

October 16, 2022

For Immediate Release:

From: Tom Critchley; MBCA Executive Director

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

2022 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. To be eligible for the Hall of Honor, a person must have been involved with basketball for at least 20 years. That person must 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 2022:

- **Vance Carlson; Media** – In 1987 after serving two years as an intern for the Fargo Forum Sports Department, Vance accepted a position as Sports Editor for the Park Rapids Enterprise. During the 35 years that have followed Carlson has covered and written about the Park Rapids, Menahga, and Nevis high school sports teams. Highlights in his career include State Basketball Tournament trips by the Nevis Boys, Nevis Girls, and Menahga Girls basketball teams. In addition to game reports and results, Vance has also written about memorable achievements for student-athletes and coaches whom who have achieved milestone accomplishments during their high school playing and coaching careers.
- **Jack Coombe; Official** – Jack served as a MSHSL Basketball Official for over 50 years. In addition to his service on the court, Coombe also officiated football, softball, and baseball. Jack officiated numerous MSHSL State Tournaments and Minnesota Community College tournaments; including MSHSL Championship games in basketball and football. In addition to his service on the courts and fields, he has served in multiple settings including; Executive Secretary of the Range Coaches and Officials Association (31 years), a mentor for new officials (50 years), and as an Official Evaluator and Observer for the MSHS- a position he continues to hold today. Jack was selected for and received Distinguished Service awards from the MSHSL and the MSHSCA. His service also includes serving 15 years on the Biwabik/Mesabi East School Boards.
- **Jeff Coombe; Official** – Following in the footsteps of his father, Jeff has officiated MSHSL Basketball for 30 plus years. During his tenure as an MSHSL official he has had multiple State Tournament assignments and Championship games. Coombe is a member of the Minneapolis Official's Association and served as a President and Board Member of the organization. Jeff has also officiated College basketball for 30 plus years at the DII, DIII, NAIA, and JUCO levels. He has officiated multiple college Conference and Regional Championships plus National DII, DIII, NJCAA tournaments and championships.
- **Eric Gray; Official** – Eric has been a registered MSHSL basketball official since 1998. During his tenure, Eric has worked countless girls and boys section games, 20 girls and boys state tournament assignments, including five championship games. Eric has previously served as the basketball clinician for Gopher State Officials Association (GSOA) with the MSHSL. He is currently the treasurer for the Gopher association. In 2016, Eric was appointed as a regional MSHSL basketball coordinator for the metro area. In his roles with both the MSHSL and Gopher association, Eric's responsibilities include the recruitment, retention, training/development and evaluation of basketball officials with a special emphasis on women and officials of color.
- **Justin Hegna; Friend of Basketball/Media** – Justin served as a High School/Middle School Educator for 17 years, including 8 years as the Head Coach of the Becker Girls Basketball team where he led the Bulldogs to a 2007 Class AAA State Championship and earned State Coach of the Year honors. He was also an Assistant Coach in football and track and field during that time frame. Hegna started High School Sports Media Publications in 2001 and now as Breakdown Sports USA it has served Minnesota High school sports for 22 years. The first Breakdown Sports High School event started with two games in 2004. It has grown to now having over 200 games. Summer and Fall League Events have eclipsed to nearly 2500 teams per year. Breakdown Sports USA focuses solely on High School programs.

- **Mark Knoblauch; Media** – Mark is in his 41st year of broadcasting high school sports. After beginning at WELY in Ely in 1981, one year later he moved to the Sauk Centre radio station to cover Sauk Centre and Melrose high school athletics. The Sauk Centre station was sold in 1999 and Mark moved to the Albany radio station so he could continue to cover Mainstreeter and Dutchmen sports. In 2013, he created MID MN Sports and the Melrose and Sauk Centre games are now live streamed on that website. Mark has broadcasted approximately 7,000 games of many different sports. One of his most memorable experiences was watching and following the 2015 Melrose AA State Champions in their journey to the title.
- **Julie Longstreet; Friend of Basketball** - Julie has been an instrumental leader, serving as president, advisor, and coach within the Delano Basketball Association for 20 plus years. Her most influential work has been the formation and growth of the Delano boys and girls youth basketball programs. Longstreet has organized and scheduled every basketball tournament Delano has run for 20 years. In addition to her tournament responsibilities Julie also organizes leadership meetings, plans tryouts, serves as a youth coach, and answers questions regarding the DYBA for Delano families. Julie has been integral to the success of the Delano Basketball Association and the Tigers High School teams with her unselfish leadership resulting in establishing and maintaining a strong and consistent K-12 basketball program.

The honorees will be honored guests, recognized, and presented with a plaque at the MBCA Fall Clinic Awards Luncheon at the Mpls. Hyatt Regency, Friday, October 28, 2022.