m. All football game tickets must be purchased and proceeds will go to the UHSAA Foundation.

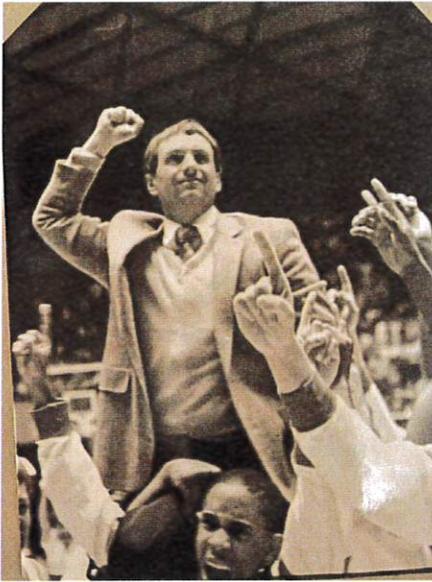
**About Ben Lomond Athletics:**

Ogden School District will develop and maintain equitable and competitive athletic programs. All Stakeholders strive for excellence in the classroom and athletics while promoting leadership, citizenship, accountability, sportsmanship and a positive environment.

###

To make a tax deductible contribution to the *Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund* you can send a check to the Ogden School Foundation Office at 1950 Monroe Blvd. Ogden, UT 84401. To donate using a credit card, visit <https://www.ogdenschoolfoundation.org/how-to-help/donate> and select the “Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund” drop-down option under the donate button. You can also donate by scanning the QR code below or call 801-737-7307.

Coach Excell and the 1986 basketball 3A championship team



What Ben Lomond HS is currently contemplating in naming their basketball court, for me, is frankly mind-boggling. To even be considered for such an astute honor among hundreds of other most capable coaches, players, and contributors is humbling indeed. I am truly blown away, overwhelmed, yet overjoyed for this auspicious occasion. My plan is to fully represent my wonderful family, and those who have formerly been involved with the marvelous game of basketball-gracing the hardwoods at BL since it first opened its doors way back in 1952. Special gratitude to all my players and coaches over the span of 16 tremendous years at BL. To the best high school fans on the planet and to those responsible for this action, a huge, and heartfelt thank you. Go Scots!

- Evan Excell  
Basketball Coach, BLHS  
1978-1994

On Jan 15, 2023, at 2:40 PM, Dan Ainge <[dainge22@gmail.com](mailto:dainge22@gmail.com)> wrote:

Congratulations Elder Excell, since that is the name I know you by from your missionary service in Boston. This is a well-deserved honor for someone who gave so much to Ben Lomond for over 18 years, including two state championships. 1986, your hoops championship year, was also a Celtics championship year. It was a fantastic year! Having grown up in Eugene Oregon, (track capital of the world) not very many people can appreciate a Girls Track State Championship like I can. So cool!

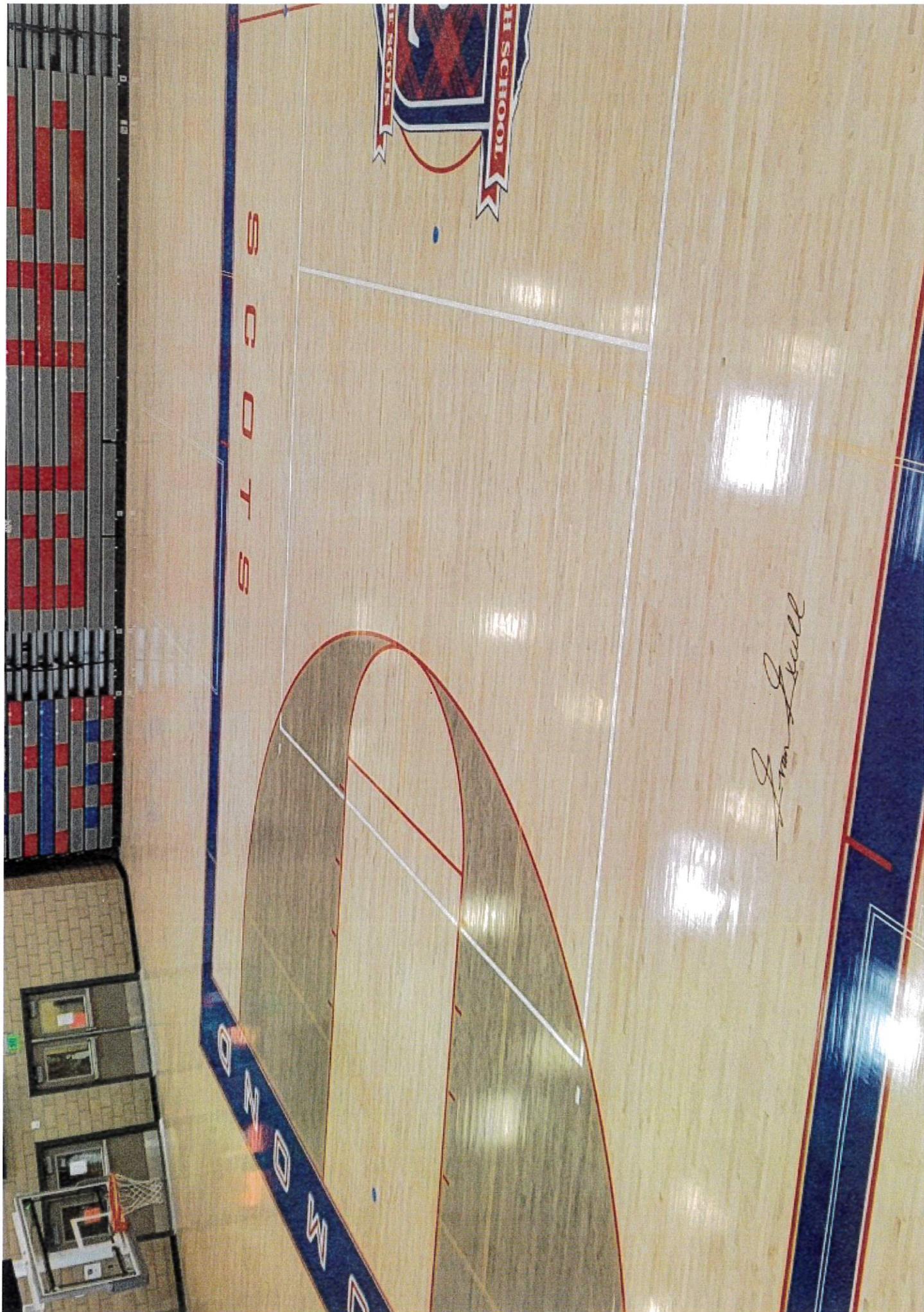
I quickly understood how well you liked the game of basketball from the support you gave my son and the high school team in Wellesley. I often have thought, that when I grow up, I want to go on a mission and still get to go to High School basketball games.

Seriously, the same kind of example of service and sacrifice that you and Sister Excell provided us in Boston, is what others see in your leadership at Ben Lomond High. How fitting it seems for you to be honored with a basketball court! Well deserved Brother!

Maybe I should have added you to the Celtics coaching staff.

Long live the Evan Excell basketball Court 🏀

Danny Ainge  
CEO Utah Jazz



Frank Russell

Prior  
Information

# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

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Name of Nominee: Evan K. Excell]  
*(first, middle, last)*

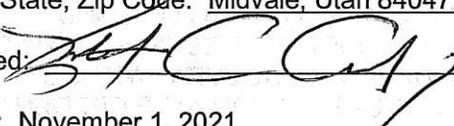
### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Robert C. Cuff

Phone: 801-381-1586

Street Address: 199 East 7200 South

City, State, Zip Code: Midvale, Utah 84047

Signed: 

Date: November 1, 2021

Email: cuff@uhsaa.org

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete    Coach    Official    Administrator    Performing Arts    Others

Name of Nominee: Evan K. Excell  
*(first, middle, last)*

Current Address: 414 North Highland Parkway  
*(street address)*

Washington, UT 84780  
*(city, state, zip)*

Email: evanexcell@gmail.com

Phone: 801-381-1582      Date of Birth: October 23, 1943

School Affiliation (if any) Utah High School Activities Association

City: Midvale      State: Utah

Place of Birth: Panguitch, Utah      Date of Retirement: June 30, 2008

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?    Yes    No

If yes, please explain:  
[Tab here]

If deceased, date of death:  
[Tab here]

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Nicki Dawn Griffin Excell

Address: Same

Phone: 801-381-2684

## Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Panguitch High	Panguitch, Utah	1961	Diploma
College/University: University of Utah	Salt Lake City, Utah	1966	Bachelor's of Science
Post Graduate School: University of Utah	Salt Lake City, Utah	1967	Master's of Science

- Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Attached
- Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

(Please see attached Bio.)

Special Honors and Achievements

(Included in attached Bio.)

Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

(Included in attached Bio.) Also lifetime member of the National Education Association

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Evan Excell's appointment as the Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association was unique. It is believed that he was the first high school athletic director to receive such an appointment (state association director), without having served as a high school principal or administrator in a school or school district, or elevated to the position from within the association staff. It may still remain to be the only such appointment.

Unique contributions to the Utah High School Activities Association after assuming the director's position in 1994, were to:

1) Streamline the governing bodies and redefine the roles of each group. There had been no material changes over the past twenty years, and these changes dramatically improved the communication with the schools on important topics including classification of schools, alignment, and enforcement of eligibility rules;

2) Within rules enforcement, using the authority and prestige of the Executive Director's role, changes and/or amendments of several bylaws pertaining to due process, hearings, appeals and opportunities for petitioning students were initiated and sold to the governing policy-making bodies of the UHSAA. Prior eligibility issues and decisions were determined by the Executive Director based on information received solely by the embodied schools- the involved students and parents were not heard. Recognizing that the failure to provide the student with a hearing and an opportunity to appeal was an invitation to litigation that the Association might easily lose. These results, although often timeconsuming in the beginning, were significant. The changes highly reduced litigation possibilities. Mark O. Van Wagoner, the Association's legal counsel (for an ongoing 47 years now) states: "Under Evan Excell's direction, the Bylaws and Constitution were amended to provide for due process, and a uniform system of adjudication by three-person panels was put in place. The impact was immediate and dramatic. Petitioning students found the opportunity to fully present their claims and to appeal any adverse decision. Not surprisingly, those opportunities satisfied almost all the students. There have been no successful lawsuits since these implementations. It was noticed that surrounding states, and even some far away, adopted the language of the UHSAA's procedures. Today, the Utah Association, and other NFHS member associations, continues to successfully follow the same basic due process procedures that Evan introduced some twenty years ago."

3). Consolidate state tournaments to a single site ( like all classifications of wrestling, or volleyball). This was a significant cost effective move to avoid high facility costs and staffing. Ticket prices remained the same for nearly the entire tenure of Mr. Excell. A small raise in the ticket for adults transpired near his retirement, but student ticket prices never changed during his 14-year career. The chaotic financial situation of the Association began to change almost immediately upon his arrival, and was soon to show significant progress towards a workable budget.

4) Establish the Utah High School Association Foundation as a way to guarantee solvency of Association finances into the far distant future. The Foundation has already exceeded expectations and has begun to pay back dividends to member schools in the form of alleviating expensive premiums for catastrophic insurance and discounting annual dues.

5). Build the new state-of-the-arts UHSAA building. The new facility was conceived, designed and built around half-way through Excell's years at the helm. While only a dream at the beginning of that tenure, it had been completed and nearly paid off by the time of his retirement. The Association is justifiably proud of the facility and staff has shown it to many visiting national and state association staff members.

6) Manage the number of member schools in the UHSAA increasing by some 25% during the 14 years from 1994-2008, and the number of classifications moving from three to five. This meant much more work in planning and administering many more state tournaments and events. The staff increased from one assistant to four assistants during this time, and from two secretaries to three and an office manager.

# Letters of Recommendation

**Robert C. Cuff**  
*Executive Director*  
**Jeff J. Cluff**  
*Assistant Director*  
**Brenan L. Jackson**  
*Assistant Director*



**Jonathan C. Oglesby**  
*Assistant Director*  
**Jan H. Whittaker**  
*Assistant Director*  
**Jeanne Widerburg**  
*Office Manager*

## Utah High School Activities Association

November 1, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Mr. Evan Excell for your consideration for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame in the Administrator category.

I am pleased and honored to reflect back on my professional experiences with him as a mentor, colleague and friend for 30 years. Evan's application and biography show his long and distinguished contributions to high school activities as a teacher, coach and athletic director in the state of Utah. Furthermore, his contributions to the NFHS during his tenure at the UHSAA are extensive. He served on the National Federation Board of Directors and other NFHS committees, including the Football Rules Committee, the Appeal Board and the Annual Summer Meeting Advisory Committee.

Evan is a gifted and unique individual who can inspire people in a variety of ways. He has the capacity for motivation, beginning with creating relationships, demanding accountability and ethics and evaluating performance. My association with Evan has been one of collegiality, compatibility and professionalism. I have witnessed his keen ability to keep calm in stressful situations, negotiate void of unethical compromise, problem-solve effectively and make appropriate decisions in the best interest of the stakeholders. He is quick to offer praise and recognition, the nutrition our youth thrive upon.

In addition to his many accomplishments and career experiences, Evan's ethical profile is never in question. Foremost, he has integrity and can be trusted. His style is honest, direct, yet empathetic. In most cases, his style is preventing issues, but his direction and mentoring are effective in ways that produce "win-win" outcomes as he has developed key relationships throughout his career. He focused on maintaining relationships and relevance.

Evan is an outstanding educator, fearless leader and an incredible ambassador for educational based high school activities in our state. We were extremely fortunate to have him involved for many years as a high school teacher and coach, athletic director and ultimately the Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association for 14 years. His passion and enthusiasm for high school activities and students have personally helped me to shape my perspectives and attitude toward the importance of creating participation opportunities and invaluable life lessons through high school activities for all students.

It is a great honor and pleasure for our Association to highly endorse and recommend Mr. Evan Excell from the great state of Utah as a candidate for this most prestigious award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert C. Cuff".

Robert C. Cuff, CAA  
UHSAA Executive Director



**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATIONS**

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 690 | Indianapolis, Indiana 46206  
Phone: 317-972-6900 | Fax: 317.822.5700  
www.nfhs.org

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NFHS Distribution Center  
1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

October 20, 2021

National High School Hall of Fame Selection Committee:

I am pleased and honored to submit this letter of recommendation on behalf of Evan Excell, a candidate for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame.

Without question in my mind, a review of his state, national and international achievements, honors, awards and service in position after position which he has held in his distinguished career, will lead to the conclusion of his worthiness of this honor.

As a teacher /coach and administrator at the school, state and national levels of high school athletics and activities, he has been a beacon of hope and guidance for others. Evan has truly been a friend, advisor and a model for all who were touched by his efforts throughout his career. Patience, kindness and humility describe him.

He has always sought to serve well every situation and circumstance in each of the positions he has held while acting with courage, concern and commitment to the highest standards and expectations in co-curricular sports and activities. Evan possesses the rare talent of seeing the good and potential in people and gaining their trust by his own personal example and standards.

Many of his initiatives at all levels continue to provide service and positive educational experiences to others including the UHSAA Foundation.

Winston Churchill once observed that the "Price of greatness is responsibility." In each and every case and instance, Evan accepted every responsibility accorded to him with confidence to do what was right and to lead by serving others before himself.

I recommend him without reservation and would be prepared to offer any other information requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert F. Kanaby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert F. Kanaby  
NFHS Executive Director Retired



---

**National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association**

January 23, 2010

Mr. Evan Excell  
1398 West 11150 South  
South Jordan, Utah 84065

Dear Evan:

I would like on behalf of the NIAAA Hall of Fame Committee to congratulate you on your induction into the NIAAA Hall of Fame. This is the highest honor a person can receive from the NIAAA, and you are most deserving.

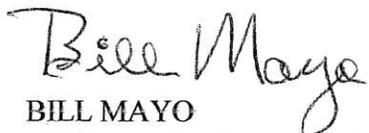
Your unselfish work through a lifetime of service is a key reason for the growth and influence of the NIAAA. Your effort and that of your fellow Hall of Fame inductees have become an unbeatable team. This team is the driving force that has developed the NIAAA into one of the finest volunteer organizations in America.

Our Committee felt a great degree of satisfaction in the effort of all involved in the process to bring the induction to fruition. The induction was a special event in the history of the NIAAA in which you were the main attraction. What a deserving honor for those of you who have devoted your lives to the education of young people through athletics.

Your performance throughout your career exemplifies the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and moral character. These traits are the common thread that unites the great leaders and contributors, not only to the development to the NIAAA, but also to the youth of our country.

Once again, congratulations on a lifetime of service.

Sincerely,

  
BILL MAYO  
NIAAA Hall of Fame Chair

cc: Bruce Whitehead, CMAA  
Mike Blackburn, CMAA, PhD

October 23, 2021

To the NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

It is with pleasure I write this letter of recommendation by commendation for one of the nation's true champions of high school sports and activities. Evan K. Excell owns the copyright to that. His entire life, professionally and personally, is a living testament to the worth and development of the human soul as expressed through high school activities. That truth is painted, with broad strokes, on the canvas of his life.

Numerous are the contributions Mr. Excell made through his high school coaching, teaching, a stint as athletic director and eventually as Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association where he served for fourteen years, 1994-2008. That path was decorated outside of vocational duties by a legion of community services to include judging pageants, officiating contests, membership on city committees, membership on the Organizing Committee for the 2002 Winter Olympics, directing the Moscow-Utah games in Moscow Russia and continuous lifetime ecclesiastical service of which most were with the youth. Those "second mile" services he didn't have to do, but he did.

Having previously served as Chair of the Hall of Fame Selection Committee on which you now serve, I trust that Evan's bevy of committee work, state and national awards and service to the NFHS is available elsewhere. From my experience, what you really need from me is not that laundry list, but personal life examples that distinguish him from the rest of the "field." Permit just three examples of the many which could be cited.

With this gentle giant, there was never a question of right and wrong, he chose right and then did it. Always the champion of fairness to every one and every group, his deliberations were dominated with what was best for organizations and groups, but mostly what benefited the one, the individual. Example: State Association financing always challenges directors. At the time of his hiring, Evan stared that challenge in the face by even securing monies and sponsorships to purchase a new Association building for burgeoning numbers of groups needing meeting space. As testament to his organizing capacities and concern for families, in his fourteen years at the helm, the UHSAA raised tournament ticket prices a minuscule \$1.00! That is management at its finest despite double digit inflation.

As a director at the UHSAA when Evan was coach and athletic director, I always knew whom to trust implicitly, lean on for support, expect honesty from even in the face of extreme community pressures and attend to details most people don't even know exist. That man was Evan K. Excell. He was firm, he was fair, he was fun, he was forgiving.

Finally, recognizing that no vocational success can compensate for failure in the home, Evan was and is, most importantly, a family man. How he balanced family, faith, community and work would mystify most and challenge the best on the planet, but he did it. In that capacity he presided, protected and provided with uncommon effectiveness and love. But then again, everything he did was personally stamped with love for others and that was, in the end, the hallmark which so qualifies him for the Hall. After decades of watching him serve then serving at his side, it's no secret I love this man. He just "gets" it. My hope is that he "gets" inducted!

To the Committee, thank you for YOUR service. It is meaningful.

David L. Wilkey

Former Assistant under Evan Excell and former Executive Director, UHSAA  
Former Chair NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee

October 30, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

It is my privilege to recommend Evan Excell to the National High School Hall of Fame. I am aware of the stature and merits of the Hall of Fame members, as I have personally attended 24 of the ceremonies. Evan Excell unquestionably belongs to this distinguished group.

Evan's extensive and unique biography clearly speaks for itself and sets him apart. He has received many recognitions, all well deserved. Evan was a capable and inspiring coach, teacher, and administrator. He has had a tremendous and immeasurable impact on thousands of young people through sports and other activities.

One has to take notice of the obvious. Evan rises to the leadership of any organization he is affiliated with. One notably, was breaking through the leadership barrier of the Utah High School Activities Association. Evan was appointed director, a position traditionally appointed to a principal, among exceptional competition.

I have known Evan personally and worked with him professionally for 30 years. It was an honor to experience his character, leadership talent, and skills. I watched him join people and organizations together. I was chairman of the UHSAA executive committee, a group of principals charged with the management of the association's activities. I worked with Evan the entire fourteen years he was director. Evan was responsible for managing and coordinating all the association's activities, leading the executive committee, and answering to the Board of Trustees and often the state legislature. He created fresh movement the first day on the job...dealing with a worn building, charter schools, unstable finances and a disgruntled Board of Trustees.

Evan's mantra of leadership elevated the Association to noticeable levels. He set a model of personalization. He made it a point to be at school events. It was very important to Evan to visit and meet with the Athletic Director's and Principals. Evan set out on a daunting task to travel to every membership school, not once, but several times. Utah is bookended by Indian reservations, 350 miles apart in a state that is 240 miles wide. Schools are in remote locations, and only accessible by miles of dirt roads. Evan visited them all.

Among many of Evan's notable accomplishments was the creation of a seat on the executive committee for an Athletic Director. That, in itself, promoted and expanded harmonious working relationships and increased communication. He initiated recognition programs for communities and schools. He also developed partnerships with businesses. Under Evan's direction, the association established a Foundation, which led to the improvement of the organization's financial problems.

Evan always had an extraordinary ability to personalize any, and every situation. It came naturally to him. After retirement, Evan was in Boston on an ecclesiastical mission. He happened to be in a building that had a recreation hall and heard the bounce of a basketball. He watched a young man shooting and noted his abilities. Evan introduced himself, offered tips and subsequently followed the boy and his team through the finals of their season.

What has set Evan apart and ushered him to successful accomplishments is his strong, sincere, and genuine character. It's in his DNA...and he has a lot of it. I can promise with certainty that Evan will be a credit to the National High School Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Smith

Educator, 51 years school level

Chairman, Utah High School Activities Association, 19 years

Support  
Data



**PRESS RELEASE:**

**OGDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Contact: Jessica Haro, Communication Specialist

Phone: 801 737 7334

Twitter: @ogdensd

[haroj@ogdensd.org](mailto:haroj@ogdensd.org)



**Ben Lomond High School Athletic Center To Honor Coach Evan K. Excell**

**Ogden, Utah – July 7, 2022** – The Ben Lomond High School Alumni Association has come together to honor Coach Evan Excell’s legacy by naming *Evan Excell Court* in the state-of-the-art Ben Lomond High School Athletic Center.

Evan Excell was the Ben Lomond High School Boys Basketball coach and athletic director from 1978-1994 and led the team to a 3A championship in 1986. The next year in 1987, his girls track team won a 3A championship. After 16 years of teaching, coaching, and serving at Ben Lomond High School, Coach Excell went on to serve as the fourth Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association.

“To even be considered for such an astute honor among hundreds of other most capable coaches, players, and contributors is humbling indeed,” Coach Excell said in response to the proposal to name the court in his honor. “My plan is to fully represent my wonderful family and those who have formerly been involved with the marvelous game of basketball. Special gratitude to all my players and coaches over the span of 16 tremendous years at Ben Lomond, to the best high school fans on the planet, and to those responsible for this action, a huge and heartfelt thank you. Go Scots!”

Along with the plan to formally name the main gym court in his honor, the Ogden School Foundation has created *The Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund*. This fund will provide ongoing support to the athletics and extracurricular programs at Ben Lomond High School. These donations will be used to support Scots in the pursuit of extracurricular excellence for generations to come.

Ben Lomond High School is hosting a *Gathering of the Clans* event to promote the fund on August 12, 2022 from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. All alumni and community members are invited to attend for free. Current students will be leading tours of the new, state-of-the-art athletics facilities and the school. Following the Gathering of the Clans, the Scots will host Providence Hall in the 2022 football endowment game at 7:00 p.m. All football game tickets must be purchased and proceeds will go to the UHSAA Foundation.

**About Ben Lomond Athletics:**

Ogden School District will develop and maintain equitable and competitive athletic programs. All Stakeholders strive for excellence in the classroom and athletics while promoting leadership, citizenship, accountability, sportsmanship and a positive environment.

###

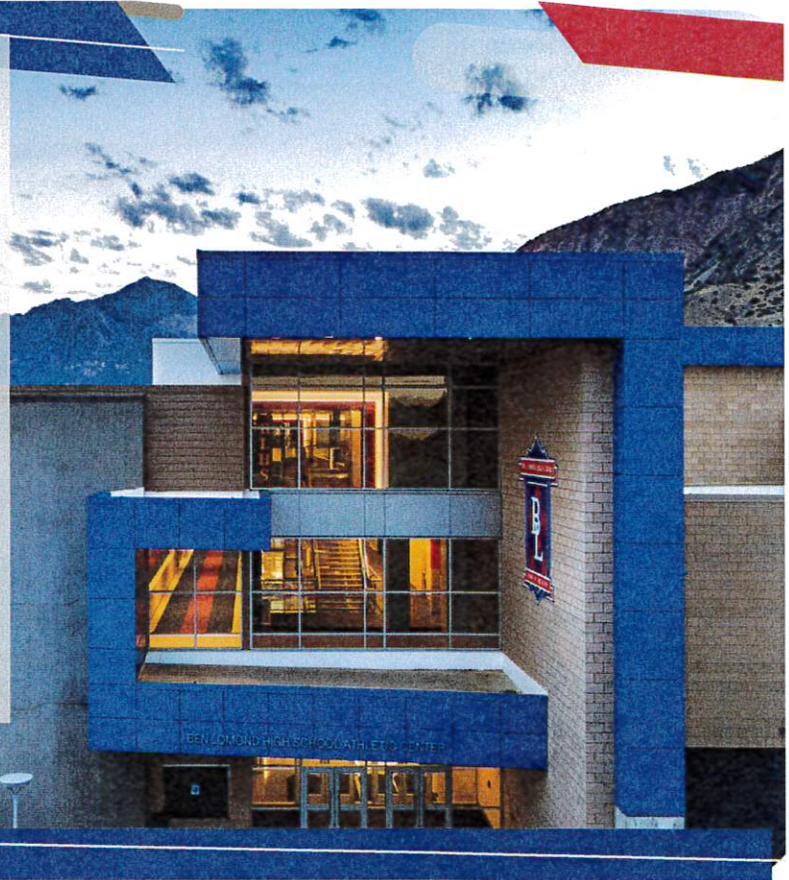
To make a tax deductible contribution to the *Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund* you can send a check to the Ogden School Foundation Office at 1950 Monroe Blvd. Ogden, UT 84401. To donate using a credit card, visit <https://www.ogdenschoolfoundation.org/how-to-help/donate> and select the “Evan Excell Honorary Endowment Fund” drop-down option under the donate button. You can also donate by scanning the QR code below or call 801-737-7307.

Coach Excell and the 1986 basketball 3A championship team



OGDEN \* SCHOOL  
FOUNDATION

# Gathering of the Clans



**August 12, 2022**  
**3:30 pm - 6:30 pm**

**Tour the new Ben Lomond  
Athletics Facilities**

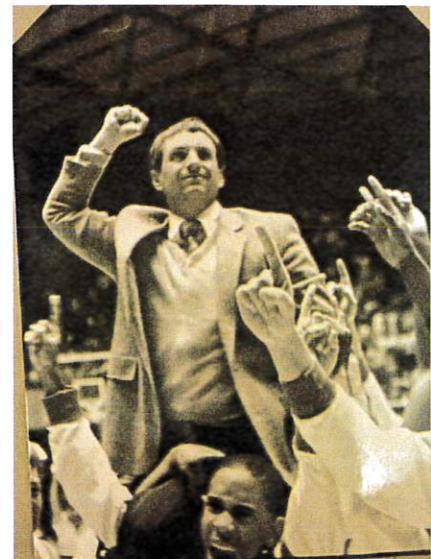
Stay for Ben Lomond vs.  
Providence Hall

Kickoff at 7:00 pm



Donate at  
[ogdensechoolfoundation.org/  
how-to-help/donate](https://ogdensechoolfoundation.org/how-to-help/donate)

Ben Lomond High School has created an endowment to support future Scots. The fund is in honor of legendary Coach Evan Excell.



\*Football game attendees must purchase tickets

Ogden Standard-Examiner

Ben Lomond High to name court after Evan Excell, a former, longtime coach and AD

July 16, 2022

By: Patrick Carr

Students at Ben Lomond High can probably be forgiven if, in the year 2022, they don't know who Evan Excell is. Pretty soon, they might see his name on the school's gymnasium floor.

Ben Lomond High plans to name the basketball court in its still-new gym after Excell, a former teacher, basketball coach and athletic director at the school from 1978-94.

Anyone in Ogden and the surrounding area who knows Excell probably knows him because of his time coaching boys basketball.

The Scots won the 3A boys basketball state championship back in 1986 with a star-studded team including standout Kurt Miller that ran up and down the court, sometimes scoring 100 points on teams in an era before the 3-point line had arrived.

Excell also coached the girls track and field team to the 1987 state championship.

After Ben Lomond, Excell became the executive director of the Utah High School Activities Association and held the position from 1994-2008.

The hope is there will be a floor naming ceremony the same night as a basketball game this season, with Excell and other alumni in attendance.

In conjunction with the court naming, the Ogden School Foundation is launching an endowment fund in Excell's name with an initial fundraising goal of \$200,000, the purpose of which will be to support Ben Lomond student-athletes and activities. Ben Lomond High administrators would control disbursement of the endowment money.

The Ogden school board approved the court naming and the creation of the endowment fund during its May 19 board meeting, according to meeting minutes posted on the district website.

BLHS is one of several high schools in Utah with more than 50% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch, according to state education figures.

“One of the things Ben Lomond struggles with is participation. A lot of that has to do with financial constraints,” administrator Ed Morris said. “We’d want money to have more kids participate in sports and pay fees for kids or meet whatever needs the kids need.”

Morris, the principal of the Malan’s Peak School in Ogden, is heading a committee that’s trying to raise awareness about the court naming as well as solicit donations for the endowment fund.

Excell’s former players and colleagues say the honor of naming the court after him is appropriate.

“He’s done so much for so many kids and stuff at that school, not just basketball, as a teacher and coaching other sports,” said Eddie Green, a member of the 1986 state title-winning basketball team. “And then going to the state office and working there and continuing to make high school sports in Utah safe and important for everybody, if anybody deserves it, it’s him.”

While he pointed out the athletic successes of the basketball teams, Morris noted that most members of Excell’s teams did well after high school, too.

“Most of us have Bachelor’s degrees, some of us have Master’s degrees,” Morris said.

Morris said the endowment fund isn’t exclusive to “athletics,” rather all “activities” because that fits with how Excell operated.

“Evan’s thing was always we want everyone to participate, they were pushing three-sport and four-sport athletes,” said Jerry Bovee, an assistant athletic director at Utah State who was formerly Weber State’s athletic director. “The day of specialization had not hit, it was, ‘Come to everything.’”

Bovee has the distinction of having played basketball for Excell at Ben Lomond and working with Excell at the UHSAA. Bovee said the court naming is a nice way to honor Excell and that the endowment fund is more of a way “for us to give back” to the school.

As part of the committee’s fundraising and awareness efforts, there will be an event at Ben Lomond High at 3:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12, before the Scots’ first home football game. This will be called “Gathering of the Clans,” where the committee hopes to gather alumni to tour the recently built athletic facilities at the school.

BEN LOMOND HIGH

Former coach, AD Excell 'overwhelmed'

BY PATRICK CARR  
Standard-Examiner

Plans to put Evan Excell's name on the basketball court of Ben Lomond High's new gym were well in place before Excell himself knew anything about it.

Then, he got a FaceTime call earlier this summer from his daughter, Jodi. She, and several other people Excell knew very well, told the former, longtime BLHS basketball coach and athletic director that the new gym floor would eventually be

named after him.

"I'm just overwhelmed," Excell said in a phone interview in July. "There's so many people involved in the years since Ben Lomond started back in the '50s that could've had their name on that place that I have the utmost respect for, but to be chosen, it's just simply overwhelming."

Excell, 78, taught and coached at Ben Lomond High from 1978-94. In

that time, he coached all manner of sports including boys basketball and girls track and field.



EXCELL

Excell grew up in Panguitch, graduated from the University of Utah, taught at Bryce Valley High, Escalante, East Carbon (no longer exists) and Carbon before landing at Ben Lomond. From 1994-2008, Excell was the executive director of the

UHSAA.

Throughout his career, Excell was

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# Excell

From B1

"We had a 4x100 meter relay team that was undefeated that year regardless of — we were in the 3A out of four classes — and they were undefeated even with the big boys. All four of those girls qualified for the 100 finals, so I mean that's almost unheard of," Excell said.

Several people who either knew Excell or attended Ben Lomond when he taught there formed a committee to both raise awareness about the court-naming as well as solicit donations for an endowment fund that was also created in Excell's name.

"One of the things Ben Lomond struggles with is participation. A lot of that has

to do with financial constraints. Administrator Ed Morris said earlier, "We'd want money to have more participation in sports and pay fees to meet whatever needs the kids

Morris, the principal of the Lomond School in Ogden, played for Excell. "The endowment isn't exclusively for sports," he said, but rather all "because that fits with how Excell

While Excell said he was humbled by the honor, another player said Excell was the perfect person for the honor.

"He's done so much for so many years of stuff at that school, not just as a teacher and coaching other players like Eddie Greene, a member of the title-winning basketball team

## BIOGRAPHY

Evan K. Excell, Former Executive Director  
Utah High School Activities Association

Evan K. Excell was the fourth Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association, appointed July 1, 1994. Born and raised in Panguitch Utah, Mr. Excell attended Brigham Young University and holds degrees from the University of Utah. His resume of experience and service to Utah high schools is varied and legion. His sterling career affiliation with high school activities began at Bryce Valley High School and included teaching, coaching and athletic administration stints at Escalante, East Carbon and Carbon High Schools. He finished his teaching and coaching career with 16 years at Ben Lomond High School where he also served as Athletic Director.

Evan was a teacher and coach for 28 years. He won state titles in boys basketball and girls track. While he was their athletic director, the Ben Lomond Scots responded with nine state athletic championships and twelve second place finishes. They also garnered thirty-five region titles. Coach Excell had the opportunity of taking basketball teams to Brazil and Australia for international competition. He was honored in May of 2000 as a "Distinguished High School Coach" by the Utah Sports Hall of Fame. This honor is bestowed on a very limited number of coaches. In 2000, the UIAAA Basketball Hall of Fame Game began awarding the "Evan Excell" trophy to the winning boys team, an honor that remains today.

Among his many other affiliations, Evan served as the President of the Utah High School Basketball Coaches Association and as President of the Utah High School Activities Administrators Association. He received the 1993-94 Distinguished Service Award as the Athletic Director of the Year as presented by the Utah High School Activities Association. In 2001, he was presented the Meritorious Service Award by the Utah Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association. Evan was appointed as the Region Seven representative on the Board of Directors for the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association in 1993. In 2001 he received the Distinguished Service Award from the NIAAA.

Mr. Excell achieved the distinction of Certified Athletic Administrator, which carries a high level of knowledge and expertise in the field of interscholastic athletic administration. There is a limited number nationwide who attain this level of professionalism.

As Executive Director of the UHSAA, Mr. Excell served on the National Federation Football Rules Committee for eight years and the NFHS Appeals Board for four. In July 1998, he began a four-year term to become only the 6<sup>th</sup> Utahn to serve on the National Federation's Board of Directors, and since served on the NFHS Annual Meeting Advisory Committee another four years. He participated several times as a presenter and moderator at the summer meetings of the NFHS and served regularly and diligently on ad hoc committees whenever asked.

Mr. Excell served on the Education Committee of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 Winter Olympic games and assisted in directing the Moscow-Utah Youth games in Moscow, Russia in 2003, where Over 300 young athletes competed with the Russians. Mr. Excell planned and shepherded athletes and coaches for these exciting games over a period of two weeks in Moscow. The Russians returned to Utah for winter games the following February. The Moscow/Utah Youth Games were a wonderful exchange...involving the political, athletic and travel offices of Russia and Utah at the time.

In 2006, Mr. Excell was honored by the Utah "Best of State" program as the educational administrator of the year, an honor that in his own words was "overwhelming to me, considering all of the outstanding superintendents, principals and their assistants we have administering schools and programs in our great state.

In his fourteen years as director, Mr. Excell opened the lines of communication for member schools into the UHSAA office, listened and implemented new concepts which will better serve the Association and provide greater opportunities for the students of Utah. His years of service saw the consolidation of many state championship events, which have resulted in a more fan-friendly atmosphere. Under his administration and direct supervision, the UHSAA built a beautiful new office building (and nearly paid for it), a further legacy for which he is justifiably proud. In fact, the financial situation at the UHSAA is in wonderful condition as Evan leaves. His ambition was to provide a fund balance equal to the annual budget (as recommended by the NFHS), and very nearly achieved that status. Under his watch, the UHSAA established the UHSAA Foundation, an organization committed and funded to perpetuate high school programs in Utah for years in the future. Mr. Excell was an initial board member for that foundation.

Now at the end of a 42-year career in education and education-based high school activities (June 30, 2008), Evan was involved at many levels and served in numerous capacities. He was a teacher, coach, official, athletic director and a state association executive director. His philosophy was one of loving activities and the students who were involved in them, including his own five daughters, and his many grandchildren. He advocated: "A student should be involved. It matters not in which activity...just become involved in something. The rewards are outstanding and overwhelming!"

Mr. Excell maintained that any success, which he may have been viewed as having, has been as result of being among good people. "The students, fellow coaches and administrators, wherever I was employed, were forthright and honest with me and truly outstanding. I tried and succeeded in surrounding myself with wonderful people and I made tremendous hires, when faced with those decisions. Those people, along with outstanding support from my family and friends, of course, made my job an easy one. I modeled many people along the way and appreciate the influences they had on me and on my family. It was a terrific run for me. I wouldn't change one minute of anything."

Mr. Excell was notified of three outstanding honors near the end of his career and another where his name was placed in nomination. The first, and what Evan calls a very prestigious and special award because of so few that receive it, was the National Federation Citation. Mr. Excell received the award, in behalf of Section Seven, at the NFHS Summer Conference in Washington D.C., July 2008. The second honor was induction to the Utah Summer Games Hall of Honor as a distinguished administrator in June 2008 at Southern Utah University in Cedar City. Third, Mr. Excell received a citation on the floor of the Utah Senate in October 2008, detailing his influential career and acknowledging his retirement after 42 years in education and education-based activities. In addition, Mr. Excell has been nominated as a member of the inaugural class for the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Hall of Fame. Evan views that as an almost impossible dream.

Since his retirement, Evan has been inducted into the UHSAA's prestigious Circle of Fame (March, 2009) and to the UIAAA's Hall of Fame (April, 2009). He received word in June 2009 that his impossible dream had indeed been realized, as he was selected for the NIAAA's first Hall of Fame. Evan was formally inducted on December 15, 2009 in Grapevine, TX, at the NIAAA conference banquet at the Gaylord Texan Hotel. These three honors have been received with an extremely humbling attitude.

Serving on the Board of Directors of the Utah Sports Hall of Fame Foundation has been another wonderful experience for Evan. He began that service in 1993. He also served a two-year term (2014 and 2015) as president of the Foundation.

Evan is married to the former Nicki Griffin of Escalante, Utah. The Excell's have five daughters - Jodi Rae Andre, Jenifer Dawn Rhees, Jill Ane Hopkins, Jessi Kay Allen and Justi Gai Lundeborg. They have eighteen wonderful grandchildren. Evan and Nicki currently reside in Washington, Utah during the cold months and at their mountain cabin at Panguitch Lake during the warm ones. He believes that he has finally figured it out!

## HIGH SCHOOLS

# New UHSAA chief plans on living up to his name

*Evan Excell has 28 years experience as a teacher, coach around the state.*

**By Dirk Facer**

Deseret News prep editor

MIDVALE — Evan Excell has covered a lot of ground in his 28 years in education. However, few journeys compare with his daily commute from Pleasant View to Midvale. Distance isn't the concern here. It's destination.



**Evan Excell**

After teaching stints at Bryce Valley, Escalante, East Carbon, Carbon and Ben Lomond high schools, the Panguitch native now serves as executive director of the 110-member Utah High School Activities Association. He filled the post July 1 when Glen Beere retired after seven years at the helm.

"This is my dream job," said Excell. "It's what I want to do. Twenty-eight years has given me a good perspective of activities."

Indeed. The fourth executive director in UHSAA history owns an impressive resume.

Prior to being named the state's Outstanding Athletic Director last year, Excell served as president of the State Association of Athletic Directors and the Utah Basketball Coaches Association. In addition, he was appointed to serve on a national athletic directors committee. As a coach, Excell led Ben Lomond to the state boys basketball crown in 1986 and a girls' state track title in 1987.

"There's nothing more exciting

than high school sports. That's why I stayed in it," he said. "I'm just a kids' advocate, that's me."

Every fall for the past 45 years, as both a student and teacher, Excell has answered the school bell.

"It's going to be different for me," he admits. "I will miss the daily interaction with kids. I think I can do more good for more kids here, but I'm going to miss that."

Calling the timing "right," the 50-year-old educator took the plunge into administration — becoming the first UHSAA executive director not to have previously served as a high school principal.

"I've worked at small schools and big schools and I've been all over the state," Excell said. "I felt like I was qualified to assume this position. I'm very excited to be here."

While not anticipating any radical changes on the prep activities scene, Excell does plan on getting involved.

"I think I'm a people person and I don't want to get caught behind this desk too much," he said. "I hope I can get out there and visit the schools. I'd like to darken the door of every school in the state."

However, the father of five girls (enough for a basketball team, he jokes), will hardly be a one-man show.

"We have a wealth of experience in this office and we'll be united in our decisions," Excell said. "We have the greatest product in the world — kids. I realize it's a lot of work and a lot of long hours, but I welcome the challenge."

The UHSAA sponsors sports, music and speech arts activities for high school students throughout the state. Excell's first year at the helm officially begins later this month when fall activities get under way.

SUNDAY  
JULY 17, 2005

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a  
<< www.sltrib.com >>

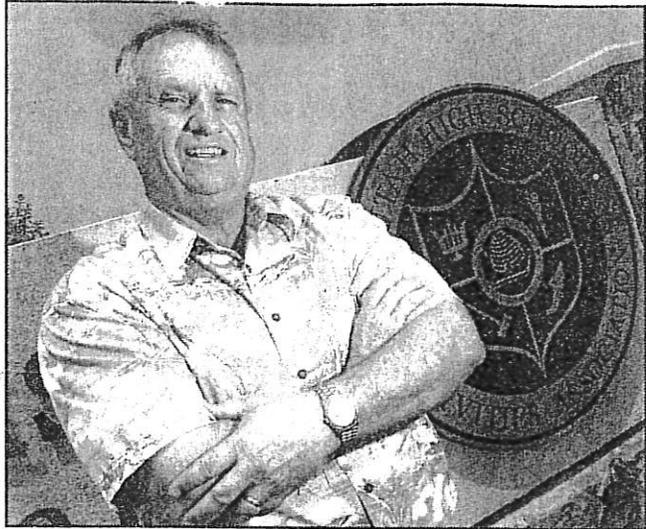
## Top 25 features those you know - and don't

**P**ower. How do you define it? It's a simple word, one we use on a frequently, but what does it really mean? Webster's Dictionary has a hard time, offering 14 definitions if it's used as a noun and three others as an adjective.

Here at *The Salt Lake Tribune*, we discovered even more meanings in a series of lively discussions as we tried to define power in one of its more simplistic ways — who has it?

The result is *The Tribune's* first ranking of the most powerful people in Utah sports, written and researched by Staff Writer Lya Wodraska. Our list, which will be annual, is a fluid one. Being powerful now doesn't mean there is a spot being held on next year's list. And being powerful doesn't mean being famous or having been a superb athlete.

Our list is subjective. It's supposed to be. We'd appreciate your thoughts after perusing our choices, because the fun is in the debate.



RYAN GALBRAITH/*The Salt Lake Tribune*

## 12 EVAN EXCELL Executive Director, UHSAA

As the executive director of the Utah High School Activities Association, Excell oversees the state's 123 schools in the association, which includes participation of 82,765 athletes. The UHSAA is the governing body for the high schools, controlling the rules and championships for athletic events.

A job well-done

# UHSAA boss has few critics anymore

After 14 years at the helm, retiring Evan Excell leaves to much praise from peers

By JAY DREW  
*The Salt Lake Tribune*

When an easygoing basketball coach, math teacher and athletic director from Ogden's Ben Lomond High with deep ties to southern Utah was chosen to be only the fourth executive director of the Utah High School Activities Association 14 years ago, a ripple of shock swept through coaches and others involved in Utah prep sports.

Shouldn't a principal, superintendent or other established administrator have been appointed to that position, they asked.

Well, few are asking that question now.

Evan Excell, 64, who will step away from the position and into retirement on July 1, has taken the UHSAA to unprecedented heights and success, most observers of the group that governs prep sports in Utah agree.

"The Excell era has been one of tremendous challenges," said Paul Smith, principal of Layton High and longtime chairman of the UHSAA's executive committee. "I don't know of anyone who could have done it better."



Evan Excell

## Excell set to retire

► Continued from D1

Chiefly, Excell has helped moved the UHSAA into the sporting public's consciousness — been to a state championship game lately? — made it flourish financially, opened the channels of communication to its member schools, overseen tremendous growth and established a new \$1.2 million office building where it conducts the business of some 90,000 high school athletes, musicians and debaters.

"I still say that if I have a legacy, it is the people I have hired," he said in typical humble fashion. "I've been able to surround myself with very good people."

Still, the executive director is the face of the association, and even the harshest critics, such as Sen. Mark Madsen, R-Eagle Mountain, have acknowledged that the UHSAA has taken great strides the past 14 years under Excell's

"I still say that if I have a legacy, it is the people I have hired."

### EVAN EXCELL

UHSAA executive director

guidance.

"Evan has done a wonderful job," said Laura Baker, a Murray school board member and chairperson of the Board of Trustees. "He will be difficult to replace."

First, the organization is no longer in financial difficulty. There was a time a few years into Excell's tenure, after some corporate sponsorships dried up, that he worried about making payroll for the office staff of seven.

Today, the UHSAA has more than \$1 million in reserve, despite a budget that has increased from less than \$1 million to almost \$2 million since 1994. An endowment fund that was created in 1999 by allowing schools to play an extra game in football and basketball if they would give half the gate receipts to the UHSAA has surpassed

\$1 million, and soon, interest from the account will be used to fund coaches training, officials training and student leadership opportunities.

"Financially, the association is in great, great shape," said Excell, who will be succeeded by longtime Associate Director Dave Wilkey, a 31-year employee of the UHSAA.

When Excell, a native of Panguitch, got the job, he inherited a small, run-down, octagon-shaped building with a leaky roof. He almost immediately began plans to replace the building, and a few years ago that dream was realized with a \$1.2 million facility on the same property that rivals any other building of its type in the country.

More importantly, triple payments have been paid on the building's mortgage, and now less than \$300,000 is owed. Excell says one day he hopes that its basement will house the Utah High School Sports Hall of Fame.

The reserved and humble former basketball coach and math teacher from southern Utah would not be a bad first choice for induction.

drew@sltrib.com

*Utah State Senate*  
OFFICIAL CITATION  
HONORING

*Evan K. Excell*

Executive Director  
Utah High School Activities Association

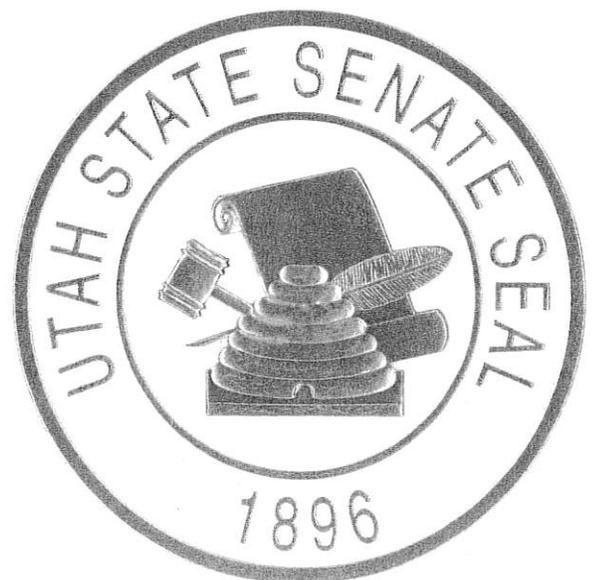
AN OFFICIAL CITATION OF THE UTAH STATE SENATE HONORING EVAN K. EXCELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UTAH HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION (UHSAA), AND RECOGNIZING HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO THE STATE OF UTAH UPON HIS RETIREMENT.

*Be it known to all by the Senate of the State of Utah:*

*WHEREAS, Evan K. Excell is retiring after serving as the Executive Director of the Utah High School Activities Association (UHSAA) for the past 14 years, having been appointed July 1, 1994.*

*WHEREAS, serving as the Executive Director of UHSAA is the culmination of Mr. Excell's outstanding 42-year career with high school athletics. Prior to this position, Mr. Excell was teacher, coach, and athletic director at Ben Lomond High School in Ogden, Utah. Under his tutelage, the Ben Lomond Scots won nine state athletic championships and 12 second-place finishes.*

*WHEREAS, while serving as the Executive Director of UHSAA, Mr. Excell received numerous prestigious awards and accolades, including "Distinguished High School Coach" awarded by the Utah State Hall of Fame in 2000, an honor enjoyed by only a select number of coaches. Other awards he received include: 1993-94 Distinguished Service Award as Athletic Director of the Year, presented by UHSAA; 2001 Meritorious Service Award, presented by the Utah Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association; 2001 Distinguished Service Award, presented by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association; and 2006 Educational Administrator of the Year, presented by the Utah "Best of State" program.*



WHEREAS, during Mr. Excell's 14 years as Executive Director of UHSAA, he implemented many new policies to better serve the association and enrich opportunities for student athletes participating in Utah's high school sports. He was a great voice of reason, fairness and opportunity for all students.

WHEREAS, under Mr. Excell leadership, the UHSAA saw unprecedented growth in numbers and change. He oversaw the construction of a new building to house the offices of UHSAA and, at the same time succeeded in solidifying the financial status of the association. He was instrumental in creating a foundation that will eventually offer scholarships to prep athletes.

WHEREAS, during Mr. Excell's notable career as a teacher, coach, official, athletic director, and state association executive director, he promoted consistent and fair policies, made difficult decisions, lobbied effectively, and always stood firm on the rules and standards he believed were in the best interest of all students. He has said that the best thing about high school sports is the opportunity it provides young men and women to play for their school and along the way learn the time-honored values of work ethic, teamwork, sportsmanship, winning, leadership, cooperation, discipline and self-confidence.

WHEREAS, Mr. Excell and his wife Niki have always been great supporters of high school prep events, attending a game or competition every Friday night, a tradition they plan to continue. The thing he enjoyed most about his job was being with students at the tournaments.

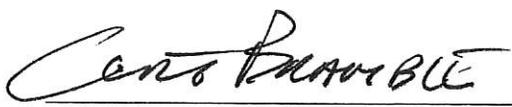
WHEREAS, Mr. Excell retired June 30, 2008, as Executive Director of UHSAA. He appreciates all those he has worked with and attributes much of his success to always surrounding himself with good people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT KNOWN, that the Utah State Senate recognizes and appreciates the dedicated service of Evan K. Excell. They pay tribute to him upon his retirement and extend to him their best wishes in all his future endeavors.

Presented by the Utah State Senate on the 15th day of October, 2008.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator John L. Valentine  
President of the Senate

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Mike Dmitrich  
Senate Minority Leader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Curtis S. Bramble  
Senate Majority Leader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Gene Davis  
Senate Minority Whip



Marty Hickman

# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

---

Name of Nominee: Dr. Martin (Marty) Leonard Hickman  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Craig Anderson

Phone: 309-663-6377

Street Address: 2715 McGraw Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Bloomington, Illinois, 61704

Signed: Craig Anderson

Date: November 15, 2021

Email: mtroha@ihhsa.org

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete     Coach     Official     Administrator     Performing Arts     Others

Name of Nominee: Dr. Martin (Marty) Leonard Hickman  
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 404 South Spencer  
(street address)

Lexington, Illinois, 61753  
(city, state, zip)

Email: mnaa44@gmail.com

Phone: 309-530-0828      Date of Birth: 9-12-1958

School Affiliation (if any) n/a

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: Colorado Springs      Date of Retirement: January, 2016

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?     Yes     No

If yes, please explain:  
n/a

If deceased, date of death:  
n/a

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: Nancy Hickman

Address: 404 South Spencer, Lexington, Illinois, 61753

Phone: 309-530-1328

## Schools Attended:

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: New Berlin High School	Ner Berlin, Illinois	1976	General studies
College/University: Eastern Illinois University	Charleston, Illinois	1980	Education
Post Graduate School: University of Illinois-Springfield University of Illinois-Champaign	Springfield, Illinois Champaign, Illinois	1983 1994	Master's in Education Doctorate in Education

- Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Attached
- Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

## 0) CAREER OVERVIEW

- a) Girard High School (Girard, IL): Teacher, Coach (1980-83)
- b) Bluffs High School (Glasford, IL): Principal (1983-85)
- c) Westmer High School (Joy, IL): Principal (1985-87)
- d) Monmouth High School (Monmouth, IL): Principal (1987-91)
- e) IHSA Assistant Executive Director (1991-1999)
- f) IHSA Associate Executive Director (1999-2002)
- g) IHSA Executive Director (2002-2016)

## 1) NFHS SERVICE

- a) Member of NFHS Basketball Rules Committee (1999-2002)
- b) Chaired NFHS Strategic Planning Committee (approx. 2006)
- c) NFHS Appeal Board (2008-2012)
- d) NFHS Board of Directors (2012-2016)
- e) Multiple-time presenter at NFHS Summer Meeting
- f) Worked with NFHS staff to co-host Summer Meeting in Chicago (2003, 2009, 2018)

## 2) NATIONAL LEADERSHIP - HOF ENDORSEMENTS:

Rick Wulkow, Retired Iowa HS Athletic Association Executive Director – NFHS Hall of Fame Class of 2017:

"Marty Hickman was respected by his peers; whenever he spoke, people listened. He was always well prepared, articulate, and passionate. Marty had the best interest of State Associations and the NFHS in mind whenever he acted. He was truly a visionary in my opinion. He was a natural leader and didn't hesitate to accept that role when called upon. The IHSA, under Marty's leadership, was a model for other State Associations to become prominent and successful. Aside from that, Marty was a great person and a true friend. He is very worthy of induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame."

Bob Gardner, Retired NFHS Executive Director – NFHS Hall of Fame Class of 2019:

"Marty Hickman brought stability to the IHSA taking over in a difficult time. His vision and leadership unified the membership of the Association. He brought that to the NFHS family through service on the Board and leading the Strategic Planning Committee. He is worthy for selection to the National High School Hall of Fame as an Administrator."

## 3) NATIONAL INVOLVEMENT & STATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

a) Guided the IHSA through a successful defense of a class-action concussion football lawsuit from 2014 to 2015, the first of its kind in the nation at the high school level. Provided resources and expertise from the IHSA's case to other state high school associations as they traversed similar situations. Continues to consult in this area, including currently for the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA).

b) Served as a Board member for the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). Provide input in CSIET rule-writing, as well as guidance to other state high school associations during the early 2010's when an influx of student-athletes attending high schools on various Visas created issues for many state high school associations.

c) Increased diversity in the IHSA staff, hiring first African-American administrator and increased female representation on the administrative staff. Installed internal policies to increase diversity among IHSA membership committees and in State Series representation by game officials.

d) Financial Responsibility: Dr. Hickman inherited the Executive Director position at a time when the IHSA was crippled financially by an unsuccessful lawsuit. His financial austerity had the Association back on solid ground financially with 2-3 years. By 2007, he had eliminated annual dues for membership schools. While not necessarily popular by staff at the time, his foresight to eliminate the pension program and move to a 401K proved to be especially forward-thinking, as the IHSA was able to weather the pandemic year without reducing staff.

e) Provided greater student participation opportunities with the addition of multiple IHSA sports and activities during his tenure, including the first state high school association sponsored bass fishing tournament in the country. Other programs that began under his watch included boys and girls water polo, boys bowling, competitive cheerleading, dance, and journalism.

f) Met the desire of member schools by initiating a committee process that ultimately led to the expansion of classes in many IHSA sports. Decried by some purists, the move remains wildly popular among IHSA schools and clairvoyant given a growing disparity in athletic success often spurred by school enrollment and socioeconomic factors.

g) Oversaw the creation of an ad hoc committee that would ultimately become a full-time IHSA committee advocating for athletes with disabilities, a group that would spur the implementation of IHSA State Finals divisions for athletes with disabilities in four IHSA sports.

- h) Remained constant in his support of the IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the IHSA SMAC taking on greater involvement in the Association, which led to progressive safety initiatives throughout his tenure.
- i) Was a key proponent in starting the IHSA Officials Conference, an annual summer conference for IHSA officials to attend and attend sessions to improve while networking and building camaraderie.
- j) Started the IHSA Foundation, a not-for-profit that aided students with scholarship opportunities, including the IHSA All-State Academic Team, which is now considered the top honor a high school student-athletes can achieve in the state.

#### Special Honors and Achievements

- a) Illinois Wrestling Coaches & Officials Association (IWCOA) Hall of Fame inductee
- b) Bloomington-Normal Officials Association Hall of Fame inductee
- c) New Berlin High School of Fame (attended)
- d) Mercer County High School Hall of Fame (worked as administrator there)

#### Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

- a) Past Board member for Special Olympics Illinois
- b) Past Board member for National Association of Sports Officials (NASO)
- c) Past Board member of Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET)
- d) Past Board member for Peoria Riverfront Museum
- e) Annual presenter at Illinois Association of School Boards Conference, Illinois Athletic Directors Association Conference, Illinois Principals Association Conference.

#### Other information (*not previously listed*)

I have attached a letter Dr. Hickman wrote entitled "Handing Off The Future Of High School Football". In the open letter, Hickman talked about how important his high school football experience was and why the sport would endure despite the growing concerns about head trauma that were swirling at the time. The letter went viral and was eventually read by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, who invited Dr. Hickman to be his guest at Super Bowl 50.

Finally, I just wanted to share a few brief words from Marty's initial reaction when he learned he was being nominated for the NFHS High School Hall of Fame.

Dr. Marty Hickman:

"I know how diligent we were and the time and thought that we gave to the NFHS Hall of Fame nominations while I was at IHSA, so I am humbled that your team would even consider me. It's not something I ever expected, but even to be nominated is really rewarding. My identity will

always be as a guy who spent 25 years working in a job he could never have dreamed of having. I will always LOVE the IHSA and what it stands for. My life was enhanced and changed for the good by participating in high school sports."

# Letters of Recommendation



Esteemed Members of the Selection Committee,

It is with the utmost deference that the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) submits the nomination of former IHSA Executive Director Dr. Marty Hickman for enshrinement in the National Federation of State High Associations (NFHS) National High School Hall of Fame in the Administrator category.

The IHSA has been privileged to see 27 past nominees achieve the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an individual for excellence in high school sports and activities with their respective enshrinements into the NFHS National High School Hall of Fame.

We recognize that when a coach or athlete is considered for the Hall of Fame, while still never an easy decision, the selection committee has more data to pull from in the form of stats, records, and championships. We believe that we have outlined the transcendent impact and visionary leadership that Dr. Hickman displayed during his 26 years at the IHSA, which included 16 years in the Executive Director role. In addition, Dr. Hickman frequently provided his expertise to the NFHS via committee work, and volunteered his time on the Board of Directors for several organizations who support education-based athletics and activities.

However, before you review those supporting materials, we wanted to start by sharing the personal views of two NFHS Hall of Fame administrators, both of whom worked alongside Marty during their careers and believe him to be worthy of Hall of Fame status:

**Rick Wulkow, Retired Iowa HS Athletic Association Executive Director – NFHS Hall of Fame Class of 2017:**

"Marty Hickman was respected by his peers; whenever he spoke, people listened. He was always well prepared, articulate, and passionate. Marty had the best interest of State Associations and the NFHS in mind whenever he acted. He was truly a visionary in my opinion. He was a natural leader and didn't hesitate to accept that role when called upon. The IHSA, under Marty's leadership, was a model for other State Associations to become prominent and successful. Aside from that, Marty was a great person and a true friend. He is very worthy of induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame."

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"Marty Hickman brought stability to the IHSA taking over in a difficult time. His vision and leadership unified the membership of the Association. He brought that to the NFHS family through service on the Board and leading the Strategic Planning Committee. He is worthy for selection to the National High School Hall of Fame as an Administrator."

We believe Dr. Hickman's career merits NFHS National High School Hall of Fame consideration and hope you will give him full consideration.

Craig Anderson  
Executive Director  
Illinois High School Association



## Missouri State High School Activities Association

1 N. Keene Street, Columbia, MO 65201 ♦ P.O. Box 1328, Columbia, MO 65205  
Phone (573) 875-4880 ♦ email@mshsaa.org

♦ [www.mshsaa.org](http://www.mshsaa.org) ♦

**Dr. Kerwin Urhahn, Executive Director**  
**Stacy Schroeder, Associate Executive Director**

Davine Davis, Assistant Executive Director Doug Fessler, Assistant Executive Director Craig Long, Chief Financial Officer Lou Mazzocco, Assistant Executive Director  
Marty M. Marsh, Assistant Executive Director Kenny Seifert, Assistant Executive Director Greg Stahl, Assistant Executive Director Jason West, Communications Director

October 15, 2021

NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee:

It is a great honor and privilege to write a letter of support for my mentor, peer, and most importantly my friend, Dr. Marty Hickman, for induction into the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame. What an outstanding director, and even better person.

I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today if not for Dr. Hickman. Marty was so generous with his knowledge, time, and expertise to help a new executive director find his way in his new role. I cannot tell you the number of hours that I asked Marty questions, and he never tired of helping me.

Dr. Hickman chaired the NFHS Strategic Planning Committee in 2005, and presented the plan to the entire membership at the 2005 Summer Meeting. He was a leader in a room full of leaders.

Marty also hosted a regional states meeting each year. From that meeting, many things came out which impacted the entire country with examples such as, officials training for the NFHS, and the NFHS Network, which was first discussed by Jack Roberts. Also at that meeting, the first concussion lawsuit was discussed and strategized on how to defend. There were many topics discussed, suggestions made, and possible solutions presented to the NFHS for consideration.

Dr. Hickman did not stop helping others when he retired from the IHSA. He went to work for Special Olympics Illinois. His generous heart, and servant leadership makes him a candidate for every Hall of Fame, but definitely one for the NFHS. Marty has impacted more people's lives in his time in education, association work, and with the Illinois Special Olympics, that he is a blessing to all that come into contact with him.

Respectfully,

Kerwin Urhahn, Ed.D  
MSHSAA Executive Director

**Bobby and Katby Cox**  
**26 Fairlane Dr.**  
**Warsaw, IN 46580**  
**3100 Silkwood Ln.**  
**Port Charlotte, FL 33953**



Members of the Selection Committee,

It is with high honor and humility that I enthusiastically author this letter of unlimited support for Dr. Marty Hickman and his potential induction into the National High School Hall of Fame. While I knew of Marty prior to 2011, our professional and personal relationship grew exponentially during my years as Commissioner of the Indiana High School Athletic Association.

Simply stated, Dr. Hickman is one of the finest state Executive Directors the NFHS family has enjoyed in its illustrious history. I greatly benefited from his wisdom and counsel as I began my tenure in Indiana. I deeply admired Marty's calm and thoughtful approach to the myriad of challenges facing him and the Illinois association throughout his career. His strong and steady leadership benefited the IHSA dramatically as well as our Federation family.

During Marty's career at the IHSA, he served admirably on the NFHS Board of Directors, chairing a Strategic Planning Committee for the Federation during a critical time of growth and change. And while these formative modifications were occurring at a national level, simultaneously additional opportunities were being created for Illinois students at the IHSA under his watchful eye.

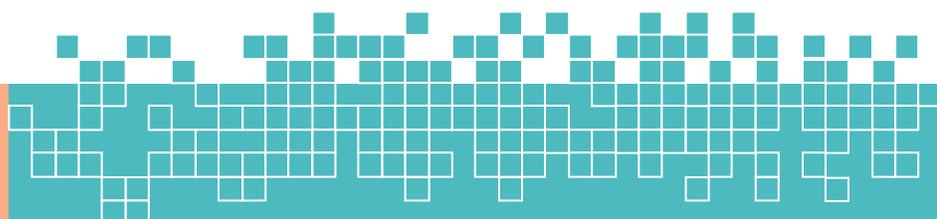
Perhaps the most dramatic series of events that accentuated Marty's profound leadership were the challenges of the concussion lawsuits brought against the IHSA. Marty activated a dynamic legal team and his Federation friends and supporters to successfully defend the actions and protocols exercised to ensure student safety in the sport of Football. His guidance through these tumultuous times provided reassurance to parents, students, school administrators and those of us in other state associations facing the same tests. The public relations campaign evolving from these trials served as a template for other state associations for years to come. Yet again, another sterling example of Marty's leadership.

As I look at the list of tremendous Executive Directors already enshrined into the NFHS Hall of Fame as Administrators, the name of Dr. Marty Hickman should be added proudly to this roster, reflective of his superb service to the State of Illinois and our National Federation. I provide my highest recommendation to the National High School Hall of Fame for the induction of Dr. Marty Hickman of Illinois.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you wish to discuss Dr. Hickman's candidacy for this honor directly.

Sincerely,

Bobby Cox, Retired Commissioner, Indiana High School Athletic Association



Support  
Data

14

## Handing Off The Future of High School Football In Illinois by Marty Hickman

January 14, 2016

SHARE

Marty Hickman joined the IHSA staff in 1991 and became the organization's sixth Executive Director in 2002. After 25 years at the IHSA, he will retire on January, 15, 2016.

### Independent (At Large): New Berlin



**MEET THE PRETZELS OF NEW BERLIN** — Front row, from left: Chris Burger, Vince King, Bill Westwood, Bryan McCray, Joe Corbett. Second row: Phil Hermes, Carl Hart, Kevin Workman, Bob Ward, Greg Miller, Darrell Nation. Third row: John Smith, Mike Thomas, Jim Burger, Tim Lewis, Marty Hickman, Bill Pfeffer. Fourth row: Stan Workman, Mike Simpson, Dan Andrew, Monty Hichman, Rich Nation. Fifth row: Keith Meiers, Jeff Andrew, Jerry Knepler, John Workman, Mike Maurer, Lee Fuchs. Top row: Asst. Coach Bill Bordon, Manager Kent Fortner, Coach Woody Cheesman.

In the fall of 1972, I started my high school athletic career on a football field at New Berlin High School in New Berlin, Illinois. It was the first year of our school's football program and I can still vividly recall playing against the Kincaid Ponies in the inaugural round of the IHSA Playoffs just two years later. What a thrill it was for our team and community.

Now I sit just one day from my retirement date after a 25-year career at the IHSA.

I have made a commitment to writing one letter each day during my final few months on the job, sharing reflections with colleagues, coaches, officials and others who have impacted my life and career. Today's letter is an open one of sorts, responding to the question I have been most oft asked over the past few years... "what is the future of high school football?"

As I have routinely told folks throughout my career, the reason I believe so strongly in education-based athletics is that my high school coaches were the most influential individuals in my life next to my mom growing up. The character and life lessons they instilled in me led me to follow their path as a high school teacher, coach and then principal, en route to my "dream job" at the IHSA...a job I didn't know existed growing up in a town of 1,000 people.

In my quarter of a century at the IHSA, I don't know that there is an issue we have attacked more fervently or collaboratively than that of concussions, especially in football. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has been at the forefront in that leadership, and the NFHS recently capped the 2015 high school football season with a release highlighting how far we have come in a short period of time ([click here for entire release](#)), including...

*2008 – The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee advocated that a concussed athlete must be removed from play and not allowed to play on the same day.*

2010 – The NFHS developed its “Concussion in Sport” online course that has been completed by more than two million student-athletes, parents, coaches and officials.

2014 – The NFHS Concussion Summit Task Force adopted recommendations for reducing the amount of full contact in practices.

I am proud to say that in Illinois we took many additional steps in the name of safety thanks to the collective efforts of our member school coaches/administrators, the IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, the IHSA Council on Player Safety, the state legislature, and other invested constituents (please take the time to educate yourself further at [Play Smart. Play Hard.](#)).

Those efforts include the development of a Return to Play Policy that was eventually used as the model for the current Illinois state law, the elimination of contact in summer football, required concussion education testing for coaches, and regular-season football practice contact limitations to name a few.

Keeping the 340,000-plus young men and young women who participate in high school sports in Illinois safe through risk minimization is the number one responsibility of the Association. We had an uplifting moment in that regard in October, when a class-action concussion lawsuit against the IHSA was dismissed with prejudice by the Honorable LeRoy K. Martin Jr. of the Circuit Court of Cook County. In Judge Martin’s order granting dismissal, he supported the IHSA’s progressive safety record, saying: “In fact, it is clear to this court that IHSA has acted to protect student athletes in this State.”

Still, there are stark reminders that there is a risk of injury any time a player steps on the field of play. Chicago was home to a tragic example of that in October, when Bogan High School’s Andre Smith passed away following an injury suffered in a contest. As devastating as a tragedy like this is, it is also what continues to drive the doctors, certified athletic trainers and medical experts around the world who work to make sports safer for all athletes. Never has that been more apparent than right now.

The future of the game of football has been called into question often recently in the media. There is a part of me that takes exception to the tunnel vision that football is often viewed through, as the health of the student-athletes who play football is no more, or no less, important than those participating in cheerleading, soccer, lacrosse, basketball and so on.

As the dangers of head trauma in sports have become clearer over the last decade or so, many have piled on football (no pun intended), hastily calling for its demise. However, given time for research and reflection, we have seen many top medical experts speak to the safer climate that the initial “concussion crisis” has created for today’s game. Make no mistake, football has been here before, as history shows us that in 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt intervened to help change the trajectory of college football at a time when the game was becoming increasingly violent.

*Sports Illustrated* recently ran a story (December 14th: [Brain and Brawn by Tom Taylor](#)) on Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), citing what we do and don’t know about CTE, along with highlighting some of the misinformation that been reported on the subject. In the story, University of Minnesota associate professor of neurosurgery Uzma Samadani, MD, PhD, makes it clear that she believes that inactivity and obesity are greater threats to young people than football, saying, “America’s problem is not that it plays football, but that it watches football.”

Samadani had even stronger words in a Counterpoint against the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in their stance to ban youth football that was published in Minneapolis Star Tribune, as she said:

"Football is on the riskier end of the spectrum of sports, but still is less risky than skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding, equestrian sports or bicycling. If we are going to legislate all risk-taking behaviors in children, we should probably begin with those that are statistically most dangerous, rather than those in the middle."

We know more today about concussions than we did yesterday and will know tomorrow than we did today. Football remains under the microscope, and that is a good thing for the safety of current and future student-athletes. I have been irked that many of those serving as the judge, jury and abolitionists of high school football often do so based upon judgements accrued from looking at the college and professional game, as well as past athletes who played in different eras without the current safeguards. It remains vital that we move forward and allow the opportunity for the recent changes to the high school game, and those that may still come [like the development of new helmet technology](#), to positively impact player safety for this generation of players.

I can say unequivocally that high school football is far safer now than when I played. I believe that is a sentiment that will be repeated by the forthcoming generations of high school football players in Illinois.

As long as some of the best and brightest minds on the planet are focusing their energy on the goal of making the game as safe as possible, I personally believe the game will continue to not only survive, but thrive.

I hope it gets that chance.

I talked earlier about the tragedy that occurred in Chicago this season, but there was also triumph from the Windy City.

The city of Chicago has a storied lineage of producing great high school athletes, so many were surprised to learn that when Wendell Phillips Academy won the 2015 IHSA Class 4A Football state championship, it marked the first-ever football state title by a member of the Chicago Public Schools.

In the post-game press conference that night, several of the players talked about how football had helped steer them to a path away from gangs, drugs, and violence that others around them had succumb to.

Senior captain Amir Watts told the assembled media that, "Football has pretty much guided my life, all my life. With football, you get structure and discipline. It's made me a better man."

Fellow defensive linemen Malcolm Fox finished Watts next sentence, adding, "especially with our coaches. Our coaches are amazing in the way they teach us to be young men and to deal with adversity and be humble in victory."

Then Chris Elmore closed by saying, "Football has made me a better person, and man, all-around. Every day when I go to practice, I think, 'man, what would I do without football'."

The world is a very different place today than it was when I graduated from high school 1976, and New Berlin remains a very different place than the Bronzeville neighborhood that houses Phillips Academy in Chicago.

I won't pretend to have faced the same adversity as those young men from Phillips as a high school student, but I can definitely relate to their post-game comments.

I am not sure where I would be today without football either.

I hope that is something that the nearly 47,000 high school student-athletes who played the game in Illinois last year, and the million-plus around the country, never have to worry about either.

Sincerely,



Marie Ishida

New  
Information



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

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Name of Nominee: Marie M. Ishida  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Ron Nocetti

Phone: 916-239-4477

Street Address: 4658 Duckhorn Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Sacramento, CA 95834

Signed: *Ron W. Nocetti*

Date: November 12, 2021

Email: rnocetti@cifstate.org

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete    Coach    Official    Administrator    Performing Arts    Others

Name of Nominee: Marie M. Ishida  
*(first, middle, last)*

Current Address: 233 Sundance Lane  
*(street address)*

Watsonville, CA 95076  
*(city, state, zip)*

Email: ishidasanm@gmail.com

Phone: 831-728-8028      Date of Birth: February 25

School Affiliation (if any) California Interscholastic Federation (CIF)

City: Sacramento      State: CA

Place of Birth: Utah      Date of Retirement: July 2012

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?    Yes    No

If yes, please explain:

Member of CIF's Title IX 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Advisory Committee

If deceased, date of death:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Schools Attended:**

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Strathmore	Strathmore, CA	1965	College Prep
College/University: Cal State Univ. Long Beach	Long Beach, CA	1972	Physical Education
Post Graduate School: Cal State Univ. San Jose	San Jose, CA		Masters and Administrative Credential in Educational Administration

- Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Attached
- Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

Marie Ishida’s career spans a 40-plus year history in education. The now retired State CIF executive director was the seventh chief executive officer of the statewide organization, and currently the only female to hold this post. She served in this position from April 2001 to July 2012.

Ishida served on the CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. She was CIF president-elect from 1992-1994, CIF president from 1994-1996 and CIF past president from 1996-1998 (the first female to hold this elected position). Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization’s strategic plan. Under her leadership, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

She also served two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. Once as an at-large member (1998-2002) and as the Section 7 representative (2006-2010), only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post. Additionally, Ishida also served on the NFHS Foundation Board of Directors for six years (July 2005-June 2011).

During her tenure as CIF Executive Director, Ishida was responsible for implementing a state championship in football, as well as soccer and girls wrestling. She also played a key role in the CIF negotiating a 15-year deal with Spectrum (previously Time Warner Cable) to televise regional and state championship events in boys and girls sports. Additionally, she championed the promotion of women in leadership roles such as CIF Officers, Staff and Tournament Directors.

Ishida began her career as a teacher and coach at Faye Ross Junior High School in 1971. From 1974-1979, she worked at Artesia High School as a teacher, coach, assistant athletic director (1975-1979) and assistant Dean of Students (1976-1979).

She was an administrative intern for the CIF Central Coast Section from 1979-1980 before becoming the assistant principal at Santa Cruz High School, a position she held from 1980-1986. From 1986-1995, Ishida was the principal at Carmel High School.

In 1995, she accepted the position as the assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools and served in that capacity until being appointed the State CIF executive director.

Ishida's involvement spans two other CIF Sections as well: the CIF Central Coast and Southern Sections. She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-1991 and was a manager for the girls' basketball championships within the CIF Southern Section from 1976-1978.

#### Special Honors and Achievements

1997 NFHS Outstanding Service Award Recipient

2014 NFHS Citation Recipient

CIF Extraordinary Service Award honoree

William S. Rockwell Distinguished Service Award (California Coaches Association's highest honor)

Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

Served on the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee, including one year as chair.

Represented the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) on the State CIF Federated Council (1987-1989).

Served as the State CIF Softball Rules Interpreter from 1982-1985 and was a member of the NFHS Softball Rules Committee.

Moderator for several NFHS Summer Meeting topics, including: Advancing Equity, Tournament Finance, and NFHS Strategic Plan.

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity



RONALD W. NOCETTI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION

CIF STATE OFFICE • 4658 DUCKHORN DRIVE • SACRAMENTO, CA 95834 • (916) 239-4477 • CIFSTATE.ORG

November 9, 2021

National Federation of State High School Associations  
Attn: NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee  
P.O. Box 690  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee,

It is my honor to endorse the nomination of Marie Ishida for the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Hall of Fame. Marie dedicated 41 years of her life to education with much of her career in service to education-based athletics. There is no better candidate that the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) could put forward for this prestigious honor.

In a year where the entire NFHS family is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic Title IX Legislation, the nomination of Marie Ishida is particularly appropriate as she was a trailblazer for women in high school sports in California. Marie was the first female CIF President serving in that role from 1994-1996. In 2001, Marie was selected as the CIF Executive Director becoming the first woman to hold that position since the CIF was founded in 1914. Marie held that position until her retirement in 2012 celebrating numerous achievements during her tenure as outlined in our nomination packet.

At a time when all of us are working to grow and improve in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Marie's selection to the NFHS Hall of Fame would be recognizing the accomplishments of a strong, Asian woman. I may not be correct in my perusal of the current Hall of Fame members as names alone do not identify ethnicities but is it possible the Marie would become the first Asian woman in the NFHS Hall of Fame? It would not only be another first for Marie but her appointment would also send a clear message to the education-based athletics community about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.

Marie's accomplishments are numerous and there is no doubt that she qualifies to be in the NFHS Hall of Fame. I appreciate the arduous task in front of this committee as you will obviously have many qualified individuals for so few spots. However, I ask that you look not only at Marie's career but also at the exciting possibility of selecting the first female president and first female executive director of the largest state in the country to be inducted into the Hall of Fame so close to the date that the historic Title IX legislation was signed into law. The CIF nominates Marie Ishida without reservation and we look forward to your announcement of the 2022 NFHS Hall of Fame class.

Sincerely,



WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION  
6571 EAST 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET  
CASPER, WY 82609  
(307) 577-0614 (Phone) / (307) 577-0637 (FAX)  
[www.whsaa.org](http://www.whsaa.org)



November 9, 2021

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Marie Ishida in support of her nomination for the National High School Hall of Fame. I have known Marie for over twenty years and have worked directly with her as an Executive Director.

Marie was very active in the NFHS both during her tenure as a CIF Executive Committee member as well as her years serving as the CIF Executive Director. Marie is one of the few in the history of the NFHS to serve two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. I was fortunate enough to serve with her on the board during her second term.

My experiences with Marie have been nothing but positive. She has strong leadership abilities and built positive relationships with her welcoming personality throughout the NFHS family. She is well respected among her peers, and I believe was an outstanding team player. Marie was willing to share her opinion in a professional manner and respected the opinions of others.

I worked with Marie on the NFHS Strategic Planning Committee and her insight into moving the organization forward was invaluable. She took several of those ideas back to the CIF and implemented them at the state level as well. Marie was always willing to assist at the NFHS Summer Meeting in advancing professional development in several areas.

Marie was one of the few female Executive Directors. She did not look at this as being a challenge, but rather an opportunity to advance equity. I believe Marie stands for what education-based athletics is all about. Her service to the NFHS, her leadership skills and her overall contributions to her state and the NFHS as an administrator make her an outstanding candidate for the National High School Hall of Fame.

I cannot think of a better way to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title IX than to select a most deserving female administrator into the National High School Hall of Fame. I urge you to give her your strongest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ron Laird'.

Ron Laird, CMAA  
Commissioner

**RECOMMENDATION**  
**MARIE ISHIDA**  
**NFHS HALL OF FAME**

It is with unwavering respect and admiration for Marie Ishida that I endorse her nomination for induction in the NFHS Hall of Fame.

I was first introduced to Marie in the late 90's at an NFHS Summer meeting. We were both serving as officers for our respective state athletic associations. At the time, I didn't realize our professional paths would cross to the degree they have, and an enduring friendship would result.

Marie's contributions to the California Interscholastic Federation will be highlighted by numerous individuals from her home state. I prefer to focus on how Marie Ishida interacted with and influenced her fellow state commissioners and executive directors.

From 2000 to 2012, I had the privilege of working closely with Marie during the time we both served as state executive directors, Marie with the CIF and me with the NYSPHSAA. As the athletic associations in California and New York are structured in a similar manner, I depended greatly on Marie's wisdom, insight, and judgment.

During our NFHS meetings, it was quickly evident to me the impressive leadership skills Marie possessed. Marie was elected to serve on the NFHS Board of Directors for two terms. There is a reason for that. She was "the" leader among leaders. She is soft-spoken, engaging, and kind. Her style of leadership is highly effective because she inspires those around her. Marie is a clear and concise communicator and has the courage and conviction to make difficult decisions.

When serving on the NFHS Board with Marie, I witnessed her innate ability to see solutions in all matters, regardless of their complexity. She was often the voice of reason, always keeping in perspective the values of an education-based athletic program.

Marie has earned nationwide respect in the field of Interscholastic athletics. She is a consummate professional often called upon to serve on influential committees such as the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee and the NFHS Foundation Committee. She was never reluctant to get actively involved. Her contributions were recognized with the (NFHS Outstanding Service Award (1997) and the NFHS Citation Award (2014).

Marie Ishida has dedicated her impressive career to the CIF and NFHS. She is, without doubt, extremely deserving of induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame. I trust you will agree.

Sincerely,

*Nina Van Erk*

Nina Van Erk  
NYSPHSAA Executive Director (2000-2012)  
President NFHS Board of Directors (2010-2011)

November 5, 2021

NFHS Hall of Fame Committee  
P.O. Box 690  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Dear Committee Members,

It is with great pride that I write this letter of recommendation to you for your consideration the nomination of Marie Ishida of Watsonville, California to the National Federation Hall of Fame in the administration category.

California has a very proud tradition of world-class athletes and administrators, and Marie Ishida is considered to be one of our best. After forty-one years of public service, Marie retired in 2012 having served her last eleven (11) years as the Executive Director of the California Interscholastic Federation, the first female to hold the position.

Marie began as one of the first trailblazing female athletic directors in southern California at Artesia High School in 1975. That was just the beginning of an administrative career that impacted millions of student-athletes that included time as Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, Principal of Carmel High School, and Assistant Superintendent of the Santa Cruz School District. During her tenure as a school site and school district administrator, Marie continued her involvement as an athletic administrator in both the CIF Southern Section and the CIF Central Coast Section as well as the State CIF. Marie served as manager for the girls' basketball championships in the CIF Southern Section from 1976-1978 She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-1991.

Before becoming the CIF Executive Director, Marie continued to serve in leadership roles in both California and nationally with the NFHS. Marie was elected to serve on the State CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. In recognition of her exemplary leadership, Marie was elected as CIF president-elect from 1992-1994, CIF president from 1994-1996, and CIF past president from 1996-1998 Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization's strategic plan. Under her guidance, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

On a national level, She also served two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. Once as an at-large member (1998-2002) and as the Section 7 representative (2006-2010), only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post.

I urge the committee members to read the various letters of recommendation for Marie Ishida. You will read about not only an outstanding administrator who has long shown herself not only to be an outstanding leader but also to be a person of strong character, showing others mutual respect and human decency. You will see the admiration and respect that everyone who encountered Marie over the years, and she accomplished this all the while remaining a quiet, reserved, and humble person, a trait not often found in today's world.

The NFHS could not have a more deserving person, whose servant leadership impacted millions of lives to induct into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Blake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" and last name "Blake" clearly distinguishable.

Roger L. Blake  
Executive Director, retd. (2012-2019)

# After 11 years, Marie Ishida to step down as CIF Executive Director

By [BAY AREA NEWS GROUP](#) |

February 3, 2012 at 9:10 a.m.

Marie Ishida announced Friday she will step down as the California Interscholastic Federation's Executive Director at the end of the 2011-12 school year and begin her retirement.

Ishida, who has held the position since 2001, made the announcement at Friday's CIF Federated Council meeting in Ontario.

"It has been an honor to serve as the CIF Executive Director for the past 11 years," Ishida said in a press release. "When I was initially selected for this post I said at that time that this was my dream job. It has been just that. I could not have held any other position that has been so satisfying to end my educational career."

North Coast Section commissioner Gil Lemmon, who attended the meeting, was surprised by Ishida's decision.

"Oh absolutely, I was shocked," said Lemmon, in his fourth year heading the NCS. "I was not aware of any information that she was thinking about retiring."

Ishida, the CIF's first female chief executive, has done a "terrific job," Lemmon said.

Lemmon praised Ishida for bringing financial stability to the CIF, including raising funds for its new office in Sacramento, and establishing "more of a partnership" with the state legislative body. The federation also upgraded its website and re-did its brand under her leadership, he said.

"Marketing has greatly improved over her leadership," Lemmon said. "They've been through three marketing directors and yet they've been able to make progress during her tenure. I think she's done a wonderful job."

Lemmon said he was not going to pursue Ishida's position. He mentioned CIF Associate Director Roger Blake as a "terrific candidate."

The CIF Executive Committee will begin the search for the new candidate immediately, with the new CIF Executive

Director being announced at the CIF Federated Council meeting in May.

Staff writer Matt Schwab contributed to this story.

## 2010-2011 FEDERATED COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Officers

CIF President, Heather Daims, Principal Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 CIF President-Elect, Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 CIF Past-President, Mike Henson , Dir. of Student Pathways, Porterville U.S.D.

### Executive Committee

Jeff Cardoza , Athletic Director, Washington Union, High School  
 Dave Contreras , Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Richard Graey , Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Michael Lewis, Assistant Superintendent, Grossmont U.H.S.D.  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Principal, Bellarmine-Jefferson, High School  
 James Perry, CAHPERD

### Federated Council

Nancy Acerrio, Athletic Director, Hilltop High School  
 Ray Alvarado, Athletic Administrator, Calexico High School  
 Shielagh Andujar, Principal, Oakland Tech High School  
 Todd Arrowsmith , California Association of Directors of Activities  
 Diane Burbank, Principal, Prospect High School  
 Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union, High School  
 Dave Contreras, Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Marci Cranford, Coach, Kingsburg High School  
 Bill Dabbs, Assistant Superintendent, Oxnard U.H.S.D.  
 Heather Daims, Principal, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 Maureen Ferrel, California, Heath, PE, Recreation & Dance  
 Dick Fukuda , Athletic Director, Roybal Learning Center  
 Mike Garrison, Principal, Rocklin High School  
 Evelia Genera, Principal, Woodland High School  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Mike Henson, Dir. of Student Pathways, Porterville U.S.D.  
 Debbi Holmerud, Principal, Lincoln High School  
 Andrew Ishibaishi, Principal, Lowell High School  
 Doug Kaelin, Association of California, School Administrators  
 Sue Kuwahara, California School, Boards Association  
 Nancy Lambert, Assistant Principal, Galileo Academy  
 Michael Lewis, Assistant Superintendent, Grossmont U.H.S.D.  
 Camille Maben, California Department of Education  
 Catherine Manthey, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Keith Matthews, Principal, St. Francis Catholic, High School  
 Dennis McClanahan, California Coaches Association  
 Kim McEwen, Athletic Director, Francis Polytechnic High School  
 Darlene Miller, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Principal, Bellarmine-Jefferson , High School  
 Jim Monico, Assistant Superintendent, Paramount U.S.D.  
 Richard Morris, California School, Boards Association  
 Ray Odom, Superintendent, Hamilton U.H.S.D.  
 James Perry, California Association for Health,  
 Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
 Dave Reid, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Marco Sanchez, Principal, Gilroy High School  
 Benjamin Schmookler, Principal, Fremont High School  
 Thom Sembritzki, Athletic Director, Lemoore High School  
 Gary Smidderks, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 Mary Jo Truesdale, California Coaches, Association  
 Reginald Thompkins, Principal, Santiago High School  
 Nancy Veilleux, Assistant Principal, Roseville High School  
 Salvador Velasco, Principal, Eagle Rock High School  
 Kim Wheeler, Coach, Red Bluff High School

### CIF State Office Staff

Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director  
 Roger Blake, Associate Executive Director  
 Ron Noetti, Senior Director  
 Desiree Friedman, Director of Marketing  
 Quwan Spears, Sports Information Officer  
 Jade Chin, Assistant to Executive Director  
 Al Goldberg, Assistant Director  
 Brian Seymour, Assistant Director of Championship Events  
 Bobbi Madsen, Bookkeeper  
 Jennifer Peters, Receptionist  
 Mary Davis, Intern  
 Dean Crowley, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Sheri Ross, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Diane Marshall-Freeman, General Counsel  
 Richard Nelson, Foreign Exchange Coordinator

### CIF Sections Contact Information

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 559.781.7586 • fax 559.781.7033 • www.cifcs.org

**Central Coast**  
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 408.224.2094 • fax 408.224.0476 • www.cifccs.org

**Los Angeles City**  
 Barbara Fiege - P.O. Box 3307, Los Angeles, Calif. 90051  
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 213.241.5847 • fax 213.241.5856 • www.cif-la.org

**North Coast**  
 Gil Lemmon - 5 Crow Canyon Court, Suite 209, San Ramon, Calif. 94583  
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 Elizabeth Kyle - 2241 St. George Lane, Suite 2, Chico, Calif. 95926  
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**Oakland**  
 Michael Moore - 900 High Street, Oakland, Calif. 94601  
 510.879.8311 • fax 510.879.1835 • oousd.k12.ca.us/

**Sac-Joaquin**  
 Pete Saco - 1368 East Turner Road, Suite A, Lodi, Calif. 95240  
 209.334.5900 • fax 209.334.0300 • www.cifjs.org

**San Diego**  
 Dennis Ackerman - 6401 Linda Vista Road, Room 504, San Diego, Calif. 92118  
 858.292.8165 • fax 858.292.1375 • www.cifds.org

**San Francisco**  
 Don Collins - 555 Portola Drive, Room 250, San Francisco, Calif. 94131  
 415.920.5185 • fax 415.920.5189 • www.cifsf.org

**Southern**  
 James Staunton - 10932 Pine Street, Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720  
 562.493.9500 • fax 562.493.6266 • www.cifss.org

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### A Shout Out to Commissioners

By Heather Daims, CIF President



Throughout the state, there are 10 people, along with their staff, who make it possible for the athletes of California to reap all of the benefits of the high school interscholastic athletic experience. These are the commissioners of the 10 sections that make up the California Interscholastic Federation. The hours are grueling and the work is virtually non-stop, from season to season and year to year. They give up untold time with loved ones and friends to pursue their passion of having the highest quality athletic programs possible for their student-athletes. The concept of "down time" does not exist in their world.

These 10 men and women deal on a daily basis with difficult issues such as student eligibility, incidents at athletic events, parent frustration, negotiating contracts with officials, unethical behavior by some involved in the athletic program, demands from their boards of managers and school districts, ongoing training of coaches and athletic directors, securing venues for athletic events, student health concerns, media requests, dwindling finances for their programs, legal and legislative issues and myriad other tasks and concerns that are usually exhausting (mentally, physically and emotionally), oftentimes anxiety-producing, but always necessary. It is miraculous that they do not collapse under the load.

Occasionally they get to stop for a brief moment and enjoy the fruits of their labors, from sportsmanship awards events, to exciting athletic events to honoring others who have paved the way for today's athletes in

their sections. Occasionally, because of their positions, they are able to meet highly regarded professional athletes or celebrities. Occasionally, they travel to other parts of the country to meet with their counterparts and to learn from them. Unfortunately, these moments are fleeting and they are back to the work that needs to get done too quickly.

The skills that commissioners must possess to be effective run the gamut from having the patience of a saint, the diplomacy of an international ambassador, the organizational skills of the President's chief of staff, the knowledge of their subject similar to that of a doctoral candidate and the communication skills of Dale Carnegie.

And so, at the end of this school year, as many of us will head off to vacations and relaxation, I would like to take a moment to do something that happens far too rarely. I would like to recognize and express my gratitude for all ten commissioners of the State CIF who work diligently all year long to ensure that the students of California continue to have an outstanding interscholastic athletics program. Thank you Dennis Ackerman, Barbara Fiege, Don Collins, Jim Crichlow, Liz Kyle, Nancy Lazenby Blaser, Gil Lemmon, Michael Moore, Pete Saco and Jim Staunton for a job well done.

The perks are few, the headaches many. We who dabble in the arena of athletics are fortunate, indeed, to have amazing, committed people like you doing the difficult job of commissioner with such grace and professionalism.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### "Looking Back - Looking Ahead"

By Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director, CIF State Office



Recently marking the passage of my 10<sup>th</sup> year as the executive director of the California Interscholastic Federation, it gave me pause to reflect on the decade and made me think of the future of this organization.

When I became executive director of the CIF, I knew exactly what direction the CIF was headed. After all, the direction was clearly spelled out in the Strategic Plan the organization had passed:

- CIF needed to not only be a governance organization, but also a service organization assisting our member schools with education based athletics
  - Train and educate coaches
  - Train and educate athletic administrators
  - Continue to work on health and safety issues of our student-athletes
  - Be more inclusive
- Since that time the CIF has:
- Increased the number of participants from 656,345 to 736,727
  - Developed a statewide eligibility transfer and appeal process
  - Increased state championship revenue
  - Purchased a permanent headquarters
  - Added seven Regional/State Championships: football (just passes the regional football games), boys and girls golf, SoCal Boys and Girls Regional Soccer, Girls Wrestling and SoCal Boys Volleyball

- Developed a master plan for the addition of Regional/State Championships: Girls Wrestling (2011), SoCal Regional Tennis - 2013 (NorCal in place), NorCal Regional Boys Volleyball (SoCal in place), State Swimming and Diving, Badminton, Water Polo

Updated the original strategic plan  
 Issues that will face the CIF in the next ten years will be:

- Lack of consistent revenue for public schools
- Walk on coaches
- Principals and athletic directors with little or no athletic background
- Schools with a competitive advantage (public or private)
- Creating an "open" division in basketball
- Section reconfiguration
- Legislative interference
- Legal issues and costs
- Consistency in rules statewide

Regardless of how much we have accomplished and how many issues will face us in the future, you can be assured the CIF is sound in its basic structure and sound financially.

## 2011-2012 FEDERATED COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Officers

CIF President, Heather Daims, Principal, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 CIF President-Elect, Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 CIF Past-President, Mike Henson, Calif. Network Services Dir. National Academy Foundation

### Executive Committee

Nancy Acerrio, Athletic Director, Hilltop High School  
 Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union High School  
 Dave Contreras, Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Mike Garrison, Assistant Superintendent Human Resources Rocklin U.S.D.  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 James Perry, California Association Health, P.E., Recreation & Dance

### Federated Council

Nancy Acerrio, Athletic Director, Hilltop High School  
 Sheilagh Andujar, Principal, Oakland Tech High School  
 Todd Arrowsmith, California Association of Directors of Activities  
 Dennis Byas, Superintendents Liaison Committee  
 Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union High School  
 Duane Coleman, Associate Superintendent Educational Services, Oceasi U.S.D.  
 Dave Contreras, Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Marci Cranford, Coach, Kingsburg High School  
 Bill Dabbs, Assistant Superintendent, Oxnard U.H.S.D.  
 Heather Daims, Principal, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 Maureen Ferrel, California Association Health, P.E., Recreation & Dance  
 Mike Garrison, Assistant Superintendent Human Resources, Rocklin U.S.D.  
 Evelia Genera, Principal, Woodland High School  
 Patty Gillig, Dean of Students, Monte Vista Christian School  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Wendell Greer, Associate Superintendent, West Contra Costa U.S.D.  
 Mike Henson, Director, District Engagement National Academy Foundation  
 Debbi Holmerud, Principal, Lincoln High School  
 Andrew Ishibashi, Principal, Lowell High School  
 Doug Kaelin, Superintendent/Principal, Biggs U.S.D.  
 Bill Kappenhagen, Principal, Burton High School  
 Terry Kok, Superintendent, Calvin Christian School  
 Sue Kuwabara, California School Boards Association  
 Nancy Lambert-Campbell, Assistant Principal, Galileo Academy  
 Sue Lepisto, Administrative Consultant, Los Angeles U.S.D.  
 Camille Maben, California Department of Education  
 Catherine Manthey, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Keith Mathews, Principal, St. Francis Catholic High School  
 Dennis McClanahan, California Coaches Association  
 Amy McNamera, Principal, James Logan High School  
 Darlene Miller, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Assistant Principal, Paraclete High School  
 Jim Monico, Director, Instruction & Student Services, Paramount U.S.D.  
 Richard Morris, California School Boards Association  
 James Perry, California Association Health, P.E., Recreation & Dance  
 Dave Reid, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Richard Rankin, District Athletic Director, Porterville U.S.D.  
 Marco Sanchez, Principal, Gilroy High School  
 Benjamin Schmookler, Principal, Fremont High School  
 Thom Sembritzki, Athletic Director, Lemoore High School  
 Gary Smidderks, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 Mary Jo Truesdale, California Coaches Association  
 Reginald Thompkins, Principal, Santiago High School  
 Salvador Velasco, Principal, Eagle Rock High School  
 Kim Wheeler, Coach, Red Bluff High School

### CIF State Office Staff

Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director  
 Roger Blake, Associate Executive Director  
 Ron Nocetti, Senior Director  
 Rebecca Brutlag, Media Relations Officer  
 Desiree Friedman, Director of Marketing  
 Jade Chin, Assistant to the Executive Director  
 Bobbi Madsen, Bookkeeper  
 Brian Seymour, Assistant Director of Championship Events  
 Al Goldberg, Assistant Director  
 Jennifer Stephens, Receptionist  
 Kevin Brady, Intern  
 Dean Crowley, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Sheri Ross, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Diane Marshall-Freeman, General Counsel  
 Richard Nelson, Foreign Exchange Coordinator

### CIF Sections Contact Information

**Central**  
 Jim Crichlow - P.O. Box 1567, Porterville, Calif. 93258  
 559-781-7586 • fax 559-781-7033 • www.cifcs.org

**Central Coast**  
 Nancy Lazenby Blaser - 6850 Via Del Oro, Suite 103, San Jose, Calif. 95119  
 408-224-2094 • fax 408-224-0476 • www.cifccs.org

**Los Angeles City**  
 Barbara Fiege - 333 S. Beaudry Ave., Suite B216, Los Angeles, Calif. 90007  
 213-241-5847 • fax 213-241-5856 • www.cif-la.org

**North Coast**  
 Gil Lemmon - 5 Crow Canyon Court, Suite 209, San Ramon, Calif. 94583  
 925-263-2110 • fax 925-263-2120 • www.cifncs.org

**Northern**  
 Elizabeth Kyle - 2241 St. George Lane, Suite 2, Chico, Calif. 95926  
 530-343-7285 • fax 530-343-5619 • www.cifns.org

**Oakland**  
 Michael Moore - 900 High Street, Oakland, Calif. 94601  
 510-879-1831 • fax 510-879-1835 • oud.k12.ca.us/

**Sac-Joaquin**  
 Pete Saco - 1568 East Turner Road, Suite A, Lodi, Calif. 95240  
 209-334-5900 • fax 209-334-0300 • www.cifsjcs.org

**San Diego**  
 Jerry Schittepp - 2131 Pan American Plaza, San Diego, Calif. 92101  
 858-292-8165 • fax 858-292-1375 • www.cifsdcs.org

**San Francisco**  
 Don Collins - 555 Portola Drive, Room 250, San Francisco, Calif. 94131  
 415-920-5185 • fax 415-920-5189 • www.cifsf.org

**Southern**  
 Rob Wigod - 10932 Pine Street, Los Alamitos, Calif. 90720  
 562-493-9500 • fax 562-493-6266 • www.cifss.org

CIF on the Web: [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Heather Daims, CIF President

June marks my last month as the President of the California Interscholastic Federation. Although many people are not aware, those of us who have the honor of serving in this voluntary position also have careers in education, or what many of us call our "paying" job. I am most fortunate to be a high school principal at the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex in the Los Angeles Unified School District. My work with the CIF is often filtered through that lens of a high school principal.

In the past two years since I began my stint as the President of the CIF, we have seen great upheaval in education, particularly at the high school level, from the huge growth in the numbers of charter schools and alternative educational settings (like cyber schools and home schooling), to the extreme funding shortages for many schools and districts throughout the state. During these very tumultuous and often difficult times, many programs have seen harsh reductions or outright elimination.

In the wake of the statewide fiscal crisis, there is much talk about reducing programs such as athletics and arts programs or eliminating many of the extra-curricular activities that our students so enjoy and out of which they learn so many lessons beyond the classroom. At the same time, and from many of the same people, there is much talk about intervention programs and increasing student achievement.

In a system of education where there is such great emphasis on "data driven decision making", it seems that many of our decision makers around

education have not read the research about the multitude of benefits of athletics, arts and activities for our students. In a time when 21st Century Skills are incorporated into every high-level educational conversation and many mission statements, it seems particularly strange that the very programs that build these skills are under threat.

At this time of reflection about my career in education and my time working with the amazing people who make up the CIF, I would like to offer some encouragement for those of you who continue to make the difference in thousands of students' lives each year. Let us continue to stand strong and stay vocal about what we know is in the best interests of all of our students. Although we may often disagree about how things should be done around the state, I believe every one of us has the students' best interests in mind.

As a final comment, I would like to thank Marie Ishida for her amazing work during her tenure as CIF Executive Director. Although she remains incredibly humble and is often willing to pass the credit to someone else for the outstanding work that is accomplished each day by this organization, the California Interscholastic Federation would not be the fiscally solid and ethically responsible organization that it is today without her strong, capable and compassionate leadership. We are all wishing you great health, great happiness and great adventure as you move into this strange, exciting time called "retirement" and know that you will continue to be the strong advocate you have always been for student-athletes and for the work being done by the CIF.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### A Tribute to my Mom and Dad

By Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director, CIF State Office



I'm not a writer, never have been, never will be, but I've often had to try and put my thoughts into words writing these articles over the last 11 years. It has always been a struggle and I welcome the fact that this will be my last article for the CIF News! It has been extremely difficult to decide what to write about. I'm not one to get emotional or use the pronoun "I" or adjectives such as "excited" or "happy". I don't talk much about my personal life or my childhood, but I want to share with you how I believe I got to where I am today.

My parents raised four of us - all girls in California for most of my life. We were all born in Utah and when my twin and I, the youngest of the four, were nine months old we moved to central California to an area where my father was born and raised. During the war - WWII -- all Japanese were forced to leave California, relocate to a "relocation camp", or relocate to a state inland if you had family and could earn a living. Since my mother was born in Utah and we had family there, my parents relocated to Utah. They went by train with only what they could carry. We were all born after the war. I had an aunt and uncle that automatically had to go

to a relocation camp because my uncle was born in Japan. An another uncle served in the famous 442nd.

This brief family history is where I believe I get the foundation for my beliefs. For over 20-plus years of my life I never knew what had happened to my parents during the war. They never talked about it. And, somehow we just knew this was not a subject they wanted to talk about. Just as we knew we were going to college without my parents ever saying so. During a family Thanksgiving one of my brother-in-laws asked my parents what had happened to them during the war. That was the first time we had heard what had happened. My dad was matter of fact when he recounted to us what had happened to them. If they were bitter, they never showed it. After that they never talked about it again.

I learned somehow and resolved that the experience my parents had to endure and the dignity in which they lived their entire lives would be my guide. As I retire, I wish for only one thing - that I could know I made my parents proud. My parents were short on words too. I never heard them say "I," It was always "we." I never heard them use the words "excited" or "happy." I am who I am because of my parents.

Scholar-Athletes of the Year . . . . . continued from page 1

### 2012 CIF/FARMERS Scholar-Athlete Section Winners

#### Central Section

Kelsey Ruehling Woodlake Union High School, Woodlake  
 Jacob Ruiz Clovis East High School, Clovis

#### Oakland Section

Hope Schwartz Oakland Technical High School, Oakland

#### Central Coast Section

Lindsay Mewes Archbishop Mitty, San Jose  
 Kevin Bishop Monta Vista High School, Cupertino

#### Sac-Joaquin Section

Ashley Noda St. Francis High School, Sacramento  
 Ryan Peabody Christian Brothers High School, Sacramento

#### Los Angeles City Section

Camille Saucier Taft High School, Woodland Hills

#### San Diego Section

Hannah Yoder Cathedral Catholic High School, San Diego  
 Tyler Kasl Poway High School, Poway

#### North Coast Section

Liza Brusman Tamalpais High School, Mill Valley  
 Justin Roberto San Ramon Valley High School, Dublin

#### San Francisco Section

Anna Ng George Washington High School, San Francisco  
 Jeffrey Wong Lowell High School, San Francisco

#### Northern Section

Madeline Gray Pleasant Valley High School, Chico  
 Eric Neill Yreka High School, Yreka

#### Southern Section

Ilima Kung Torrance High School, Torrance  
 Seamus Land San Luis Obispo High School, San Luis Obispo

For Immediate Release  
Monday, February 26, 2001

Contact: Jim Duel  
415-492-5911  
[jduel@cifstate.org](mailto:jduel@cifstate.org)  
[www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)

### **ISHIDA SELECTED AS CIF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Marie M. Ishida, a prominent player in the CIF's history, has been selected as the State CIF executive director. Ishida follows Jack Hayes and becomes the seventh chief executive officer of the statewide organization. She will begin her new post on April 1.

The assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools, Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization's strategic plan. Under her leadership, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

The CIF was formed in 1914 as the governing agency for high school athletics in California with its major purpose to enforce the rules regarding athletics. That remained the primary focus of the organization until the implementation of the strategic plan in 1995.

Said Bob Kanaby, executive director for the National Federation of State High School Associations: "I am extremely pleased that Marie Ishida has been selected as

2-2-2

California Interscholastic Federation executive director. I have had the pleasure of working very closely with Marie the past three years as a member of the NFHS Board of Directors. During that time, she has repeatedly demonstrated the qualities of leadership that are needed for a position like this, and I am confident that the CIF will enjoy continued success and achievement as a result of her service to the membership.”

“The Executive Committee is extremely excited about the prospect of having Marie Ishida as executive director,” said Charley Berger, CIF president and assistant superintendent for the San Juan Unified School District. “Marie’s experience with the strategic plan, and her leadership in changing the role of CIF in high school athletics was an important factor in her selection. As CIF president, Marie was one of the primary forces behind significant changes the organization has made during the past five years.”

Ishida served on the CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. She was CIF president elect from 1992-94, CIF president from 1994-96 and CIF past president from 1996-98. Currently, she is on the board of directors for the National Federation of State High School Associations, only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post.

On both the state and national level, Ishida has received many accolades and honors. In 1997, the National Federation of State High School Associations bestowed Ishida with their Outstanding Service Award. She was also honored with an Extraordinary Service Award by the CIF and received the California Coaches Association’s highest honor as a recipient of the William S. Rockwell Distinguished Service Award.

- more -

3-3-3

Ishida's involvement spans two other CIF Sections as well: the CIF Central Coast and Southern Section. She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-91 and was a manager for the girls' basketball championships within the CIF Southern Section from 1976-78.

Ishida began her career as a teacher and coach at Faye Ross Junior High School in 1971. From 1974-79, she worked at Artesia High School as a teacher, coach, assistant athletic director (1975-79) and assistant Dean of Students (1976-79).

She was an administrative intern for the CIF Central Coast Section from 1979-80 before becoming the assistant principal at Santa Cruz High School, a position she held from 1980-86. From 1986-95, Ishida was the principal at Carmel High School.

In 1995, she accepted her current position as the assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools.

Said Ishida: "My first teaching position included coaching. Throughout the years I have joined the efforts of thousands of people throughout the state of California who volunteer their time and their hearts to help our student athletes experience what sports can teach us about life, discipline, commitment and achievement.

"I know success in every effort relies on a team. I am truly excited to have the privilege of working with the CIF team and helping in every way I can to make all of these efforts count. Our student athletes deserve it. Quite honestly, it feels like I've been given the best coaching job I could have imagined!"

- more -

## Other Notables on Marie Ishida:

- Serves on the National Federation of State High School Association's Hall of Fame Screening Committee.
- Was a member of the CIF Central Coast Section Executive Committee from 1984-92.
- Represented the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) on the State CIF Federated Council (1987-89).
- Served as the State CIF Softball Rules Interpreter from 1982-85 and was a member of the National Federation's Softball Rules Committee.
- Was a moderator for several National Federation Summer Meeting topics, including: Advancing Equity, Tournament Finance, and NFHS Strategic Plan.
- Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity.

**CIF Chief Executive Officers**

E.W. Barnhart	January 1914-February 1915
C.L. Biedenbach	February 1915-December 1937
A.B. Ingham	December 1937-June 1955
William Russell	July 1955-June 1980
Thomas E. Byrnes	1980-1995
Jack J. Hayes	1995-2001
Marie M. Ishida	2001-present

Prior  
Information

# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

---

Name of Nominee: Marie M. Ishida  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Ron Nocetti

Phone: 916-239-4477

Street Address: 4658 Duckhorn Drive

City, State, Zip Code: Sacramento, CA 95834

Signed: *Ron W. Nocetti*

Date: November 12, 2021

Email: rnocetti@cifstate.org

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Athlete  
  Coach  
  Official  
  Administrator  
  Performing Arts  
  Others

Name of Nominee: Marie M. Ishida  
 (first, middle, last)

Current Address: 233 Sundance Lane  
 (street address)

Watsonville, CA 95076  
 (city, state, zip)

Email: ishidasanm@gmail.com

Phone: 831-728-8028      Date of Birth: February 25

School Affiliation (if any) California Interscholastic Federation (CIF)

City: Sacramento      State: CA

Place of Birth: Utah      Date of Retirement: July 2012

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated?  
  Yes     No

If yes, please explain:

Member of CIF's Title IX 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Advisory Committee

If deceased, date of death:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Schools Attended:**

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: Strathmore	Strathmore, CA	1965	College Prep
College/University: Cal State Univ. Long Beach	Long Beach, CA	1972	Physical Education
Post Graduate School: Cal State Univ. San Jose	San Jose, CA		Masters and Administrative Credential in Educational Administration

- Small Portrait-type Photograph of Nominee Attached (to be used for news release, etc.)
- Letters of Recommendation Attached
- Newspaper and/or Other Supportive Material Attached

# ADMINISTRATOR

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Note: All candidates in this category must be retired by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated. In addition, state association administrators must meet the following additional criteria:

- Must be retired for three years by November 15 of the applicable year to be nominated.
- Extended service as state association administrator.
- Viewed as innovative leader within respective state. Statewide accomplishments beyond “simply doing the job.”
- National impact on high school activity programs
  1. Service to NFHS should include the following:
    - a) member of NFHS rules committees
    - b) member of other NFHS committees
    - c) member/president of NFHS Board of Directors
    - d) speaker at NFHS conferences, meetings
  2. Involvement with NFHS exceeded normal service opportunities, for example:
    - a) national impact on playing rules
    - b) viewed as leader nationally among state executives
  3. Impact on high school activities beyond NFHS service, for example:
    - a) national speaking engagements
    - b) expert in certain field; i.e., technology, Title IX, etc.
    - c) accomplishments as state CEO received national attention
- Longevity as state association administrator without major and innovative accomplishments at the state and national levels does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.
- Serving on the NFHS Board of Directors and as NFHS President without major and innovative accomplishments at the national level does not constitute appropriate credentials for Hall of Fame induction.

Career Description as High School Administrator, State Administrator or National Administrator (give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in high school athletic administration)

Marie Ishida’s career spans a 40-plus year history in education. The now retired State CIF executive director was the seventh chief executive officer of the statewide organization, and currently the only female to hold this post. She served in this position from April 2001 to July 2012.

Ishida served on the CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. She was CIF president-elect from 1992-1994, CIF president from 1994-1996 and CIF past president from 1996-1998 (the first female to hold this elected position). Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization’s strategic plan. Under her leadership, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

She also served two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. Once as an at-large member (1998-2002) and as the Section 7 representative (2006-2010), only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post.

During her tenure as CIF Executive Director, Ishida was responsible for implementing a state championship in football, as well as soccer and girls wrestling. She also played a key role in the CIF negotiating a 15-year deal with Spectrum (previously Time Warner Cable) to televise regional and state championship events in boys and girls sports. Additionally, she championed the promotion of women in leadership roles such as CIF Officers, Staff and Tournament Directors.

Ishida began her career as a teacher and coach at Faye Ross Junior High School in 1971. From 1974-1979, she worked at Artesia High School as a teacher, coach, assistant athletic director (1975-1979) and assistant Dean of Students (1976-1979).

She was an administrative intern for the CIF Central Coast Section from 1979-1980 before becoming the assistant principal at Santa Cruz High School, a position she held from 1980-1986. From 1986-1995, Ishida was the principal at Carmel High School.

In 1995, she accepted the position as the assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools and served in that capacity until being appointed the State CIF executive director.

Ishida's involvement spans two other CIF Sections as well: the CIF Central Coast and Southern Sections. She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-1991 and was a manager for the girls' basketball championships within the CIF Southern Section from 1976-1978.

#### Special Honors and Achievements

1997 NFHS Outstanding Service Award Recipient

2014 NFHS Citation Recipient

CIF Extraordinary Service Award honoree

William S. Rockwell Distinguished Service Award (California Coaches Association's highest honor)

Professional Affiliations and Achievements (i.e., involvement in local, state and national administrative associations and other related professional organizations)

Served on the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee, including one year as chair.

Represented the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) on the State CIF Federated Council (1987-1989).

Served as the State CIF Softball Rules Interpreter from 1982-1985 and was a member of the NFHS Softball Rules Committee.

Moderator for several NFHS Summer Meeting topics, including: Advancing Equity, Tournament Finance, and NFHS Strategic Plan.

Other information (*not previously listed*)

Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity

# Letters of Recommendation



RONALD W. NOCETTI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION

CIF STATE OFFICE • 4658 DUCKHORN DRIVE • SACRAMENTO, CA 95834 • (916) 239-4477 • CIFSTATE.ORG

November 9, 2021

National Federation of State High School Associations  
Attn: NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee  
P.O. Box 690  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee,

It is my honor to endorse the nomination of Marie Ishida for the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Hall of Fame. Marie dedicated 41 years of her life to education with much of her career in service to education-based athletics. There is no better candidate that the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) could put forward for this prestigious honor.

In a year where the entire NFHS family is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic Title IX Legislation, the nomination of Marie Ishida is particularly appropriate as she was a trailblazer for women in high school sports in California. Marie was the first female CIF President serving in that role from 1994-1996. In 2001, Marie was selected as the CIF Executive Director becoming the first woman to hold that position since the CIF was founded in 1914. Marie held that position until her retirement in 2012 celebrating numerous achievements during her tenure as outlined in our nomination packet.

At a time when all of us are working to grow and improve in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Marie's selection to the NFHS Hall of Fame would be recognizing the accomplishments of a strong, Asian woman. I may not be correct in my perusal of the current Hall of Fame members as names alone do not identify ethnicities but is it possible the Marie would become the first Asian woman in the NFHS Hall of Fame? It would not only be another first for Marie but her appointment would also send a clear message to the education-based athletics community about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do.

Marie's accomplishments are numerous and there is no doubt that she qualifies to be in the NFHS Hall of Fame. I appreciate the arduous task in front of this committee as you will obviously have many qualified individuals for so few spots. However, I ask that you look not only at Marie's career but also at the exciting possibility of selecting the first female president and first female executive director of the largest state in the country to be inducted into the Hall of Fame so close to the date that the historic Title IX legislation was signed into law. The CIF nominates Marie Ishida without reservation and we look forward to your announcement of the 2022 NFHS Hall of Fame class.

Sincerely,

November 5, 2021

NFHS Hall of Fame Committee  
P.O. Box 690  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Dear Committee Members,

It is with great pride that I write this letter of recommendation to you for your consideration the nomination of Marie Ishida of Watsonville, California to the National Federation Hall of Fame in the administration category.

California has a very proud tradition of world-class athletes and administrators, and Marie Ishida is considered to be one of our best. After forty-one years of public service, Marie retired in 2012 having served her last eleven (11) years as the Executive Director of the California Interscholastic Federation, the first female to hold the position.

Marie began as one of the first trailblazing female athletic directors in southern California at Artesia High School in 1975. That was just the beginning of an administrative career that impacted millions of student-athletes that included time as Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, Principal of Carmel High School, and Assistant Superintendent of the Santa Cruz School District. During her tenure as a school site and school district administrator, Marie continued her involvement as an athletic administrator in both the CIF Southern Section and the CIF Central Coast Section as well as the State CIF. Marie served as manager for the girls' basketball championships in the CIF Southern Section from 1976-1978 She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-1991.

Before becoming the CIF Executive Director, Marie continued to serve in leadership roles in both California and nationally with the NFHS. Marie was elected to serve on the State CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. In recognition of her exemplary leadership, Marie was elected as CIF president-elect from 1992-1994, CIF president from 1994-1996, and CIF past president from 1996-1998 Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization's strategic plan. Under her guidance, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

On a national level, She also served two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. Once as an at-large member (1998-2002) and as the Section 7 representative (2006-2010), only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post.

I urge the committee members to read the various letters of recommendation for Marie Ishida. You will read about not only an outstanding administrator who has long shown herself not only to be an outstanding leader but also to be a person of strong character, showing others mutual respect and human decency. You will see the admiration and respect that everyone who encountered Marie over the years, and she accomplished this all the while remaining a quiet, reserved, and humble person, a trait not often found in today's world.

The NFHS could not have a more deserving person, whose servant leadership impacted millions of lives to induct into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Blake". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Blake" clearly distinguishable.

Roger L. Blake  
Executive Director, retd. (2012-2019)



WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION  
6571 EAST 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET  
CASPER, WY 82609  
(307) 577-0614 (Phone) / (307) 577-0637 (FAX)  
[www.whsaa.org](http://www.whsaa.org)



November 9, 2021

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Marie Ishida in support of her nomination for the National High School Hall of Fame. I have known Marie for over twenty years and have worked directly with her as an Executive Director.

Marie was very active in the NFHS both during her tenure as a CIF Executive Committee member as well as her years serving as the CIF Executive Director. Marie is one of the few in the history of the NFHS to serve two terms on the NFHS Board of Directors. I was fortunate enough to serve with her on the board during her second term.

My experiences with Marie have been nothing but positive. She has strong leadership abilities and built positive relationships with her welcoming personality throughout the NFHS family. She is well respected among her peers, and I believe was an outstanding team player. Marie was willing to share her opinion in a professional manner and respected the opinions of others.

I worked with Marie on the NFHS Strategic Planning Committee and her insight into moving the organization forward was invaluable. She took several of those ideas back to the CIF and implemented them at the state level as well. Marie was always willing to assist at the NFHS Summer Meeting in advancing professional development in several areas.

Marie was one of the few female Executive Directors. She did not look at this as being a challenge, but rather an opportunity to advance equity. I believe Marie stands for what education-based athletics is all about. Her service to the NFHS, her leadership skills and her overall contributions to her state and the NFHS as an administrator make her an outstanding candidate for the National High School Hall of Fame.

I cannot think of a better way to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title IX than to select a most deserving female administrator into the National High School Hall of Fame. I urge you to give her your strongest consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ron Laird'.

Ron Laird, CMAA  
Commissioner

**RECOMMENDATION**  
**MARIE ISHIDA**  
**NFHS HALL OF FAME**

It is with unwavering respect and admiration for Marie Ishida that I endorse her nomination for induction in the NFHS Hall of Fame.

I was first introduced to Marie in the late 90's at an NFHS Summer meeting. We were both serving as officers for our respective state athletic associations. At the time, I didn't realize our professional paths would cross to the degree they have, and an enduring friendship would result.

Marie's contributions to the California Interscholastic Federation will be highlighted by numerous individuals from her home state. I prefer to focus on how Marie Ishida interacted with and influenced her fellow state commissioners and executive directors.

From 2000 to 2012, I had the privilege of working closely with Marie during the time we both served as state executive directors, Marie with the CIF and me with the NYSPHSAA. As the athletic associations in California and New York are structured in a similar manner, I depended greatly on Marie's wisdom, insight, and judgment.

During our NFHS meetings, it was quickly evident to me the impressive leadership skills Marie possessed. Marie was elected to serve on the NFHS Board of Directors for two terms. There is a reason for that. She was "the" leader among leaders. She is soft-spoken, engaging, and kind. Her style of leadership is highly effective because she inspires those around her. Marie is a clear and concise communicator and has the courage and conviction to make difficult decisions.

When serving on the NFHS Board with Marie, I witnessed her innate ability to see solutions in all matters, regardless of their complexity. She was often the voice of reason, always keeping in perspective the values of an education-based athletic program.

Marie has earned nationwide respect in the field of Interscholastic athletics. She is a consummate professional often called upon to serve on influential committees such as the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee and the NFHS Foundation Committee. She was never reluctant to get actively involved. Her contributions were recognized with the (NFHS Outstanding Service Award (1997) and the NFHS Citation Award (2014).

Marie Ishida has dedicated her impressive career to the CIF and NFHS. She is, without doubt, extremely deserving of induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame. I trust you will agree.

Sincerely,

*Nina Van Erk*

Nina Van Erk  
NYSPHSAA Executive Director (2000-2012)  
President NFHS Board of Directors (2010-2011)

Support  
Data

# After 11 years, Marie Ishida to step down as CIF Executive Director

By [BAY AREA NEWS GROUP](#) |

February 3, 2012 at 9:10 a.m.

Marie Ishida announced Friday she will step down as the California Interscholastic Federation's Executive Director at the end of the 2011-12 school year and begin her retirement.

Ishida, who has held the position since 2001, made the announcement at Friday's CIF Federated Council meeting in Ontario.

"It has been an honor to serve as the CIF Executive Director for the past 11 years," Ishida said in a press release. "When I was initially selected for this post I said at that time that this was my dream job. It has been just that. I could not have held any other position that has been so satisfying to end my educational career."

North Coast Section commissioner Gil Lemmon, who attended the meeting, was surprised by Ishida's decision.

"Oh absolutely, I was shocked," said Lemmon, in his fourth year heading the NCS. "I was not aware of any information that she was thinking about retiring."

Ishida, the CIF's first female chief executive, has done a "terrific job," Lemmon said.

Lemmon praised Ishida for bringing financial stability to the CIF, including raising funds for its new office in Sacramento, and establishing "more of a partnership" with the state legislative body. The federation also upgraded its website and re-did its brand under her leadership, he said.

"Marketing has greatly improved over her leadership," Lemmon said. "They've been through three marketing directors and yet they've been able to make progress during her tenure. I think she's done a wonderful job."

Lemmon said he was not going to pursue Ishida's position. He mentioned CIF Associate Director Roger Blake as a "terrific candidate."

The CIF Executive Committee will begin the search for the new candidate immediately, with the new CIF Executive

Director being announced at the CIF Federated Council meeting in May.

Staff writer Matt Schwab contributed to this story.

## 2010-2011 FEDERATED COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Officers

CIF President, Heather Daims, Principal Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 CIF President-Elect, Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 CIF Past-President, Mike Henson, Dir. of Student Pathways, Porterville U.S.D.

### Executive Committee

Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union, High School  
 Dave Contreras, Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Michael Lewis, Assistant Superintendent, Grossmont U.H.S.D.  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Principal, Bellarmine-Jefferson, High School  
 James Perry, CAHPERD

### Federated Council

Nancy Acerio, Athletic Director, Hilltop High School  
 Ray Alvarado, Athletic Administrator, Calexico High School  
 Shielagh Andujar, Principal, Oakland Tech High School  
 Todd Arrowsmith, California Association of Directors of Activities  
 Diane Burbank, Principal, Prospect High School  
 Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union, High School  
 Dave Contreras, Athletic Director, Wheatland High School  
 Marci Cranford, Coach, Kingsburg High School  
 Bill Dabbs, Assistant Superintendent, Oxnard U.H.S.D.  
 Heather Daims, Principal, Miguel Contreras Learning Complex  
 Maureen Ferrel, California, Heath, PE, Recreation & Dance  
 Dick Fukuda, Athletic Director, Roybal Learning Center  
 Mike Garrison, Principal, Rocklin High School  
 Evelia Genera, Principal, Woodland High School  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Mike Henson, Dir. of Student Pathways, Porterville U.S.D.  
 Debbi Holmerud, Principal, Lincoln High School  
 Andrew Ishibaishi, Principal, Lowell High School  
 Doug Kaelin, Association of California, School Administrators  
 Sue Kuwahara, California School, Boards Association  
 Nancy Lambert, Assistant Principal, Galileo Academy  
 Michael Lewis, Assistant Superintendent, Grossmont U.H.S.D.  
 Camille Maben, California Department of Education  
 Catherine Manthey, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Keith Matthews, Principal, St. Francis Catholic, High School  
 Dennis McClanahan, California Coaches Association  
 Kim McEwen, Athletic Director, Francis Polytechnic High School  
 Darlene Miller, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Principal, Bellarmine-Jefferson, High School  
 Jim Monico, Assistant Superintendent, Paramount U.S.D.  
 Richard Morris, California School, Boards Association  
 Ray Odom, Superintendent, Hamilton U.H.S.D.  
 James Perry, California Association for Health,  
 Physical Education, Recreation and Dance  
 Dave Reid, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Marco Sanchez, Principal, Gilroy High School  
 Benjamin Schmookler, Principal, Fremont High School  
 Thom Sembritzki, Athletic Director, Lemoore High School  
 Gary Smidderks, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 Mary Jo Truesdale, California Coaches, Association  
 Reginald Thompkins, Principal, Santiago High School  
 Nancy Veilleux, Assistant Principal, Roseville High School  
 Salvador Velasco, Principal, Eagle Rock High School  
 Kim Wheeler, Coach, Red Bluff High School

### CIF State Office Staff

Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director  
 Roger Blake, Associate Executive Director  
 Ron Noetti, Senior Director  
 Desiree Friedman, Director of Marketing  
 Quwan Spears, Sports Information Officer  
 Jade Chin, Assistant to Executive Director  
 Al Goldberg, Assistant Director  
 Brian Seymour, Assistant Director of Championship Events  
 Bobbi Madsen, Bookkeeper  
 Jennifer Peters, Receptionist  
 Mary Davis, Intern  
 Dean Crowley, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Sheri Ross, Championship Events Supervisor  
 Diane Marshall-Freeman, General Counsel  
 Richard Nelson, Foreign Exchange Coordinator

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### A Shout Out to Commissioners

By Heather Daims, CIF President



Throughout the state, there are 10 people, along with their staff, who make it possible for the athletes of California to reap all of the benefits of the high school interscholastic athletic experience. These are the commissioners of the 10 sections that make up the California Interscholastic Federation. The hours are grueling and the work is virtually non-stop, from season to season and year to year. They give up untold time with loved ones and friends to pursue their passion of having the highest quality athletic programs possible for their student-athletes. The concept of "down time" does not exist in their world.

These 10 men and women deal on a daily basis with difficult issues such as student eligibility, incidents at athletic events, parent frustration, negotiating contracts with officials, unethical behavior by some involved in the athletic program, demands from their boards of managers and school districts, ongoing training of coaches and athletic directors, securing venues for athletic events, student health concerns, media requests, dwindling finances for their programs, legal and legislative issues and myriad other tasks and concerns that are usually exhausting (mentally, physically and emotionally), oftentimes anxiety-producing, but always necessary. It is miraculous that they do not collapse under the load.

Occasionally they get to stop for a brief moment and enjoy the fruits of their labors, from sportsmanship awards events, to exciting athletic events to honoring others who have paved the way for today's athletes in

their sections. Occasionally, because of their positions, they are able to meet highly regarded professional athletes or celebrities. Occasionally, they travel to other parts of the country to meet with their counterparts and to learn from them. Unfortunately, these moments are fleeting and they are back to the work that needs to get done too quickly.

The skills that commissioners must possess to be effective run the gamut from having the patience of a saint, the diplomacy of an international ambassador, the organizational skills of the President's chief of staff, the knowledge of their subject similar to that of a doctoral candidate and the communication skills of Dale Carnegie.

And so, at the end of this school year, as many of us will head off to vacations and relaxation, I would like to take a moment to do something that happens far too rarely. I would like to recognize and express my gratitude for all ten commissioners of the State CIF who work diligently all year long to ensure that the students of California continue to have an outstanding interscholastic athletics program. Thank you Dennis Ackerman, Barbara Fiege, Don Collins, Jim Crichlow, Liz Kyle, Nancy Lazenby Blaser, Gil Lemmon, Michael Moore, Pete Saco and Jim Staunton for a job well done.

The perks are few, the headaches many. We who dabble in the arena of athletics are fortunate, indeed, to have amazing, committed people like you doing the difficult job of commissioner with such grace and professionalism.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### "Looking Back - Looking Ahead"

By Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director, CIF State Office



Recently marking the passage of my 10<sup>th</sup> year as the executive director of the California Interscholastic Federation, it gave me pause to reflect on the decade and made me think of the future of this organization.

When I became executive director of the CIF, I knew exactly what direction the CIF was headed. After all, the direction was clearly spelled out in the Strategic Plan the organization had passed:

- CIF needed to not only be a governance organization, but also a service organization assisting our member schools with education based athletics
  - Train and educate coaches
  - Train and educate athletic administrators
  - Continue to work on health and safety issues of our student-athletes
  - Be more inclusive
- Since that time the CIF has:
- Increased the number of participants from 656,345 to 736,727
  - Developed a statewide eligibility transfer and appeal process
  - Increased state championship revenue
  - Purchased a permanent headquarters
  - Added seven Regional/State Championships: football (just passes the regional football games), boys and girls golf, SoCal Boys and Girls Regional Soccer, Girls Wrestling and SoCal Boys Volleyball

- Developed a master plan for the addition of Regional/State Championships: Girls Wrestling (2011), SoCal Regional Tennis - 2013 (NorCal in place), NorCal Regional Boys Volleyball (SoCal in place), State Swimming and Diving, Badminton, Water Polo

Updated the original strategic plan  
 Issues that will face the CIF in the next ten years will be:

- Lack of consistent revenue for public schools
- Walk on coaches
- Principals and athletic directors with little or no athletic background
- Schools with a competitive advantage (public or private)
- Creating an "open" division in basketball
- Section reconfiguration
- Legislative interference
- Legal issues and costs
- Consistency in rules statewide

Regardless of how much we have accomplished and how many issues will face us in the future, you can be assured the CIF is sound in its basic structure and sound financially.

## 2011-2012 FEDERATED COUNCIL MEMBERS

### Officers

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 CIF President-Elect, Rick Spears, Principal, Colfax High School  
 CIF Past-President, Mike Henson, Calif. Network Services Dir. National Academy Foundation

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 Todd Arrowsmith, California Association of Directors of Activities  
 Dennis Byas, Superintendents Liaison Committee  
 Jeff Cardoza, Athletic Director, Washington Union High School  
 Duane Coleman, Associate Superintendent Educational Services, Oceasi U.S.D.  
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 Evelia Genera, Principal, Woodland High School  
 Patty Gillig, Dean of Students, Monte Vista Christian School  
 Richard Graey, Superintendent, Mattole U.S.D.  
 Wendell Greer, Associate Superintendent, West Contra Costa U.S.D.  
 Mike Henson, Director, District Engagement National Academy Foundation  
 Debbi Holmerud, Principal, Lincoln High School  
 Andrew Ishibashi, Principal, Lowell High School  
 Doug Kaelin, Superintendent/Principal, Biggs U.S.D.  
 Bill Kappenhagen, Principal, Burton High School  
 Terry Kok, Superintendent, Calvin Christian School  
 Sue Kuwabara, California School Boards Association  
 Nancy Lambert-Campbell, Assistant Principal, Galileo Academy  
 Sue Lepisto, Administrative Consultant, Los Angeles U.S.D.  
 Camille Maben, California Department of Education  
 Catherine Manthey, California Association of Private School Organizations  
 Keith Mathews, Principal, St. Francis Catholic High School  
 Dennis McClanahan, California Coaches Association  
 Amy McNamera, Principal, James Logan High School  
 Darlene Miller, California State Athletic Directors Association  
 Sister Cheryl Milner, Assistant Principal, Paraclete High School  
 Jim Monico, Director, Instruction & Student Services, Paramount U.S.D.  
 Richard Morris, California School Boards Association  
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CIF on the Web: [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Heather Daims, CIF President

June marks my last month as the President of the California Interscholastic Federation. Although many people are not aware, those of us who have the honor of serving in this voluntary position also have careers in education, or what many of us call our "paying" job. I am most fortunate to be a high school principal at the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex in the Los Angeles Unified School District. My work with the CIF is often filtered through that lens of a high school principal.

In the past two years since I began my stint as the President of the CIF, we have seen great upheaval in education, particularly at the high school level, from the huge growth in the numbers of charter schools and alternative educational settings (like cyber schools and home schooling), to the extreme funding shortages for many schools and districts throughout the state. During these very tumultuous and often difficult times, many programs have seen harsh reductions or outright elimination.

In the wake of the statewide fiscal crisis, there is much talk about reducing programs such as athletics and arts programs or eliminating many of the extra-curricular activities that our students so enjoy and out of which they learn so many lessons beyond the classroom. At the same time, and from many of the same people, there is much talk about intervention programs and increasing student achievement.

In a system of education where there is such great emphasis on "data driven decision making", it seems that many of our decision makers around

education have not read the research about the multitude of benefits of athletics, arts and activities for our students. In a time when 21st Century Skills are incorporated into every high-level educational conversation and many mission statements, it seems particularly strange that the very programs that build these skills are under threat.

At this time of reflection about my career in education and my time working with the amazing people who make up the CIF, I would like to offer some encouragement for those of you who continue to make the difference in thousands of students' lives each year. Let us continue to stand strong and stay vocal about what we know is in the best interests of all of our students. Although we may often disagree about how things should be done around the state, I believe every one of us has the students' best interests in mind.

As a final comment, I would like to thank Marie Ishida for her amazing work during her tenure as CIF Executive Director. Although she remains incredibly humble and is often willing to pass the credit to someone else for the outstanding work that is accomplished each day by this organization, the California Interscholastic Federation would not be the fiscally solid and ethically responsible organization that it is today without her strong, capable and compassionate leadership. We are all wishing you great health, great happiness and great adventure as you move into this strange, exciting time called "retirement" and know that you will continue to be the strong advocate you have always been for student-athletes and for the work being done by the CIF.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### A Tribute to my Mom and Dad

By Marie M. Ishida, Executive Director, CIF State Office



I'm not a writer, never have been, never will be, but I've often had to try and put my thoughts into words writing these articles over the last 11 years. It has always been a struggle and I welcome the fact that this will be my last article for the CIF News! It has been extremely difficult to decide what to write about. I'm not one to get emotional or use the pronoun "I" or adjectives such as "excited" or "happy". I don't talk much about my personal life or my childhood, but I want to share with you how I believe I got to where I am today.

My parents raised four of us - all girls in California for most of my life. We were all born in Utah and when my twin and I, the youngest of the four, were nine months old we moved to central California to an area where my father was born and raised. During the war - WWII -- all Japanese were forced to leave California, relocate to a "relocation camp", or relocate to a state inland if you had family and could earn a living. Since my mother was born in Utah and we had family there, my parents relocated to Utah. They went by train with only what they could carry. We were all born after the war. I had an aunt and uncle that automatically had to go

to a relocation camp because my uncle was born in Japan. An another uncle served in the famous 442nd.

This brief family history is where I believe I get the foundation for my beliefs. For over 20-plus years of my life I never knew what had happened to my parents during the war. They never talked about it. And, somehow we just knew this was not a subject they wanted to talk about. Just as we knew we were going to college without my parents ever saying so. During a family Thanksgiving one of my brother-in-laws asked my parents what had happened to them during the war. That was the first time we had heard what had happened. My dad was matter of fact when he recounted to us what had happened to them. If they were bitter, they never showed it. After that they never talked about it again.

I learned somehow and resolved that the experience my parents had to endure and the dignity in which they lived their entire lives would be my guide. As I retire, I wish for only one thing - that I could know I made my parents proud. My parents were short on words too. I never heard them say "I," It was always "we." I never heard them use the words "excited" or "happy." I am who I am because of my parents.

Scholar-Athletes of the Year . . . . . continued from page 1

### 2012 CIF/FARMERS Scholar-Athlete Section Winners

#### Central Section

Kelsey Ruehling Woodlake Union High School, Woodlake  
 Jacob Ruiz Clovis East High School, Clovis

#### Oakland Section

Hope Schwartz Oakland Technical High School, Oakland

#### Central Coast Section

Lindsay Mewes Archbishop Mitty, San Jose  
 Kevin Bishop Monta Vista High School, Cupertino

#### Sac-Joaquin Section

Ashley Noda St. Francis High School, Sacramento  
 Ryan Peabody Christian Brothers High School, Sacramento

#### Los Angeles City Section

Camille Saucier Taft High School, Woodland Hills

#### San Diego Section

Hannah Yoder Cathedral Catholic High School, San Diego  
 Tyler Kasl Poway High School, Poway

#### North Coast Section

Liza Brusman Tamalpais High School, Mill Valley  
 Justin Roberto San Ramon Valley High School, Dublin

#### San Francisco Section

Anna Ng George Washington High School, San Francisco  
 Jeffrey Wong Lowell High School, San Francisco

#### Northern Section

Madeline Gray Pleasant Valley High School, Chico  
 Eric Neill Yreka High School, Yreka

#### Southern Section

Ilima Kung Torrance High School, Torrance  
 Seamus Land San Luis Obispo High School, San Luis Obispo

For Immediate Release  
Monday, February 26, 2001

Contact: Jim Duel  
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[www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)

### **ISHIDA SELECTED AS CIF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Marie M. Ishida, a prominent player in the CIF's history, has been selected as the State CIF executive director. Ishida follows Jack Hayes and becomes the seventh chief executive officer of the statewide organization. She will begin her new post on April 1.

The assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools, Ishida was the CIF president during the formation and implementation of the organization's strategic plan. Under her leadership, the CIF changed both philosophically and governance-wise becoming a service organization to member schools.

The CIF was formed in 1914 as the governing agency for high school athletics in California with its major purpose to enforce the rules regarding athletics. That remained the primary focus of the organization until the implementation of the strategic plan in 1995.

Said Bob Kanaby, executive director for the National Federation of State High School Associations: "I am extremely pleased that Marie Ishida has been selected as

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California Interscholastic Federation executive director. I have had the pleasure of working very closely with Marie the past three years as a member of the NFHS Board of Directors. During that time, she has repeatedly demonstrated the qualities of leadership that are needed for a position like this, and I am confident that the CIF will enjoy continued success and achievement as a result of her service to the membership.”

“The Executive Committee is extremely excited about the prospect of having Marie Ishida as executive director,” said Charley Berger, CIF president and assistant superintendent for the San Juan Unified School District. “Marie’s experience with the strategic plan, and her leadership in changing the role of CIF in high school athletics was an important factor in her selection. As CIF president, Marie was one of the primary forces behind significant changes the organization has made during the past five years.”

Ishida served on the CIF Executive Committee from 1989-1998. She was CIF president elect from 1992-94, CIF president from 1994-96 and CIF past president from 1996-98. Currently, she is on the board of directors for the National Federation of State High School Associations, only the third member from California ever selected to this prestigious post.

On both the state and national level, Ishida has received many accolades and honors. In 1997, the National Federation of State High School Associations bestowed Ishida with their Outstanding Service Award. She was also honored with an Extraordinary Service Award by the CIF and received the California Coaches Association’s highest honor as a recipient of the William S. Rockwell Distinguished Service Award.

- more -

3-3-3

Ishida's involvement spans two other CIF Sections as well: the CIF Central Coast and Southern Section. She served as president of the CIF Central Coast Section from 1989-91 and was a manager for the girls' basketball championships within the CIF Southern Section from 1976-78.

Ishida began her career as a teacher and coach at Faye Ross Junior High School in 1971. From 1974-79, she worked at Artesia High School as a teacher, coach, assistant athletic director (1975-79) and assistant Dean of Students (1976-79).

She was an administrative intern for the CIF Central Coast Section from 1979-80 before becoming the assistant principal at Santa Cruz High School, a position she held from 1980-86. From 1986-95, Ishida was the principal at Carmel High School.

In 1995, she accepted her current position as the assistant superintendent of human resources for the Santa Cruz City Schools.

Said Ishida: "My first teaching position included coaching. Throughout the years I have joined the efforts of thousands of people throughout the state of California who volunteer their time and their hearts to help our student athletes experience what sports can teach us about life, discipline, commitment and achievement.

"I know success in every effort relies on a team. I am truly excited to have the privilege of working with the CIF team and helping in every way I can to make all of these efforts count. Our student athletes deserve it. Quite honestly, it feels like I've been given the best coaching job I could have imagined!"

- more -

## Other Notables on Marie Ishida:

- Serves on the National Federation of State High School Association's Hall of Fame Screening Committee.
- Was a member of the CIF Central Coast Section Executive Committee from 1984-92.
- Represented the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) on the State CIF Federated Council (1987-89).
- Served as the State CIF Softball Rules Interpreter from 1982-85 and was a member of the National Federation's Softball Rules Committee.
- Was a moderator for several National Federation Summer Meeting topics, including: Advancing Equity, Tournament Finance, and NFHS Strategic Plan.
- Volunteers for Habitat for Humanity.

**CIF Chief Executive Officers**

E.W. Barnhart	January 1914-February 1915
C.L. Biedenbach	February 1915-December 1937
A.B. Ingham	December 1937-June 1955
William Russell	July 1955-June 1980
Thomas E. Byrnes	1980-1995
Jack J. Hayes	1995-2001
Marie M. Ishida	2001-present



Dan Ross

# Nomination Form



## HALL OF FAME NOMINEE

---

Name of Nominee: Daniel B. Ross  
*(first, middle, last)*

### ***Individual Submitting Nomination:***

Name: Bob Goldring

Phone: 614-378-9071

Street Address: 4080 Roselea Place

City, State, Zip Code: Columbus, Ohio 43214

Signed: Bob Goldring

Email: bgoldring@ohsaa.org

State Association Verification? True

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Please Check Appropriate Nomination Category:**

Administrators

Name of Nominee: Daniel B. Ross  
(first, middle, last)

Current Address: 1204 Harkers Court  
(street address)

New Albany, Ohio 43054  
(city, state, zip)

Email: kburgess13@breezelineohio.net

Phone: 614-378-9068 Date of Birth: 9/5/1949

School Affiliation (if any) Ohio High School Athletic Association

City: Columbus State: Ohio

Place of Birth: Portsmouth, Ohio Date of Retirement: 6/9/2018

Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics or performing arts other than the category for which he/she is being nominated? No

If yes, please explain:

If deceased, date of death:

Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Schools Attended:**

Name of School	City and State	Year Graduated	Degree
High School: St. Charles Preparatory School	Columbus, Ohio	1967	high school diploma
College/University: Ohio Dominican College	Columbus, Ohio	1971	Bachelor's degree in history and political science
Post Graduate School: Xavier University and Bowling Green State University	Cincinnati and Bowling Green, Ohio	1973 and 1983	Master's degree in guidance and counseling; Ph.D. in educational administration and supervision

# Administrators

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## **Participation/Career Description/Biography:**

Dan Ross came to the OHSAA with extensive experience as an educator in Ohio, having served as a superintendent, principal, teacher, counselor, college instructor and coach for 33 years beginning in 1971. He first taught for three years and then served as a counselor for three more. He left the education profession for a year in 1977 to work for a manufacturing company for a year before returning to education to become principal at Portsmouth Notre Dame Junior-Senior High School. He then moved to Bowling Green in 1981 and served as an instructor at Bowling Green State University.

Dan was then the superintendent of the Patrick Henry Local Schools (1983-86), Pickerington Local Schools (1986-97) and Avon Lake City Schools (1997-2004). During that time he was also an adjunct professor at BGSU, Ohio University and Baldwin-Wallace College.

Dan was also a registered OHSAA contest official for 20 years in the sports of volleyball, basketball and baseball and had seven state tournament assignments in basketball.

Dan continues today to serve as a part-time consultant, helping to raise awareness about the life lessons athletic participation provide young people, emblematic of the lapel pin he so often wore during his days as an administrator, 'Children First.' In addition, Dan enjoys counseling individuals – often at hospitals – dealing with health issues, especially those going through a heart transplant as he did himself.

## **Contributions Athletics/NFHS/Education Philosophy:**

### **Personal Records/Honors/Awards**

As the OHSAA Executive Director:

- Oversaw a Competitive Balance Plan that was approved by the membership and brought unity to the Association over a divisive issue.
- Oversaw the addition of female and ethnic minority positions to the OHSAA Board of Directors and the addition of those two positions and a 7th-8th grade representative to OHSAA District Athletic Boards.
- Formed advisory committees with the state school boards, superintendents, principals and athletic administrators associations to strengthen relationships.
- Helped strengthen the OHSAA's overall brand and awareness by creating statewide update meetings for school administrators each fall, creating the Circle of Champions recognition program for former Ohio high school sports dignitaries, increasing statewide television coverage of state tournaments, creating the OHSAA Radio Network and OHSAA Magazine and upgrading the OHSAA website. Just as important, visited all 819 high schools that are members of the Association during his tenure to create good will and build relationships.
- Saw a 2013 OHSAA overall performance survey conducted by a national a full-service public opinion research and polling firm produce a positive rating of 94.8 percent from the membership, an unprecedented number for a non-profit organization.
- Established a successful OHSAA Appeals Panel, where current and former school administrators hear requests from schools and families to overturn student eligibility decisions.
- Oversaw the adoption of numerous successful referendum issues resulting in many OHSAA Bylaws rewritten with common sense in mind and providing more opportunities for students to benefit from interscholastic athletics participation.
- Oversaw the adoption of a statewide coaches' education program that is required for certification, and advocated for the state's new training requirements on concussion management and sudden cardiac arrest.
- Added girls and boys bowling, dual team wrestling and girls and boys lacrosse as sanctioned sports after establishing an OHSAA Emerging Sports Committee to review new and growing sports.
- Added tournament divisions in girls soccer, girls golf, boys swimming & diving and football.

- Added events for seated athletes at the state track & field championships.
- Oversaw the move of several OHSAA state tournaments to upgraded venues throughout the state.
- Helped offset some of the OHSAA's financial concerns by growing the Association's corporate partnerships program.
- Established a more business-like approach to the OHSAA Office with the clear delineation of separate sport management, compliance, finance, officiating and communications departments while also increasing the physical space needs for the staff that included additional meeting and storage space.

## **Professional Achievements**

### National Committees and Assignments:

- Served on the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Review Committee as the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) representative.
- Served on and chaired the NFHS 2008-11 Strategic Planning Committee.
- Served on and chaired the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee.
- Served on the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee.
- Served on the NFHS Foundation Board of Directors.

## **Other Information**

- Was the Ohio High School Athletic Association's ninth Executive Director from August 1, 2004, until July 9, 2018 (14 years).
- Was the first person to serve in that role after never having been on an OHSAA District Athletic Board or the OHSAA Board of Directors.
- The Daniel B. Ross Performing Arts Center at Avon Lake High School is named in his honor.
- Selected to the OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame in 2006.

# Letters of Recommendation



## OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, OH 43214

Phone: 614-267-2502 • Fax: 614-267-1677 • [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)

Doug Ute, Executive Director

November 2, 2023

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with tremendous pleasure that I highly recommend Daniel B. "Dan" Ross, Ph.D., for selection to the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame in the 'administrator' category. Besides leading the Ohio High School Athletic Association to unprecedented accomplishments during his 14 years as executive director while also making an impact on the national level, Dan set a standard of personal character and integrity – while at the same time exuding a genuine care, concern and interest in improving the lives of those around him – to which many leaders aspire. His passion and enthusiasm for secondary education, combined with his tireless efforts to promote the important role that interscholastic athletics and extracurricular programs play for students, helped the OHSAA become one of the most respected high school associations in the country. Dan would be an especially outstanding representative of the hall of fame.

The OHSAA had always been known as a successful organization, but Dan's previous experience as a school superintendent, principal, teacher, counselor, college instructor, coach and contest official for 33 years paid huge dividends when he took over as executive director in 2004 as he was able to take the association to even greater heights. Among his many achievements in 14 years:

- Despite concerns that tournaments may be split between public and non-public schools, he oversaw the passing of a Competitive Balance Plan, a process which makes modifications to school enrollment numbers and could impact how schools – both public and non-public – are placed into tournament divisions in eight team sports.
- Advocated for the addition of female and ethnic minority positions to the OHSAA Board of Directors and the addition of those two positions and a 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade representative to OHSAA District Athletic Boards which was approved by the member schools.
- Strengthened the Association's partnership with other statewide educational service organizations by forming advisory committees with the state school boards, superintendents, principals and athletic administrators associations.
- Established a widely appreciated and successful OHSAA Appeals Panel, where current and former school administrators hear requests from schools and families to overturn student eligibility decisions rather than having the appeals heard by the OHSAA Board of Directors.
- Championed the adoption of numerous referendum issues resulting in many OHSAA Bylaws written with common sense in mind and providing more opportunities for students to benefit from interscholastic athletics participation.
- Oversaw the adoption of a statewide coaches' education program that is required for certification, and also advocated for the state's new training requirements on concussion management and sudden cardiac arrest.
- Spearheaded the addition of five sanctioned sports, additional tournament divisions in four sports and events for seated athletes at the state track & field championships.
- Helped offset some of the OHSAA's financial concerns by growing the Association's corporate partnerships program.

Through his leadership, a 2013 OHSAA overall performance survey conducted by a national full-service public opinion research and polling firm produced a positive rating of 94.8 percent from the membership, an unprecedented number for a non-profit organization.

His formula for getting so much accomplished was simple: Meet with and talk to as many people as possible. "People need to see you on a regular basis and be comfortable talking to you about issues they face every day," he once said. "If you don't get to know your people, how can you help them?"

## **Dan Ross Letter of Recommendation – Page 2**

He used that formula as a springboard to success while at the OHSAA, never turning down a chance to travel statewide or locally to talk to and gain feedback from student groups, civic organizations, school leaders and coaches, contest officials, OHSAA district athletic board members, legislators and media members, while also forming numerous committees and sub-committees where those involved were encouraged to share their viewpoints.

OHSAA legal counsel Steve Craig, who has served in that role since 1995, said seeing how Dan worked following the 2012 formation of the Association's Appeals Panel – whose work mostly handles student eligibility issues – epitomized how he treated people and won them over. "The way (Dan) handled families coming for their appeal, from the moment they arrived to where (he) escorted them to the parking lot, left every person who participated in this process know – not believe, but KNOW – that the person with whom they were conversing truly cared about them, their situation and their student's future. This passion provided not just comfort to these families, but also confidence that if there were any way to accomplish what they had come to (the OHSAA Office) for, (Dan) and the Panel would find it."

Others offered additional feedback on what made Dan so successful while at the OHSAA:

"What (Dan) Ross brought in 2004 and continued throughout his tenure was a show of respect for all involved. He wasn't a guy who just pounded a gavel, but one folks could work with – and that's not just school administrators. That's game officials, media members, coaches, parents and, most importantly, the people the OHSAA says it serves – the students. There was now professionalism. Communication improved. Bylaws and rules changed or were improved. Exceptions were passed. Tournaments were managed in a more welcoming tone. Even if an issue didn't go your way, you came away from the experience feeling like you were listened to more times than not. The leadership of Dan Ross is what made it all happen."

— **Rob McCurdy, sports reporter, *Marion Star*, 2018**

"There's no question in my mind that he cares about kids and made decisions based on what he sincerely thought was the best interest of kids and schools. I've appreciated that he has held actual roles within high schools as an educator and administrator. He knows what it's like to work with teachers, kids, parents, community members, etc., and he understands these unique dynamics."

— **Brad Burchfield, head football coach, Columbus Bishop Hartley, 2018**

While working hard to improve the OHSAA during those 14 years, Dan also contributed his expertise at the national level, serving on several National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) committees. He served on the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Review Committee as the NFHS representative; served on and chaired the NFHS 2008-11 Strategic Planning Committee; served on and chaired the NFHS Hall of Fame Screening Committee; served on the NFHS Basketball Rules Committee, and served on the NFHS Foundation Board of Directors.

During his tenure with the OHSAA, Dan Ross did it all . . . administrator, leader, innovator. His remarkable passion and dedication were on display each and every day, serving the nearly 400,000 student-athletes who participated in sports under the direction of the OHSAA. I do hope you will strongly consider him for the tremendous honor of being inducted into the NFHS Hall of Fame. I believe he is most deserving of this honor. Thank you for your consideration, and please contact me should you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Doug Ute, Executive Director  
Ohio High School Athletic Association

October 30, 2023

Dear National High School Hall of Fame Screening and Selection Committee:

This letter passionately supports Dr. Dan Ross of Ohio for induction into the National High School Hall of Fame. Dan served the schools of Ohio and the students both in state and across the nation with visionary leadership.

Dr. Ross spent 33 years in a variety of roles from teacher/coach to superintendent, honing his skills to lead the Ohio High School Athletic Association as Commissioner from 2004 until his retirement in 2018. Dan was known for his tireless efforts in promoting the values and important role extracurricular programs play in the lives of students.

Dan assumed the role of Commissioner in a time of controversy and public pressure on the OHSAA. He skillfully guided the organization through the challenges restoring the faith of the membership and public in the OHSAA. He led reforms that brought transparency and common sense change to the OHSAA.

Dan went well beyond the borders of Ohio in his influence and value. He served the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) in a wide variety of leadership roles from chair of the Strategic Planning Committee; member of the Basketball Rules Committee; member of the NFHS Foundation Board of Directors; NFHS representative on the NCAA Initial Eligibility Review Committee, and as chair of the Hall of Fame Screening Committee.

Dan's humble leadership made him a much-sought confidant among his peers in state associations. In my role as executive director, I often consulted with Dan in seeking solutions to issues we faced.

Add to all these accomplishments, Dan was an outstanding contest official who still supports the work of contest officials.

Dan Ross would make a fine addition to the National High School Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Bob Gardner  
Executive Director Retired  
NFHS

October 20, 2023

Dear NFHS Hall of Fame Selection Committee:

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I strongly support the nomination of a selfless servant, Dr. Dan Ross, for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame. It is impossible to count the lives he has touched and the many contributions he has made throughout his distinguished career with one driving passion: "Children FIRST."

Dr. Ross has shown great service and loyalty to every school district and organization that he has served, freely sharing his experience and wisdom with others. The school districts and organizations that Dr. Ross has poured himself into are without question better as a result of his hard work and dedication, and always putting Children First.

Once appointed as the ninth the Executive Director of the OHSAA on August 1, 2004, Dr. Ross adapted to numerous changes over the years, while making sacrifices of his personal time whenever the job demanded it. He has been a mentor and friend to his colleagues and has worked tirelessly, despite his own personal obligations, joys and challenges.

Prior to Dr. Ross taking the helm at the OHSAA, the OHSAA Board made all decisions on infractions and appeals with little to no latitude for examining extenuating circumstances. Driven by his insatiable desire to FAIRLY SERVE student-athletes, the always calm, deliberate, caring leader posed points of view to members of his cabinet that forced them to consider everyone impacted by their decision. This resulted in the establishment of the OHSAA Appeals Panel made up of current and former school administrators to hear requests of schools and families and consider overturning student eligibility decisions.

On a personal level, I had the distinct honor of serving as principal at Avon Lake High School under Dr. Ross's leadership as our superintendent. I was quick to learn that his leadership style was driven solely by what best served the students of Avon Lake. His 'Manage By Walking Around' leadership style was so well engrained in him that you rarely found him in his office. He was in the district, in the buildings, building relationships while talking with students, K-12. He knew most, if not all, of the students – along with their families – by name, grade, and performance.

Dr. Ross has dedicated his entire life to improving the lives of children. When I was asked to give the invocation at his OHSAA retirement celebration, it was apparent by the guest list what Dr. Ross has meant to so many across the country. Honored guests from every district that he served and leaders of educational and athletic organizations across the nation showed up in droves to honor this great human being.

If I were to sum up Dr. Ross with one word, "GIVER" comes to my mind. He is the epitome of "Servant Leader." I humbly ask that you give Dr. Dan Ross every consideration for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Respectfully Submitted,

Todd J. Alles, Sr.

Associate Director – Football Operations (Retired)  
The Ohio State University

**PRESIDENT**

John Richard, Ed.D.

400 Market Ave N, Suite B  
Canton, Ohio 44702-1554  
www.edpartner.org  
330-452-0829

October 20, 2023

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National Federation of High School Hall of Fame Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to recommend Dr. Daniel Ross for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame. Dr. Ross is most deserving of this opportunity based on his lifetime of achievement at all levels and his unwavering commitment to the youth participating in high school athletics. I have the unique perspective and honor of having served under, alongside, and as a colleague of his, and observed his accomplishments on behalf of schools and students.

Dan was Ohio High School Athletic Association's (OHSAA) Executive Director between 2004 and 2018. Under his leadership, direction, and engagement with stakeholders, several highlights are listed below.

- His passion and efforts to promote the important role that interscholastic athletics and extracurricular programs play for students resulted in the OHSAA being highly respected in Ohio and throughout the country for its integrity and focus on athletes.
- Oversaw a Competitive Balance Plan that was approved by membership and brought unity to OHSAA over a divisive issue.
- Oversaw the addition of female and ethnic minority positions to the OHSAA Board of Directors.
- Strengthened OHSAA's partnership with other state education organizations by forming advisory committees with various entities.
- Improved OHSAA's overall brand and awareness by creating update meetings annually, creating the Circle of Champions recognition program for former Ohio high school sports dignitaries, increasing television coverage of tournaments, creating the OHSAA Radio Network and *OHSAA Magazine*, and upgrading the OHSAA website.
- Personally visited each of the 819-member high schools during his tenure to create goodwill and build relationships.
- OHSAA received a rating of 94.8 percent from membership on a survey conducted by a national full-service public opinion research and polling firm, an unprecedented number for a non-profit organization.

- Established a highly acclaimed OHSAA Appeals Panel, where current and former school administrators hear requests from schools and families to overturn student eligibility decisions.
- Oversaw the adoption of a statewide coaches' education program that is required for certification.

Additionally, prior to leading OHSAA, Dr. Ross had extensive experience in the field of education, both as a teacher and in administrative leadership. Dan was a high school coach and a registered contest official for 20 years in volleyball, basketball, and baseball.

Perhaps more than all the aforementioned accomplishments, two other characteristics stand out about Dan Ross. First is the high integrity with which he approaches any and every situation. Dan's character is above reproach and is an example for students, coaches, officials, and any individual. Secondly, Dan has always been and remains an advocate for doing what is in the best interest of students. He has consistently demonstrated this with words, actions, and policies. Dan has for decades worn a lapel pin simply stating, "Children First." It has not been a clever saying, but rather the way he has conducted himself and his decisions throughout his life.

It is with great enthusiasm and without hesitation that I write this letter recommending Dr. Dan Ross for induction into the NFHS Hall of Fame.

Please feel free to call with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John V. Richard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Dr. John V. Richard, President

*(Former Deputy State Superintendent, Ohio Department of Education)*

Support  
Data

# Competitive balance is OHSAA Commissioner Dan Ross' No. 1 legacy: Tim's Take

Updated: Jul. 31, 2015, 12:30 a.m. |

Published: Jul. 30, 2015, 11:30 p.m.

**By Tim Warsinskey, The Plain Dealer**

NORTHFIELD, Ohio -- Breakfast was a thick vegetarian omelet and home fries as we sat in the corner of a greasy spoon diner on Northfield Road. [Dan Ross](#) was having a difficult time doing any damage to the meal.

That was our fault. Former Plain Dealer colleague Tim Rogers and I were peppering Ross with questions about his 11 transformative years as commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

Ross, as he always has been, was happy to go on and on about high school sports. At age 65, this clearly is a man still in love with his job. He said he has no immediate plans to retire and has a contract that runs to 2021.

The get-together was Ross' idea. In 2004, Rogers and I had lunch with him a few weeks before he joined the OHSAA. A longtime high school administrator -- including seven years as Avon Lake's superintendent -- he was much-needed outlier coming into a stodgy bureaucracy.

Ross said he recently came across a Plain Dealer story from that meeting and read our many suggestions for changes that needed to be made, ranging from more accountability and greater visibility from OHSAA to fixing an unfair playoff system. Shortly after taking office, he formed a blue-ribbon committee that suggested about 21 changes that needed to be made, and he's tackled nearly all of them.

Ross helped push through more than 100 new bylaws and remade the OHSAA itself. Not everything worked. Not every step was in the right direction.

But it's clear Ross has, whenever he retires, three major legacies:

## **1. Competitive balance.**

It will be years before we know if this is a positive or negative legacy. What we know for certain is that it was Ross' biggest fight. He pursued it from the day he took office and kept at it through [three referendum defeats](#), which says as much about Ross as anything he has accomplished.

Ross believed deeply that the OHSAA had to make private schools understand they have an unfair advantage. And he had to rein in a radical group of public-school administrators whose proposal to separate public and private schools would have gone too far and ruined smaller sports. Most daunting, he had to develop a formula that attempted to balance the uneven playing field, then get the majority of the state to approve it.

The competitive balance formula is scheduled to go into place next school year, but might be delayed a year for technical reasons.

"It will never get to the end of it, but at least we've started to put a plan together to help deal with that," Ross said.

## **2. Remaking the OHSAA**

When Ross came into office, the OHSAA hierarchy was almost all white men too often caught flat-footed by controversies to which the organization should have either prevented or reacted in a better fashion.

OHSAA spending also was out of control with little oversight. In 2001, OHSAA sent more than 50 members of its staff and district boards to a national convention in Hawaii, five times the number of many other state associations. The cost was about \$140,000.

LeBron James' high school career at St. Vincent-St. Mary was a long series of challenges [that ended with both sides in court](#) after OHSAA tried to suspend James for reportedly receiving free gear. James had moved on to the Cavaliers by the time Ross became commissioner. One of the first things Ross did was meet with the families and coaches of future NBA players O.J. Mayo and Henry (Bill) Walker to open a line of communication and ensure there would not be a repeat of the James controversies.

Most of the OHSAA bylaws Ross inherited were unchanged since the 1980s and appeared written with the 1950s in mind. Every time a school's or individual's state championship was taken away because of an administrator's error or a petty uniform violation, the OHSAA's inept reaction usually was, "Well, those are the rules."

Under Ross, the bylaws largely have been rewritten to include common sense. In some cases, such as the transfer bylaw, the handbook was laden with too many exceptions. Ross and OHSAA finally changed directions and began allowing students to transfer more easily with fewer penalties, especially for those who play a different sport after they change schools. OHSAA was pushed in this direction by several judges who took the organization to task.

More minorities and women now are involved in the OHSAA. Two commissioners are black and two are women, and each district board has at least one ethnic minority. It's progress, but the diversity statewide needs to increase.

## **3. Concussion protocols.**

Ross and the OHSAA have been ahead of the national curve on establishing concussion protocols. The commissioner continues to push for more research and action in areas such as girls soccer, where the number of athletes suffering concussions is second only to football and twice that of boys soccer. "I'd love to figure that one out," he said.

### **Other vital changes that have taken place under Ross:**

\* **Paralympic sports.** I'll never forget the sight of Ross with tears in his eyes as he bent over to drape a medal around the neck of then-Ravenna Southeast sophomore Jenna Fesemyer at the 2013 state track meet. Fesemyer had just become the state's first wheelchair track state champion, and Ross gave her a long embrace.

While others worked long and hard to make Ohio the 17<sup>th</sup> state to include wheelchair athletics, Ross held the door open and fully supported inclusion for a group of student-athletes who had long been ignored.

\* **Accessibility.** Ross is visible and visits schools more than his predecessors. He often heard he was the first commissioner to set foot in a member school in the organization's 107-year history.

"You don't erase that with one trip," he said. "You have to go back."

Ross established a media advisory committee that meets regularly and talks about issues coming up across the state, helping to keep fans and schools informed about issues.

\* **State tournament success.** The OHSAA state championships are among the best-run tournaments in the nation, as they were when Ross took over.

\* **Financial challenges.** Ticket revenue, which is declining, still accounts for about 80 percent of the OHSAA budget. OHSAA is a little better positioned to handle that. Ross said corporate partnership has increased from \$60,000 to about \$1 million annually, and television revenue has quadrupled to \$240,000 annually.

**There are more challenges ahead.**

\* **Community and charter schools:** OHSAA has to get a better handle on the issue of community school students counting toward the enrollment figures for large-city school districts such as Columbus, where some schools could move up two divisions under new counting methods.

\* **Transgender athletes:** "That's the No. 1 Title IX issue," Ross said. "This issue isn't really a young lady playing on boys teams because we have that already. The biggest issue with that is a young man in the process of hormone (treatment) moving to being a female, and they make it to the state tournament.

"We have a policy now that there is a process that you go through. We're dealing with it. But it becomes magnified when you have it at a gymnastics competition or a swimming competition. It's probably a matter of time. Caitlyn Jenner coming out has magnified it."

\* **Emerging sports:** Lacrosse will become an OHSAA sport within two years. Next could be eight-man football and archery.

"We have some schools that have (eight-man football) in Northwest Ohio," Ross said. "We have an awful lot of schools that are dressing 17, 21 kids that feel an eight-man team would be competitive. A question is, can a great big school like St. Ignatius field an 11-man and an eight-man? Or, do we cut it off (and say you can't do both)?"

\* **State football finals:** Ross said the OHSAA still plans to return to Canton for two years, though that will be delayed a year to 2017-18 because of construction plans at Fawcett Stadium. Ross said he doubted games will be played in Massillon at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium. He wants to continue the rotation back to Ohio State University to keep the finals feeling fresh.

\* **Retirement:** When will that happen?

"The first day I get up and say, 'I have to go to work,'" Ross said. "The kids in Ohio deserve better than that, and I'll turn in my resignation. I love what I do. I feel blessed to do what I do and work with the people I work with. I think we have a really, really good team of people that work hard for kids in Ohio."

## HIGH-SCHOOL

# Ross to step down as head of OHSAA

**Steve Blackledge** [sblackle@dispatch.com](mailto:sblackle@dispatch.com)

Published 8:05 p.m. ET Jan. 18, 2018 | Updated 8:05 p.m. ET Jan. 18, 2018

Dan Ross made it clear Thursday that he is resigning, not quitting.

After serving 14 years as executive director of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and 47 years in a variety of educational roles, Ross submitted his resignation Thursday during the January meeting of the board of directors. He plans to step down Sept. 15.

"I've spent most of my life helping kids, or least trying to help them, and my wife (Kris) and I came to the decision that we want to work together to help people who are struggling and hopefully make an even bigger difference in their lives on a different platform," said Ross, 68.

"My wife and I feel very strongly about this. We're starting at ground zero with this. I have no idea how we're going to tackle this joint venture, whether it be through volunteering, working at homeless shelters or a soup kitchen or a hospital. I work with various groups now. Just in the past month or two I've sat down with a lot of people who are struggling. It's obvious they need to talk about things with people who have been through hardships themselves."

Ross was alluding to life-threatening health issues in 2015 that he insisted had no bearing on his decision to step down.

In November 2015, he suffered a massive heart attack in the recovery room after a routine procedure and had to be revived three times by shock paddles. A series of problems ensued during his rehabilitation, and doctors determined that his heart wasn't pumping properly. In June 2016, Ross received an artificial heart pump and has since been on a national transplant list.

He lost 65 pounds and missed several months of work during the ordeal.

"With everything I've been through, I'm about as healthy as I can possibly be," Ross said. "The doctors say numbers are right where they're supposed to be. The wait for a heart transplant is a double-edged sword. Finding matches with the same blood type and body is difficult. And the people who need a heart most desperately are the ones at the top of the priority list. Frankly, I'd much rather be healthy and waiting than getting one because I need it. I'm functioning just fine."

Ross will leave a significant legacy. During his tenure, the OHSAA took on sponsorship of boys and girls bowling and boys and girls lacrosse and added a dual team wrestling tournament. Extra divisions were added in football, girls soccer, girls golf and boys swimming, and seated events were included in the state track and field championships for handicapped athletes.

But he perhaps will be remembered most for authoring and working to gain support of a competitive balance initiative to avoid a potential split of public and private schools. After three years, school administrators finally approved the plan during a referendum in 2014. The system went into effect during the current school year.

"Whether you were for or against the plan, the whole goal was to keep the schools unified, and I can go out being satisfied in that respect," Ross said.

Ross said he is staying until September in part to give the OHSAA time to find a replacement.

In accepting the resignation, board of directors president Paul Powers, an athletic administrator at Aurora High School in northeast Ohio, praised the work of Ross.

"He is respected by so many groups, such as administrators, coaches, officials, leaders of the other professional education associations, the media and his fellow executive directors at other state associations. The list goes on and on," Powers said.

"Being the head of an organization that enforces rules and regulations and has to make decisions that are not often popular is difficult. But anyone who has come in contact with Dan will tell you that he has made them feel special and always followed the motto that is on the pin he often wears on his lapel that says, 'Children First.' "

A 1967 graduate of St. Charles, Ross has spent his career working as a teacher, coach, principal, superintendent, counselor, referee and administrator.

Although he is eager to transition to the next chapter of his life, Ross has a list of 30 items he hopes to tackle in his final eight months with the OHSAA.

"I'll do whatever the board asks me to in helping find my successor, but I sure don't want to leave that person a mess when he or she takes over," Ross said.

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## HIGH SCHOOL

# McCurdy: Best achievement by Dan Ross — restoring OHSAA's reputation

*Dan Ross accomplished a lot in his 14 years as OHSAA commissioner, but what was his crowning achievement?*



**Rob McCurdy**

Marion Star

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COLUMBUS - When Dan Ross retires in a few months after 14 years as commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, getting a competitive balance rule passed will be seen by many as his crowning achievement.

And why not?

There was a growing movement out there that threatened to splinter the OHSAA's membership.

Simply dividing up schools for tournament divisions based on enrollment was no longer cutting it.

Private schools that could pull students from a region were seen as having a competitive advantage. A small group was winning championships at a much higher rate than to be expected, and public school officials chafed at what they saw.

There were threats of separating public and non-public schools into two different tournaments, even two different organizations.

The affable Ross who has lived and worked in every region of the state at some point was the perfect guy to hold it together while attempting to fix the problem. Three times Ross, the OHSAA Board of Directors and its competitive balance committee came up with ways to address the issue and three times it failed in close votes.

But they stuck with it and on the fourth try got a bylaw passed.

While this was just the first school year with the new measure in place and some are underwhelmed at the change it initially brought, calm has been restored to the OHSAA's membership and a device is in place that can be tweaked to better help competitive balance issues in the future.

He stopped secession and brought unity over a divisive issue.

That's an accomplishment for sure.

But that's not the best thing Ross did for the OHSAA.

Dealing with the folks at 4080 Roselea Place in the bad old days was rarely a pleasant experience. It was adversarial. The OHSAA was seen as dictatorial. They were unyielding. It felt more like a kangaroo court than a governing body.

They ran their tournaments with all the charm of a drill sergeant wearing shoes that are too tight. You did exactly what they said or you suffered the consequences.

Right before Ross came on the scene as commissioner, the OHSAA was at its most embarrassing, being lampooned nationally over its handling of LeBron James in his senior year at Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary. Remember the Hummer and the outrage over a few throwback jerseys?

What Ross brought in 2004 and continued throughout his tenure was a show of respect for all involved. He wasn't a guy who just pounded a gavel, but one folks could work with — and that's not just school administrators. That's game officials, media members, coaches, parents and most importantly the people the OHSAA says it serves — the students.

There was now professionalism. Communication improved. Bylaws and rules changed or were improved. Exceptions were passed. Tournaments were managed in a more welcoming tone.

Even if an issue didn't go your way, you came away from the experience feeling like you were listened to more times than not.

The leadership of Dan Ross is what made it all happen.

He restored the OHSAA's reputation.

And that truly is his crowning achievement.

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# A Conversation With Dan Ross....

***He'll step down as commissioner of the OHSAA later this year, for reasons of personal interest, and health. But Dan Ross wants it understood...that the work is far from being finished; nor is he.***

**Columbus** – Understand as you read this, that my time with OHSAA Commissioner Dan Ross last week is to be characterized as a conversation, and not an interview.

I say that because we have that kind of relationship, and have since the inception of Press Pros back in summer of 2010. New in his position as commissioner back then he was one of the few at that time who viewed our dream of web coverage of high school sports as being relevant, as others scoffed.

“You’ve always been relevant with me,” he said during our visit in the back hallways of the Schottenstein Center. “You were then, and you are now. What you do is important, and your energy is remarkable,” he added with a smile.

Ross will step down from his position later this year due largely to his health issues. He’s on the waiting list for a heart transplant...and the stories he tells of that wait are in one word ‘chilling’, and in another, inspiring. The search for his successor is currently on.

In his ninth year as commissioner, Ross has stood on every rung of the ladder in high school sports...as an educator, coach, official, and administrator. A native of Portsmouth, Ohio, he’s unique in that he’s experienced every level of both educational challenge, and the socio-economic issues that determine the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ across the landscape of Ohio school sports.

He has a way – an easy way – with people. He prides himself on being a good listener, and he knows no strangers. Every patron of an OHSAA event has an open door with Ross, from the disgruntled fan over the price of a ticket...to the average student athlete who finds that the commissioner really is interested in his or her story.

His journey as commissioner has not been a smooth road, by any means. There have been potholes, a reflection of the dynamics that dictate everything in modern culture. Forced to adapt, because there is no alternative, Ross has been labeled by some...a politician. He would dispute that, of course. Or maybe not, as effective people in his position are most often effective ‘compromisers’. And there are...so MANY issues!

The issues are as individual as people themselves, from the cost of athletics, including the price of a ticket to this week’s state basketball tournament...to the constant discussion over ‘recruiting’, ‘privates’ versus ‘public’ schools, sportsmanship and character, and of course, the bitterness among so many over what seems to be Ross’s signature endeavor – competitive balance.

Ask him about any of the above, or, if competitive balance is indeed the one initiative that will define his tenure as chief administrator and he reflects on that notion.



While stepping down as commissioner, Ross admits, "I'd like to come back in some capacity and serve – to help things move in a positive direction."

"You know," he says quietly, "I'd like to be known as a good person, a good man, a good husband, and a good father. I'd like to be remembered as someone who was truly concerned about what's best for kids."

"As far as being known for any one thing that I've done as commissioner, I'd like to be remembered for my interest in bringing more inclusion and diversity of Ohio High School athletics – from our own staffing at the OHSAA, to more women in officiating...because I believe that it better reflects our modern culture."

But as to the obvious dissatisfaction over 'competitive balance' (at least when you ask behind closed doors and off the record), Ross responds.

"It's a start, but it's not perfect," he says. "There's more work to be done, and some of the challenge comes from downtown, and the legislators. I had one tell me recently, 'Here's what **we** want. Now you take it and fix it.'"

Another concern over the future of sports is purely financial, and not just the administrative budget, even though he'll be remembered for ushering in lucrative broadcast contracts with Time Warner (now Spectrum) and Sports Time Ohio for the OHSAA championship tournament weekends.

"If attendance is down you have to find alternative sources of income," he once told me.

But for the present – how more kids can afford to just participate? It's not cheap to play football, hockey (skates cost a fortune), baseball (a good glove costs \$200, and a bat \$400), or to play travel sports in the off-season. Pay to play **is not** the answer, and he understands reality...that if you want a shot at playing at a high competitive level you have to play year-round; and too many kids simply can't afford that.

“It’s a problem,” admits Ross, agreeing that there are no obvious answers. “And I’m concerned that the ability to participate will become an even bigger divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’.

His daily life, though still busy in the waning days of his service as commissioner, is not unlike that of playing Russian roulette as he waits for the call that a new heart is available- that it’s his turn for the ultimate in life alterations.

“It may come today, or tonight, or tomorrow,” he says with a contented smile. “Or, it may never come. It’s in the hands of the good Lord, and His purpose.”

But if it his His purpose that the call comes and Ross is able to go forward, he’ll tell you that he’s far from through. His philosophies are current, and he still has some things on his agenda.

“This is a position that probably needs new perspective every five years, but I’d like to come back in some capacity and serve – to help things move in a positive direction,” he said, extending his hand. He got up to leave from our conversation, not as a man who’s been dealt a bad hand – a bad break with his health – but as one who’s been privileged to serve as teacher, coach, principal, superintendent, and now commissioner of one of the nation’s most respected high school administrations.

You wish him the best, because despite your feelings over what he’s accomplished, Dan Ross may have a tired heart...but not tired spirit, or agenda. He’ll be remembered as one of the most influential figures in the history of Ohio high school sports.

I wish him well, because he has this way of making people feel...relevant.

Always has, always will...Lord willing!



Ross shares a happy moment during the 2014 boys state tournament with former Akron St. Vincent-St. Mary star LeBron James. (Press Pros Feature File Photos)

# OHSAA Executive Director Dr. Dan Ross to step down in September

By: [Mike Dyer](#), WCPO, Cincinnati

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio High School Athletic Association Executive Director Dr. Dan Ross has decided to step down Sept. 15. The OHSAA Board of Directors accepted his resignation Thursday morning at its regularly scheduled meeting.

The OHSAA announced the news on its [Twitter account](#). A formal news release will be posted this afternoon. The OHSAA did not offer details on how it plans to name the next individual for the position.

Ross succeeded former OHSAA Commissioner Clair Muscaro. [In 2004, Ross called the commissioner position a "dream job."](#)

“When Dan came around to the association he gave it a shot in the arm,” said Lakota West Athletic Director and Assistant Principal Scott Kaufman, a member of the Southwest District Board. “He led the association with some dramatic upgrades and improvements. He was visible and accessible. He was always an advocate for schools and kids.”

Kaufman said Ross helped the OHSAA advance into the new century and was proactive in technology, equity for schools and discovering solutions for high school athletics for its 822 member high schools. “I am grateful for his service,” Kaufman said. “I think he is absolutely the most first-class person you can ever meet.”

The OHSAA adopted a [competitive balance plan](#) unique to Ohio this school year after it was passed in May 2014 after it failed on three different occasions prior to that. However, competitive balance has not come without scrutiny in the Southwest District; flaws have been found.

This past spring, reaction of implementation this school year ranged from a shrug of shoulders to outright opposition from Cincinnati-area athletic directors.

“It certainly won’t be perfect in the beginning,” OHSAA Commissioner Dr. Dan Ross told [WCPO](#) in March 2017. “But, it is to help start make modifications in how schools get their enrollment. When those modifications occur I think most schools feel very comfortable. It’s as if a coach said, ‘I don’t mind playing that school if they got their kids the same I did.’ And if they didn’t there is a modification.”

[Ross became the ninth commissioner of the OHSAA Aug. 1, 2004.](#) A native of Portsmouth and a 1967 graduate of Columbus St. Charles High School, Ross served as a superintendent, principal, teacher, counselor and coach for 30 years.

"Dr. Ross came to the OHSAA at a time when it needed a leader with strong people skills and the ability to shift its focus to what's best for the student-athlete," Wyoming Athletic Director Jan Wilking said. "Over the last 15 years he has built strong relationships with member schools and put the

student-athlete first in decision-making. We look forward to the next commissioner maintaining the high standards Dr. Ross has set for member schools."

Ross earned his master's degree in guidance and counseling from Xavier University in 1973. He has earned many awards for this service in education.

Ross battled through health issues in recent years. He suffered a heart attack in late 2015 and later underwent a procedure to have an artificial heart pump installed, according to the [Columbus Dispatch](#).

Ross, 68, returned to work full-time in the early part of 2017 and told the media and school administrators he was committed as always to the position.

"Dr. Ross was a people person," said Western Brown Athletic Director Tim Cook, who also sits on the Southwest District Athletic Board. "He always made you feel important and took time to speak to you anytime and anywhere."

Cook, who served on the OHSAA Board of Directors from 2013 to 2015, said Ohio high school sports is better because of Ross.

"His No. 1 priority was the student-athletes," Cook said. "He made a lot of much-needed changes during his time in the OHSAA office. We are definitely in a better place with the leadership of Dr. Ross."



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