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Nancy Clark Named Recipient Of Women In Sports Leadership Award

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Dec. 13 – Nancy Clark, recognized for excellence as a pioneer, a teacher-coach, a game official, and athletic administrator in her educational career in the Flint community, has been named the recipient of the 2003 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 2003 Women In Sports Leadership Conference on Feb. 3, in Lansing.

Clark is retired from day-to-day school work after spending 25 years at Carman-Ainsworth High School in Flint. She coached girls basketball and softball for eight seasons at the school, with one of her softball squads reaching the semifinals of the MHSAA Class A tournament. Her last 16 years at Carman-Ainsworth were spent in administrative work as the school's athletic director. She was one of the first females statewide to serve in such a role.

In the officiating ranks, Clark was registered for 25 years in basketball and 23 years in softball. Her first registration with the MHSAA occurred in 1965, making her one of the female pioneers in that avocation.

Administratively, Clark was active as an appointee to the MHSAA Representative Council, serving from 1988 to 1992. She also served on numerous MHSAA committees and hosted a number of Association tournaments.

But Clark's greatest contribution to the advancement of females in sports may have been as a mentor to some of the up-and-coming women coaches and administrators who have followed her.

"As a female in a field traditionally dominated by men, I for one have reaped the benefits of Nancy's mentorship and leadership," said Kathy McGee, girls basketball coach and athletic director at Flint Powers Catholic High School, who is the winningest girls basketball coach in Michigan history with a 526-129 record through the 2002 season. "Nancy made many inroads in athletics as an official, coach and administrator for females to follow and succeed. What was more important and impressive, was she did it at a time when she had few other females to look to for support or direction."

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“Mentorship is the true mark of a leader,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. “It is in showing the way for others; being there for support in many different ways; that Nancy Clark has been – and continues to be – a women of sports leadership. We’re pleased to honor her with this award.”

Clark, who continues to serve the interscholastic athletic community as a consultant, earned her Bachelor’s degree in Education and an Education Specialist degree from Central Michigan University. She earned her Master’s degree in Education from Arizona State University.

Clark is the 14th 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
- 2001 – Suzanne Martin, East Lansing
- 2002 – Susan Barthold, Kentwood

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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