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Suzanne Martin Named 2001 Recipient Of Women In Sports Leadership Award

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Dec. 14 – Suzanne Martin, the creator of the nation's first, largest and longest-running conference to promote the role of females in interscholastic athletics, and an assistant director at the Michigan High School Athletic Association since 1977, has been named the recipient of the 2001 Women In Sports Leadership Award by the Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association.

Each year the Representative Council considers the achievements of women coaches, officials and athletic administrators affiliated with the MHSAA who show exemplary leadership capabilities and positive contributions to athletics. The award will be presented during a luncheon at the 2001 Women In Sports Leadership Conference on Feb. 5, in Lansing.

Since joining the MHSAA staff in 1977, Martin has been a sports administrator for girls basketball, girls competitive cheer, boys and girls golf, girls gymnastics, boys and girls soccer, softball and volleyball. She continues to work with tournaments and rules in competitive cheer, golf, gymnastics and soccer; and is active in National Federation of State High School Associations committees in several activities.

Perhaps the most notable of her sports experiences is in competitive cheer. When MHSAA member schools in the early 1990's expressed a desire for the Association to provide services and a post-season tournament in cheerleading, Martin spearheaded an effort to develop a Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament, including regulations for conducting competition in that sport, so that girls could have another sports option during the winter season, and one that met girls' clearly expressed interests. More than 170 schools participated in the inaugural tournament, more than the combined total of schools in the girls gymnastics and skiing tournaments that year.

The Women In Sports Leadership Conference began under Martin's direction in 1989 to provide females in sports with a vision for their involvement in interscholastic athletics as a coach, administrator or game official. The conference, a national first, annually sells out and attracts over 500 individuals, most of them student-athletes, providing today's participants with a goal of being tomorrow's leaders in sports. Martin was also fundamental in attracting a major grant which has kept the cost of the conference reasonable for attendees and guaranteed its future for years to come.

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2-2-2 – Women In Sports Leadership Award

Martin is a graduate of Charlotte High School, Lansing Community College and Michigan State University. Prior to joining the MHSAA staff, she was a teacher, coach and cheerleading advisor at Mt. Morris High School, and a Financial Aid Consultant for the Michigan Department of Education.

“When you say the words ‘Women In Sports Leadership,’ the first name many people will respond with is ‘Suzanne Martin,’” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “Suzanne has been a great leader, visionary, creator and role model for so many of the women that are involved in our school sports programs today, and is a very worthy recipient of the Women In Sports Leadership Award.”

Martin is the 12th recipient of the Women In Sports Leadership Award. Past recipients are:

1990 – Carol Seavoy, L’Anse

1991 – Diane Laffey, Harper Woods

1992 – Patricia Ashby, Scotts

1993 – Jo Lake, Grosse Pointe

1994 – Brenda Gatlin, Detroit

1995 – Jane Bennett, Ann Arbor

1996 – Cheryl Amos-Helmicki, Huntington Woods

1997 – Delores L. Elswick, Detroit

1998 – Karen S. Leinaar, Delton

1999 – Kathy McGee, Flint

2000 – Pat Richardson, Grass Lake

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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