

MIAA Retired Executive Director Richard F. Neal to Receive a Top NFHS Honor

(Franklin, MA) – Richard F. Neal, retired Executive Director of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), is among 15 leaders of high school athletic and activity programs across the country selected to receive National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Citations.



An award designed to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the NFHS, state high school associations, athletic director and coaching professions, the officiating avocation and fine arts/performing arts programs, the NFHS Citation is one of the most highly regarded achievements in high school athletics and performing arts. Richard Neal is the recipient of the honor in Section 1 and will receive his award along with the other national recipients on July 1st at the 98th Annual NFHS Summer Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island.

Mr. Neal began his professional career at Pope John High School in Everett where he served in a variety of roles for 11 years. During that time he served as a teacher, athletic director, guidance counselor, acting assistant principal and principal. He left Pope John in 1977 to accept a position as Assistant Director of MSSPA, the predecessor organization to MSSAA.

In 1978, Mr. Neal was named Assistant Director of both MSSAA and MIAA, moving up to Executive Director the following year. He realized upon assuming that position that the growth of the new dual organization would depend upon seeing to it that all the interscholastic athletics in the Commonwealth were administered centrally by MIAA, and that the MSSAA, as a voluntary organization, would prosper only if it could attract a wide membership. As the years went on, both of these conditions were met, and both organizations grew in size and in scope.

Under the guidance and leadership of Mr. Neal, both the MIAA and MSSAA saw tremendous growth through the 1980's and 90's, quickly outgrowing previous headquarters. In 2000, with membership hovering around the 1,000 mark in the MSSAA and more and more MIAA sports being introduced, another need for expansion brought about Mr. Neal's proposal to the boards that a new building, specifically designed for its needs, be constructed. Today, the MIAA headquarters in Franklin, MA hosts thousands of school administrators, educators, students, coaches, officials and professional development attendees, often in a meeting room appropriately named after Mr. Neal. Richard Neal's humanity and concern for the welfare of his employees and associates is legendary.

In attaining his own success, Richard Neal has enhanced the lives of his family, his colleagues, his organizational members and thousands of Massachusetts young people.