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Bush Award Recipients Announced For 2005

EAST LANSING, Mich. – July 5 – One of the founding administrators of the Mega Conference in Southeastern Michigan and an individual who helped the MHSAA design one of the nation's most comprehensive weight management programs for wrestling are the recipients of the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Allen W. Bush Award for 2005.

This year's recipients are: Robert Dropp of Westland, a teacher, coach and athletic director at Garden City High School for 40 years; and Jim Scott of Allendale, an associate professor at Grand Valley State University. The recipients of this year's awards will be recognized at ceremonies during the 2005-06 school year.

Allen W. Bush 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 14th year of the award, with the selections being made by the MHSAA's Representative Council.

Here are brief biographical sketches of the 2005 Bush Award recipients:

Robert Dropp – Entering his 41st year of service to the education community in 2005-06, all in the Garden City Public School system, Dropp is a 1961 graduate of Chisholm High School in northern Minnesota who earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 1965, and his Master's degree from Eastern Michigan University in 1968.

In his first six years in Garden City, Dropp was an elementary school physical education teacher, as well as a high school varsity baseball coach and a junior varsity coach in basketball and football. He then moved to Garden City West High School, where he taught biology and physical education while keeping his coaching duties; and by 1980 was the varsity baseball and boys basketball coach, keeping both positions when the two high schools in the city merged in 1982. He coached the baseball team until 1993, posting a 406-227 record with eight league championships; and coached boys basketball until 1990, finishing with a 107-106 record and two league titles.

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In 1991, Dropp became the athletic administrator at Garden City High School, and immediately was involved in the oversight of the construction of a new fieldhouse, which was finished in 1992. Dropp was one of 23 athletic directors which help create the Mega Conference from a combination of four different leagues which launched in 1993-94. Today, that league has taken on five additional schools from two additional conferences and one independent. He has served as that league's President and Treasurer as well as on numerous committees. He has also served as a host to over 60 MHSAA tournament events.

Dropp was inducted into the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1991, and the Michigan High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1992. He is also active in the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and with his local church, St. Theodore's Catholic Church in Westland. He was nominated for the Bush Award by the athletic directors of the Mega Conference.

"As a teacher, teacher-coach, and administrator, Robert Dropp has made great contributions to the educational athletics community in his lifetime of service to Garden City," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "He has been instrumental in two mergers – one of schools, one of conferences – which have worked to the betterment of all parties in his community and his region. We are pleased to honor him with the Bush Award."

Jim Scott – In the early 1990s, the MHSAA began to look into the issue of weight management in high school wrestling, and developed one of the nation's most comprehensive programs with the assistance of Jim Scott.

Scott, an associate professor in the Department of Movement Science at Grand Valley State University, had already been deeply involved with wrestling as a coach and training expert, especially at the collegiate and Olympic training levels. He was the NAIA Wrestling Coach of the Year at Grand Valley in 1967, led the Lakers to back-to-back second-place finishes in the national tournament, and was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1996. He was the director of the United States Olympic Wrestling Trials in 1984, and has long served as a wrestling consultant for the NCAA, the National Wrestling Coaches Association and the MHSAA.

Working with experts in the area of weight management from several other states, Scott helped engineer the nation's first interscholastic weight management assessment program in Wisconsin; and built on that work with the MHSAA, which made its program mandatory in 1997-98. Scott's work with the MHSAA continues, as he was instrumental in the conversion of the weight assessment process from a paper-based data gathering system an online system, and in developing a training program for more than 300 body composition assessors across the state who annually serve wrestling schools in the collection of data.

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Scott earned his bachelor’s degree in health, physical education and recreation from Central Michigan University in 1967, and has also received a master’s and a specialist degree from CMU. He has done additional studies at the Moscow Central Institute of Physical Culture and Sport, and Oklahoma State University. He also serves as a National Ski Patrol Outdoor Emergency Care Volunteer, and with worship music at New Hope Lutheran Church. He was nominated for the award by Lansing Public Schools.

“One of the things that sets high school sports apart is its work to do everything possible to ensure the safety and well-being of its participants,” Roberts said. “Weight-cutting practices had long been a concern in the wrestling community in general, and the work of Jim Scott and others saw high schools come to grips with this issue first, setting a tone for other levels of the sport to emulate. Jim’s work has contributed to wrestlers in Michigan learning how to best manage their competition weight to not only optimize their participation, but their health.”

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,600 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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