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**The Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation  
Announces Honorees for  
2010 “Honoring Legends-Inspiring Leaders” Awards Dinner**  
Former NFL MVP Rich Gannon to Give Keynote Address;  
Bob and Pinky McNamara to Receive Distinguished Minnesotan Awards

**Minneapolis, MN, March 16, 2010-** The Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame will honor outstanding individuals from the world of amateur and professional football in Minnesota at the Chapter’s annual awards dinner on April 18. The event, which will be held at the University of St. Thomas, will feature a keynote address by 2002 NFL MVP **Rich Gannon**.

Numerous college football and NFL legends will attend the event, and WCCO-TV news personality **Frank Vascellaro** will return for his third year as Master of Ceremonies.

The Minnesota Chapter will present the **2010 Distinguished Minnesotan Award** to brothers **Bob** and **Richard “Pinky” McNamara** for their contributions to Minnesota football. Bob McNamara was a four-year letter winner for the University of Minnesota from 1951-1954, earning All-American honors, All-Big Ten honors, and the team’s MVP award during his senior season. After his career with the Gophers, Bob played in the CFL and NFL for seven years, which included seasons with the Denver Broncos and the Vikings. Pinky McNamara was also a letter winner for the Gophers in the early 1950’s. In 1956, he played halfback in the Blue-Gray Classic and was drafted in the 23rd round by the Baltimore Colts. He earned a BA that same year and went on to become a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist.

The McNamaras remained loyal supporters of the University of Minnesota and its football program long after their playing careers were over. They have spent years raising funds for the university, and their involvement was instrumental to the completion of **TCF Bank Stadium**. Bob served as an honorary captain for the inaugural game in the new stadium on September 12, 2009. Pinky McNamara served on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents from 2001-2005, and his generous gifts helped fund the building of the McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota campus.

**John Lieser** will be honored with the **2010 Outstanding Officiating Award**. To earn the Outstanding Officiating Award, an official (active or retired) must have 25-plus years of experience officiating at a high school, college, or professional level; officiated games at the local, regional, and national levels; must be highly respected by peers and coaches; has given back given back as a mentor to the officiating community. During his more than 45 years in the profession, Lieser has officiated high school football games, including sectional contests and state championships, and college football games in the

North Central (NCC), Minnesota Intercollegiate (MIAC), and Northern Intercollegiate (NIC) Conferences. Lieser has also officiated 16 NCAA Division II playoff football games and worked the 1987 Division II National Championship game in Florence, Alabama, between Portland State and Troy State. His career is further highlighted by 49 years officiating high school and intercollegiate basketball games and championships, and 45 years as the golf coach at Apollo High School in St. Cloud. In 2009, Lieser was enshrined in the Minnesota High School Golf Coaches Association Hall of Fame. In addition to his service on the field of play, Lieser has given back to the profession by teaching a course at St. Cloud State University called “Officiating Football/Basketball.”

**Jim Marshall** is the 2010 recipient of the **Fred Zamberletti Award**. The award, named for the legendary athletic trainer for the Minnesota Vikings, honors an outstanding athletic trainer who has done extensive work in the state of Minnesota. Marshall, this year’s honoree, began his athletic training career as Head Student Trainer at the University of Notre Dame and attended Physical Therapy School at the Mayo Clinic in 1959. He joined the University of Minnesota staff in 1961 under Lloyd “Snapper” Stein and served both the football and hockey teams. Upon Snapper’s retirement in 1975, Marshall was named Head Football Trainer. For 25 years he worked with the Gophers football program then eventually was named Administrative Services Coordinator of the Sports Medicine Department. Marshall’s 42-year career at the University of Minnesota spanned 8 university presidents, 8 head football coaches, 6 head men’s basketball coaches, 6 head men’s hockey coaches and well over 8,000 student athletes from all the Gophers sports teams. In 1993 he was inducted into the Minnesota Athletic Trainers’ Association Hall of Fame. He is also a member of the University of Minnesota “M” Club Hall of Fame.

Eight young men will receive recognition as outstanding high school **Scholar-Athletes**. These Scholar-Athletes, as nominated by their football coaches, were evaluated on their academic achievement (3.0 GPA or better), football ability, performance, leadership, attitude, and service to their community. Remarkably, the average GPA among the finalists was 3.84.

Scholar-athlete award winner **Marshall Ash** was a two-way starter and team captain for Milaca High School. He has earned All-Conference and All-State academic honors and was a state entrant for the wrestling team. Ash is also a member of the track team, band, and National Honor Society and is dedicated to service activities, including a youth mission trip to the Philippines. Ash plans to study pre-medicine in college. He is the son of Paul and Gayle Ash.

St. Thomas Academy fullback **Dan Freund** was named All-Conference, All-State Honorable Mention (*Pioneer Press*), and earned the title of Classic Suburban Conference leading rusher in 2009. His academic achievements include Academic All-State honors and award-winning scores on the National Latin Exam. He volunteers at an elementary school care program and plans to study Economics at Princeton University. He is the son of Janet Freund.

Scholar-athlete **Jacob McHenry** is a three-year letter winner, captain, and 2009 team MVP for Henry Sibley High School. He was a 2009 Academic All-State selection and a Distinguished Academic Award Winner as a participant on the football, basketball, and baseball teams. McHenry has been involved with Feed My Starving Children and the Mendota Heights Youth Association. He plans to study aerospace engineering or business entrepreneurship in college. He is the son of Marcy and Shinya McHenry.

Award winner **Gabe Mezzenga** was a two-time State Champion during his time playing for Totino-Grace High School. He was named North Suburban Conference Defensive Player of the Year and was named an All-State, All-Metro, and All-Conference (twice) selection. Mezzenga is a member of the National Honor Society and was a winner of the Spotlight on Scholarship Gold Award three years in a row. He has made and served meals at hunger organizations and has tutored elementary school students. After high school, he plans to study sports medicine. He is the son of Tony and Rainie Mezzenga.

Captain of the Woodbury High School football team, **Anthony Osifuye** was an All-Conference and Academic All-State selection in 2009. He also earned All-Conference honors in track and field in 2009 and was named Student of the Year in 2007. Osifuye was the recipient of Woodbury At Your Service (W@YS) Awards in 2008 and 2009 for performing more than 20 hours of community service during the summer and football season. Osifuye plans to attend the University of Minnesota and study biomedical engineering. He is the son of Tracy Williams.

Scholar-athlete **Alexander Richelsen** led Holy Family Catholic High School to a 9-2 record and earned Academic All-State honors in 2009. In addition to football, he is involved in numerous service organizations including LaSallian Youth Club and National Honor Society and has participated in service trips to Florida and Ethiopia. He has lettered in football, basketball, and track and field, and he plans to attend the University of Notre Dame to study pre-medicine. He is the son of Michael and Jennifer Richelsen.

Holder of every receiving record at Andover High School, **Jason Schneider** amassed a three-year record of 20 wins, 12 losses, and one section title as a starter on both defense and offense. He earned Student of the Month honors in his freshman, sophomore, and junior years and is a member of the National Honor Society. His service activities include leading Bible studies and participating in a mission trip to Reynosa, Mexico. He plans to pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy at South Dakota State University. He is the son of Brent and Kristin Schneider.

Melrose Area High School stand-out **Kristopher Wensmann** earned Academic All-Conference (West Central Conference) and Academic All-State honors in 2009 and was recognized for Outstanding Achievement in German language in 2008 and 2009. In addition to being two-time captain of the wrestling and tennis teams, Wensmann has served as a Little Guy wrestling coach and has volunteered at Sharing and Caring Hands. He plans to study pharmacy in college. He is the son of Kevin and Karen Wensmann.

The **3rd Annual “Honoring Legends-Inspiring Leaders” awards dinner** will take place on **Sunday, April 18, at 6:00 pm** on the campus of the **University of St. Thomas**. To purchase tickets to the event or to become a member of the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation, please visit the Minnesota Chapter website: **[www.nffmn.org](http://www.nffmn.org)**.

About the Minnesota Chapter:

The mission of the Minnesota Chapter of the NFF is to serve Minnesota and the nation by developing leadership, sportsmanship, competitive spirit, and academic excellence in America’s youth through promoting amateur football. The Chapter aims to:

- Inspire excellence through Minnesota and College Football Hall of Fame player and coach role models
- Highlight the educational and character-building benefits of football through youth programs
- Honor, publicize, and financially support student-athlete football players

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