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2004-05 Bush Award Recipients Announced

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Jan. 17 – Two long-time school servants and a living legend in sports broadcasting in his community are the recipients of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Allen W. Bush Award for 2004-05.

This year's recipients are: Richard Burdis of Mt. Morris, athletic director at Flushing High School; Daniel Edmunds of Brownstown, athletic director for Taylor Public Schools; and Doug Wentworth of Hudsonville, a sportscaster for most of his career in the Grand Rapids area. The recipients of this year's awards will be recognized at ceremonies in their communities during the remainder of the 2004-05 school year.

Al Bush Sr., served as executive director of the MHSAA for 10 years. The award honors individuals for past and continuing service to prep athletics as a coach, administrator, official, trainer, doctor or member of the media. The award was developed to bring recognition to men and women who are giving and serving without a lot of attention. This is the 13th year of the award, with the selections being made by the MHSAA's Representative Council.

Here are brief biographical sketches of the 2004-05 Bush Award recipients:

Richard Burdis – In his 34th year of service to educational athletics, the last seven with Flushing Community Schools, Richard Burdis still serves as a high school assistant principal and athletic director. A 1967 graduate of Mt. Morris St. Mary's, Burdis earned his B.S. degree in Education from Central Michigan University in 1971, and began his teaching, coaching and administrative career with the Mt. Morris School District that year. He earned his Master's degree in Educational Administration from CMU in 1998.

While at Mt. Morris, Burdis taught three subjects at the junior high school level, and also coached three sports at the high school level, including 14 years as the varsity baseball coach, where his teams won four league championships. He was also the high school's athletic director and assistant principal for seven years.

As a coach, he has been honored on the local and regional level on multiple occasions, and he was inducted into the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1997. As an

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administrator, he was a Regional Athletic Director of the Year in 1999; served on the regional board of directors for the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association; hosted MHSAA post-season tournament events in 11 different sports and took an active role in MHSAA committees for baseball and softball.

Burdis is active in Mt. Morris as a life-long member of St. Mary's Catholic Church. He was the founder and first president of the Little League in that city and has served on its Recreation Planning Committee. He served for 10 years with the local Kiwanis Club on its Flint Scholar-Athlete Selection Committee. He was nominated for the award by Clio High School.

“None loom as large in programs as those who make a lifetime commitment to serve in many ways in the area in which they grew up – long after they've grown up,” said John E. “Jack” Roberts, MHSAA Executive Director. “Richard Burdis can serve as an excellent role model as someone who gained much from his experiences growing up in Mt. Morris, and the way he has given back in his educational and administrative career at nearby Flushing and personally as a civic leader in Mt. Morris.”

Daniel Edmunds – For the last eight years of his 35-year career in education, Daniel Edmunds has been an administrator in the Taylor School District, where he currently serves as the citywide athletic director. Edmunds earned a Bachelor's and two Master's Degrees from Eastern Michigan University. He then entered the Taylor system as a teacher and coach, guiding football, basketball, track and softball teams in the district. He earned statewide softball Coach of the Year honors from the Michigan High School Softball Coaches Association in 1985; and was twice the Downriver football coach of the year – in 1985 and 1989.

As Taylor's citywide athletic director, Edmunds has overseen all aspects for sports programs for two high schools and three middle schools, in addition to scheduling the town's school athletic facilities for public use. He has been a tournament manager for MHSAA events in seven sports, and served on MHSAA committees which selected officials for post-season tournament games.

Edmunds has also been active regionally as the current president of the Mega Conference, which he has also served as a treasurer for. He has also worked with the City of Taylor Recreation Department to run elementary sports programs for girls and boys, and swimming programs for senior citizens and youth. He also takes part in activities at the Grace Episcopal Church and his local American Legion post. He was nominated for the award by Belleville High School.

“It takes a special person to effectively lead a school's athletic program nowadays. It takes an exceptional one to oversee all the activities for senior and junior high schools in a single district,” said Roberts of Edmunds. “Daniel Edmunds is an excellent choice for the Bush Award because of his dedicated

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service in a variety of roles in the Taylor Public Schools. He has been successful in the development of young people as a teacher and a coach, and as an administrator working with the district’s athletic programming.”

Doug Wentworth – A local icon in sports broadcasting in West Michigan for over 40 years, Doug Wentworth is held in high esteem by the high school sports community for his love of the game and the fairness he exhibits towards its participants. Many an athletic director in the greater Grand Rapids area finds the arrival of Wentworth to broadcast a game – usually solo – a welcome sight.

A Wisconsin native who graduated from John Brown University in 1957, four years after he broadcast his first high school football game, Wentworth came to Michigan in 1958 to work as a disc jockey at WHAK in Rogers City. In 1960, he began a 25-year run as a disc jockey and high school sports play-by-play announcer at WJBL in Holland. He took on the announcing duties for Calvin College basketball in 1964, a role he still relishes with his current station, WFUR, where he continues his coverage of high school sports, and also does play-by-play of Hope College football.

The perspective he brings to high school sports broadcasting has been noticed and appreciated by coaches, players, spectators – and officials. It was the West Michigan Officials Association which bestowed an award upon Wentworth upon reaching the milestone of broadcasting high school sports for 40 years. He has also received an Honorary Alumni Award from Calvin College. He was nominated for the award by Grand Rapids South Christian High School.

“We’ve always said the essence of high school sports is its local nature, and no one embodies that nature better than Doug Wentworth,” said Roberts. “He is the ultimate wordsmith – painting pictures of what’s happening between local teams on the playing surface so well for those of us listening on the radio. He is also the ultimate cheerleader for promoting the education nature of our games, and the recognition he has brought to many young people across West Michigan is appreciated by all.”

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,500 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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