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For Immediate Release:

From: Tom Critchley; MBCA Executive Director

For further information: <http://www/mshsca.org/boysbasketball>

## **2024 MBCA Hall of Honor**

The MBCA Hall of Honor has been established to honor those persons who have helped to improve/promote/ and or serve basketball in Minnesota. Honorees have been longtime supporters of their local teams or have given outstanding service to the game of basketball. Awards are given in four categories: Officials, Media, Coach - Head/Assistant, and Friend of Basketball. Hall Of Honor inductees can be nominated by a MBCA member, the MBCA Executive Board, or the MBCA Hall of Fame committee.

The following individuals will be inducted as members of the MBCA Hall of Honor in 2024:

- **Mike Max; Media** – Mike attended Gaylord High School where he was a three year starter for Hall of Fame Coach Darrell Kreun. He played college basketball for one year at Hamline University. Mike’s contributions to the game have come in the form of covering high school basketball since 1986. He has reported on high school basketball for WCCO TV, Midwest Sports Channel and WCCO Radio with various programs. Throughout his career “Maxie” has been and continues to be an advocate for high school athletes and coaches. His reporting highlights the impact of high school sports on individuals and communities, showcasing not only performance, but also highlighting the impact of athletics beyond the game.
- **Paul McDonald; Official/Coach** – Paul, a member of the McDonald family “coaching tree,” started his coaching career as high school coach at Cotton and Tower-Soudan High Schools. He served 29 Years as Men’s Head Basketball Coach at Vermillion CC. His service to the Vermillion community also included serving as Athletic Director, Health instructor, and assistant coach in Football and Golf. Paul is a 35 year MSHSL Basketball and Football official, retiring after the 2023-24 season. During his officiating career, he worked multiple State Tournament Championship games in both sports. He still continues to serve as a coordinator/observer and mentor for MSHSL officials. McDonald was also a member of the MSHSL Board of Directors from 2014-2018 and supported and helped guide multiple hoops initiatives during his time on the Board.
- **Harold Meissner; Official**– Harold has been a MSHSL official for 52 years, officiating five sports. He has worked basketball games for 50 years, starting when he was 19 years old and retiring in 2022. Harold continues to officiate football (45 yrs), volleyball (40 yrs), baseball (40 yrs) and softball (35 yrs). He has officiated several Football State Tournaments and numerous section finals in all five sports. Harold serves as secretary and assigner for the Runestone Officials Association, taking that role on early in his career, and now sharing the responsibilities with his son and friend. A highlight of his officiating career has been to work games side by side with three of his sons, his brother, sister-in-law and nephew. In addition to his MSHSL service, Harold was involved within his community, managing the Amateur Baseball Team and youth baseball/softball program for many years.
- **Matt Mullenbach; Coach** – Matt Mullenbach has spent the entirety of his 25 year career coaching boys basketball and teaching math at Richfield High School. Following his graduation from St. John’s University, Matt began coaching the Spartan’s 9B team under Greg Miller. He worked his way up the ranks, eventually becoming the varsity assistant under Jim Dimick Jr. As part of Dimick’s staff, Matt was a member of the Spartan basketball team that won a share of the Classic Suburban title in 2003-2004 and finished state runner-up in class AAA for the 2004-2005 season. The following year, after

graduating two DI athletes, the Spartans returned to the state tournament, this time in class AAAA. Matt was named Assistant Coach of the Year in 2017 by the MBCA and the MSHSCA. Richfield advanced to the state tournament in the 2019-2020 season that was unfortunately canceled due to Covid. The following year, the Spartans won a share of the Tri-Metro Conference title and advanced to the state semi-finals. In 2023, Mullenbach was acknowledged by the Minnesota Black Basketball Coaches Association for his years of service. In addition to coaching basketball, Mullenbach spent three years as an assistant soccer coach at RHS, including one conference winning team.

- **Craig Olson; Media**— Craig started his sports broadcasting career at KDLM Radio in Detroit Lakes following his high school graduation in June, 1973. After two years covering Laker sports and 3 Pine to Palm amateur golf tournaments, Craig moved out of state for 6 years, covering sports 3 years each in Missouri and Utah. He returned to Minnesota in 1981 and Craig has been working in Fergus Falls radio since then, covering a variety of athletic events on four stations (KBRF AM, KZCR FM, KJJK AM and KJJK FM) owned now by Leighton Media. Craig has covered over 6,000 high school, community college and amateur sporting events, along with a year of Triple-A baseball in Ogden, Utah. In 1999 he started his own website, craigolsonsports.com, which provides coverage of 30 schools in Fergus Falls and the surrounding area. Craig was awarded the Minnesota State High School League Outstanding Media Service Award in 2017.
- **Pat Ruff; Media** Pat is in his 40th year of covering high school sports. A graduate of Minnesota State University Moorhead, the Fargo, N.D. native worked for one year at the Wahpeton Daily News, followed by five years at the Winona Daily News, one year at the St. Cloud Times and the rest at the Rochester Post Bulletin. Pat has covered the gamut of things at the Post Bulletin, from high school, to college to the Twins and Timberwolves. But the vast amount of his time has concentrated on high school sports, including his favorite, basketball (though volleyball is quickly gaining ground). In March of 2022, Pat took home the Minnesota State High School League's Outstanding Media Service Award for his 36 years of service at the Rochester Post Bulletin. Pat has also won a pack of Minnesota Newspaper Association awards through the years.
- **Dean Verdoes; Friend of Basketball/Coach** – Dean was the captain of the legendary Edgerton 1960 State Championship team and later captained his Macalester College basketball squad. Upon graduation from college, he coached High School basketball for 20 years including assignments at Clarkfield, Madison, and Henry Sibley high schools. At Henry Sibley he also served as Athletic Director for 12 years and coached Soccer and Boys Golf. His service leadership to high school athletics included a four year term on the MSHSL Board of Directors, 21 years as the assistant scorer for the Boys State Basketball Tournament, 19 years as the Tournament Manager for the Boys and Girls 3AAA State Golf Tournament, and 14 years as the band host for the Football State Tournament. Dean was inducted into the MSHSL Hall of Fame in 2011 and was in the 2023 inaugural class of the Henry Sibley/Two Rivers Hall of Fame.
- **Jim Weinzierl; Official** - For more than four decades, Jim Weinzierl was a fixture in High School and College gyms as a basketball official. Jim has been a registered official with the Minnesota State High School League for 41 years in Basketball, 27 years in Volleyball and 10 years in Football. Jim worked more than 3,000 college, high school varsity and high school junior varsity basketball games during his career. Of that total, 1,800 were varsity high school games, including 23 State Tournament appearances and 10 State Championship games. He has been the Coordinator of Basketball Officials for Northwest Minnesota for the Minnesota State High School League for the past 29 years and also serves as the Assistant Supervisor of Officials for the State Boys and Girls Basketball Tournaments. For 13 years, Jim was the Executive Secretary of Region 8A for the Minnesota State High School League. He received a

MSHSL Distinguished Achievement Award in 2018 and was awarded a Distinguished Service Award from the MSHSCA. Jim was inducted into the Minnesota State High School League Hall of Fame as an official in 2022.

The honorees will be honored guests, recognized, and presented with an award at the MBCA Fall Clinic Awards Luncheon at the Mpls. Hyatt Regency, Friday, October 25, 2024.