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1661 ramblewood drive east lansing, mi 48823 517.332.5046 fax-517.332.4071 www.mhsaa.com

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Contact: John Johnson, Randy Allen or Andy Frushour

517.332.5046 or www.mhsaa.com

Kathy Vrugink Westdorp Named Recipient Of 2004 Women In Sports Leadership Award

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Dec. 22 – Kathy Vrugink Westdorp, principal at Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central High School, has been named the recipient of the 2004 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 banquet at the 2004 Women In Sports Leadership Conference on Feb. 1, in Lansing.

Westdorp was recently named to an assistant director's position on the MHSAA staff, where she will be phasing into those duties over the course of the 2003-04 school year.

"It is through an entirely different process that Kathy was selected for this award after being named to serve schools as a member of the MHSAA staff, demonstrating how widespread the respect is for her in Michigan" said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the Association. "The award recognizes her past service, while her hiring recognizes her potential for future service. She was nominated for the award by the West Michigan Volleyball Officials Association and chosen by the Representative Council from among seven candidates after a thorough screening by the MHSAA Awards Committee. As our newest administrative addition, the staff selected her, with the blessing of the MHSAA Executive Committee, from a field of more than 60 candidates."

As a teacher, coach, game official, athletic administrator and principal, Westdorp has long been active in advancing females in high school sports. She encouraged student-athletes to pursue coaching and officiating following high school, and has been active in recruiting and promoting female officials as a member of the West Michigan Volleyball Officials Association.

A West Michigan native, Westdorp is a 1976 graduate of Central Michigan University, where she participated in field hockey. Her educational career then started in the Grand Rapids Public School as a coach in girls volleyball at Central High, where she also served as an English and Physical Education teacher; and a girls track and basketball coach at Creston High. After eight years, she was named director of

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health and wellness programs for Grand Rapids Public Schools, where she had staff supervision and training duties, and authored grants and curriculum for the district.

In 1987, Westdorp returned to Creston as an assistant principal and director of athletics, where she administered the athletics and activities program until 1995, when she moved into an administrative position at Grand Rapids Forest Hills Central High School.

Westdorp first served as an assistant principal at Forest Hills Central, where she directed several academic departments, and supervised a variety of student extra-curricular activities. In 1999, she was named principal at the school, and implemented a number of new programs. While principal, Forest Hills Central was named a Governor's Cup recipient from the State of Michigan for achieving academic excellence. Westdorp also remained active in athletic issues, co-chairing an athletic task force for the school district and serving as president of the Ottawa-Kent Conference, a league consisting of 41 schools.

As a game official, Westdorp has worked softball at the high school level and girls volleyball at the high school and collegiate levels.

Westdorp also holds a Master's Degree in Secondary Education from Michigan State University, and has served as an adjunct professor in graduate studies at Grand Valley State University.

Westdorp is the 15th recipient of the Women In Sports Leadership Award. Past recipients are:

1990 – Carol Seavoy, L'Anse	1997 – Delores L. Elswick, Detroit
1991 – Diane Laffey, Harper Woods	1998 – Karen S. Leinaar, Delton
1992 – Patricia Ashby, Scotts	1999 – Kathy McGee, Flint
1993 – Jo Lake, Grosse Pointe	2000 – Pat Richardson, Grass Lake
1994 – Brenda Gatlin, Detroit	2001 – Suzanne Martin, East Lansing
1995 – Jane Bennett, Ann Arbor	2002 – Susan Barthold, Kentwood
1996 – Cheryl Amos-Helmicki, Huntington Woods	2003 – Nancy Clark, Flint

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,200 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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