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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MSHSL to honor Contest Officials

BROOKLYN CENTER, Minn. --- Eight individuals will be honored with service awards by the Minnesota State High School League for their decades of service and

commitment to officiating.

Those honored with Distinguished Service Awards will be Len Brown of Grand Rapids; Rochester's Loren Else; Battle Lake's Chuck Evert; Richfield's Mike Karnas; Georgianne Kornfuehrer of Hopkins; Waconia's Tim Litfin; Shorewood's Ron Poeschel, and Robbinsdale's Ann Suits.

These officials and judges will be honored as part of the Championship Saturday festivities during the boys' basketball state tournament at Target Center. The ceremony will take place during the halftime intermission of the Class A championship game on March 23. The game is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m.

"All of these award winners are great officials," said Jason Nickleby, the MSHSL's Coordinator of Officials. "But more importantly, they have given so much to their Association members through mentorship and training, thus benefitting Minnesota State High School League member schools and participants."

Here is a look at the officials and judges that will be honored:

Distinguished Service Awards:

- **Leonard "Len" Brown, Grand Rapids:** The long-tenured leader of Grand Rapids Area Umpires, Len has been a League official for more than 50 years and a member of the Association for 24 years. Len has served the Association in many roles including mentor, teacher, assignor, and tireless advocate for his umpires. Len has worked a combined 12 state tournaments in football, baseball and softball.
- **Loren Else, Rochester:** He has been a key leader with the Rochester Area Officials Association serving as Vice President of Basketball and two terms as Association President in just more than 21 seasons. Loren has been at the forefront of mentoring and the encouragement of new officials that served his area. Loren, who led with incredible grace and humility, worked 19 state basketball tournaments and one championship game in his tenure.

- **Charles “Chuck” Evert, Battle Lake:** A football and basketball official, Chuck has provided distinguished service to the Ottertail Officials Association. He has served as the Association Leader for more than 40 years, including the role of Assignor. Chuck has served as a mentor, evaluator and clinician for basketball and football officials including his role as a MSHSL Regional Coordinator for basketball. Chuck has also served the member schools and his Association as the Region 6A Secretary and a term on the MSHSL Board of Directors in his impressive tenure.
- **Mike Karnas, Richfield:** He has been a successful multi-sport official for more than 40 years. Mike has served Minneapolis Officials Association, where he has been a mentor and an Association leader for football and basketball beginning in 1978. He is highly regarded as a top official and outstanding crewmate. Mike has represented his Association at the state tournament level in both football and basketball.
- **Georgianne “Gigi” Kornfuehrer, Hopkins:** From the Metro Volleyball and Classic Volleyball Officials Associations. Georgianne was a member of these Associations for 30 years, serving as an caring and supportive mentor for numerous new volleyball officials. She officiated at a high level and was one of the most dependable officials in the long history of the Associations before retirement from active officiating this past season.
- **Tim Litfin, Waconia:** He has been instrumental in the success of the Gopher State Officials Association with roles as a board member and baseball Charter Clinician in 38 years of service. Tim has been an advocate for Gopher State Officials in football, basketball as well as baseball, serving as a clinician, mentor and new official recruitment coordinator. Tim has been a state tournament level official in each sport that he works while giving back to new and veteran members of Gopher State Officials Association.
- **Ron Poeschel, Shorewood:** Ron is a distinguished member of Northwest Association of Umpires, and a respected contributory leader for the Association in his 44 years of membership. Ron has served the Association in a variety of roles including terms as a board member and vice president in addition to many hours as an umpire observer. Ron has been a go-to leader by doing whatever the Association needed while officiating multiple state tournaments in basketball and baseball in more than 53 years as an official.
- **Ann Suits, Robbinsdale:** Ann, a 28-year member of the Minnesota Girls Gymnastics Officials Association, has been the face of the Association, serving as assignor, clinic coordinator and Charter Clinician. She played an integral part in launching the Association’s recruitment program, “Flip it Forward.” Ann is a vital contributor to the state gymnastics community serving as MSHSL State Coordinator and State Meet Referee.