

# HALL of HONOR INDUCTEES

## OFFICIAL

### **Philip DeGabriele – Negaunee, MI**



Philip DeGabriele is being inducted into the BCAM Hall of Honor in the Officials category. He has been a registered MHSAA basketball official for 44 years and counting. Over the years he has officiated countless district and regional high school games as well as three state championships: Girls in 1993 and again in 1998. Also a boys championship game in 2002. For seven years he officiated college games in the GLIAC. He continues doing college games for DIII and Junior Colleges. For 25 years Phil has been a supervisor of officials as well.

Fellow official David St. Onge nominated Phil for the Hall of Honor. David says Phil is a person of high moral character both on and off the court. He is a “team player” and is willing to help out whenever needed. He has been an outstanding mentor for new officials.

Phil is married to Mary DeGabriele and resides in Negaunee, MI. He would like to mention Steve Ayotte, his officiating partner for 44 years at all the high school games. He also wants to recognize his college officiating partners David St. Onge and Gene Aho.

## ASSISTANT COACH

### **Phillip North – Roseville HS**

High school basketball lost one of its greatest supporters on July 8, 2020 as Phillip North passed away at the young age of 66. At that time, Phil was an assistant varsity coach at Roseville High School but had also spent time as an assistant coach at Detroit Osborn and Westland John Glenn as well as Dearborn Fordson. Hassan Nizam, former varsity head coach at Fordson and Roseville, says that Phil was Roseville’s “director of basketball operations”. There wasn’t anything he wouldn’t or hadn’t done for his varsity, JV and freshman teams over the years—running the clock keeping stats, scouting, running practices, doing individual workouts with players, fundraising and being the media contact.

Former John Glenn head coach, Dan Young nominated Phil for the BCAM Hall of Honor just before Phil’s passing. “He was one of my all-time favorites,” Young said. “Phil loved the game. When he helped us at John Glenn I remember how excited he was to be involved. He was so thankful to be a part of the program and the kids really appreciated him. I miss him to this day.” He attended almost every BCAM Coaches Clinic and every Hall of Fame Banquet. He always showed up early at the banquet and was ready to help with set-up if he was needed.

Coach Nizam writes, “Phil North loved this game more than anybody I know. More so than loving the game, he loved being around young people and watching them achieve their goals through the game of basketball. Through his various coaching stops his impact was heavily felt and appreciated by all. To me Coach North was much more than a coaching colleague. He was someone who believed in me from day one and helped me in every step of the journey. I give him a lot of credit for our teams’ success and my success as a coach. There wasn’t anything Phil wouldn’t do to help our players and our team. Phil regularly volunteered to film games, gave players who needed rides a lift home or to practice, and stayed after or came early to supervise them shooting. He was truly the best teammate I’ve ever had.”

Phil’s family includes children Caroline and Nick, grandchildren Emily and Sophia, fiancé Debbie VanNest and ex-wife Laura.



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## OFFICIAL, ASSISTANT COACH

### L. Lee Piehpo – Howell, MI



Lee's life with basketball began in 8<sup>th</sup> grade when the coach told him he would never be a basketball player. From that time, he dedicated himself to prove that coach wrong and went on to play high school and college basketball, become an assistant, then varsity, then college coach and just as important, an official. Lee has been a registered high school basketball official for 50 years and a collegiate official for 25 years. He has worked everything from numerous state finals to community college, NAIA, D3 and D2 tournament finals. Lee has officiated an estimated

2000 games. While he has enjoyed his time on the court, nothing compares to the comradery and friendship that he has made over the years.

In addition to officiating, he coached 37 years at Howell for teams from middle school up to girl's varsity, accumulating 495 wins at all levels combined. He was the freshman boys coach for 16 years, varsity girls coach for 14 years and coached 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls for 6 years. In 1996, his girls' varsity team made it all the way to the state finals, winning all but their very last game that season. He even was blessed to be able to coach a half year at the college level as the interim head coach at UD Mercy. During this time, Lee co-founded the Livingston Sting AAU Girls Basketball Organization. He won many AAU state championships with his teams and ranked nationally as well.

Lee has dedicated himself to improving the game of basketball in Michigan through his officiating and coaching. He is extremely proud of teaching life values and goal setting to his players. But basketball didn't just stop with Lee; it has truly been a family affair with the Piepho family. Lee's wife Marjie was a scorekeeper for over 37 years; and children Tracy, Jason and Sara have all played sports at the college level and are now, or have been, varsity high school or collegiate basketball coaches.

## MEDIA

### John Raffel – Big Rapids, MI

John Raffel has been writing about high school sports for 47 years! The Osceola County Herald was where he first started as an intern in 1974. Beginning in '76 he covered high school basketball full time for the L'Anse Sentinel. After 3 years there, he began at the Big Rapids Pioneer and was employed there until 1996. After a 14 year stint at the Greenville Daily News, he came back to the Pioneer and has continued there until present. Over the years he has freelanced as well, covering 50-60 mid-Michigan schools for MLive, St. Ignace News, Kalkaska Northwest Voice, Clare Sentinel, Ionia Sentinel Standard and the L'Anse Sentinel.

Both the Michigan Press Association and the Associated Press Have recognized his work with awards for his basketball stories.

John has written hundreds and thousands of article on high school athletes, teams and games over the years. He has many highlights and funny stories he could tell you about his 47 years in the field, but he says probably the best game he ever covered was the Division III State Championship game between Iron Mountain and Pewamo-Westphalia in 2019.



## **FRIEND OF BASKETBALL**

### **Marjorie Piepho – Howell, MI**

Marjie Piepho has been the official scorer and individual stat keeper for middle and high school games for 37 years in Howell. This is an estimated 2600 games! When Lee Piepho, the head coach, checked the stats versus him doing game film stats, he found that her stats were nearly perfect. When the former Howell varsity coach, Jerry Johnson would recognize her at his banquets he would say that she got at least 95%. All this was done before the use of statistic apps and all had to be done from visual and memory when the action was occurring. After a while, Lee stopped doing game film stats and relied on her stats. She was a scoring machine!! These accurate stats helped many players over the years when they needed them for their college recruiting purposes.



Since Lee was busy at his full-time job plus coaching and officiating, Marjie would type and email out his weekly newsletter to all the girls on his team in order to keep them informed about schedules, fundraisers and all the happenings. Marjie also helped Lee with the registration of his Lady Highlander Summer Basketball Camps as well as being very active with the Howell Athletic Boosters.

Outside of the school-based teams, Marjie and Lee, along with others, organized the Livingston Sting AAU teams to better improve girl's basketball in Howell and Brighton. Marjie helped organize the tryouts, kept the budget, helped with fundraising efforts, and again, kept score and stats for all these games as well. She pretty much knew all the rules and helped the coaches and officials from her seat at the scorer's table when she was needed.

Marjie and Lee have been married for 53 years. They have three children: Tracy (Carrie) Piepho, Jason (Heather) Piepho, Sarah Piepho and grandchildren: Skylar, Peyton, Grace, Gabrielle and Teddic. Marjie also wishes to remember her parents, as her "life would not be what it is today without them." Additionally she wishes to thank Charles, Shirley and Marjorie Lammlein.

## **FRIEND of BASKETBALL**

### **Chuck Walters – Napoleon HS**



Chuck Walters was nominated for the BCAM Hall of Honor in the category of "Friend of Basketball" by Tom Johns, athletic director at Napoleon High School. "Chuck is a tremendous person and we appreciate all the hours he has dedicated to our basketball program. Every time I see him, I let him know we would love to have him back full time." The 2018-19 season was Chuck's final season at the Napoleon scoring table. He ran the scoreboard for 35 years, from 1979-2019. During this time he supported approximately 400 season and tournament games combined. He even had to learn three different score boards!

In the off season, Chuck could be found umpiring baseball for 33 years (until 2016), and also officiating football for the last 38 years. The only thing Chuck has done longer than being involved with Michigan high school sports is being married to his wife Judie! He wants to thank her for her support. Thank you also to Tom Johns at Napoleon HS. Chuck and Judie have two children, Stacy (Andy) Best and Chuck (Melissa) Walters.

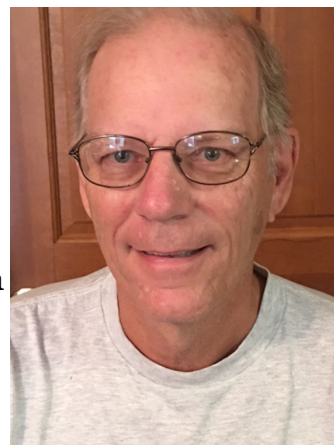


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## ASSISTANT COACH, OFFICIAL, FRIEND OF BASKETBALL

### Bruce Ritter – Brighton HS

“Hundreds of girls and boys were first introduced to basketball as members of teams that Bruce Ritter coached,” notes Dan Christner, who nominated Bruce for the Hall of Honor. For 43 years, Bruce coached in a variety of positions in 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade basketball for boys and girls at Brighton Area Schools tallying up over 250 wins as a head coach. He also helped out with other aspects of the basketball program at Brighton. “Even though he had just run middle school practices or games, Bruce was always willing to scout a game, fill in to run the clock or keep the scorebook for our high school contests,” says Christner. Bruce was the announcer and scorekeeper for 15 years at BHS.

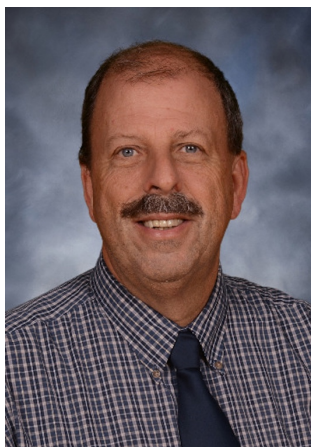


When Bruce was not working at Brighton schools, he was officiating. For 50 years he has been a registered MHSAA official for basketball, and about half as long for football. Once while officiating a boy's varsity basketball game while wearing his contacts, a fan yelled “You're blind! Get some glasses!” So at halftime, he took out his contacts and wore his glasses for the second half. Now what can the fan say??

In his “spare time” Bruce enjoyed 37 years of ushering and doing bench security for the University of Michigan men's basketball team. He also coached middle school track for 36 years. He is married to his wife Jane, and has one son Andrew and a daughter Sarah. Bruce would like to give special mention to coaches he has worked with over the years: Robert Scranton, Robert Marks, Gary Stewart, Dan Christner, Marty Lindberg, and Gary Morrison as well as athletic directors Duke Williams and John Thompson. He also wishes to thank all his former players, parents and Brighton Area Schools.

## OFFICIAL, FRIEND OF BASKETBALL

### Don Gustafson – St. Ignace HS



Don Gustafson has been a lifelong St Ignace Saint (as he graduated high school at the age of 15 and headed to MSU a few months later at 16). He returned to St Ignace after college graduation and has been an integral part of their athletic success ever since! Don's impact on the St Ignace Saints' athletic programs as a teacher, athletic director, principal and superintendent over the last 39 years are a “given”, but it is the time he gives above and beyond his “paying job” that makes him so special. Dorene Ingalls, girl's varsity head coach, nominated Don for the Hall of Honor in both the Friend of Basketball and Official categories. ““Gus” has been a positive force to our basketball program,” she writes. “He is always there when we need a listening ear and to answer questions regarding rules on and off the court. He is willing to help with PA announcing, scorekeeping, timer operating, and radio announcing. He also offers his

time refereeing during camps and has mentored numerous others to become referees. My son Jackson has Gus to thank since he is a huge reason why my son has pursued officiating. I am sure Gus will continue to volunteer his time even after his retirement this summer and we look forward to his continued leadership and friendship. Thank you Gus, it has truly been an honor to have you and your family in our lives and you have truly represented what it is to be a Saint!!” *(continued-)*

Don has been a registered MHSAA official for over 42 years. He started his officiating career while at MSU doing intramural sports. He has been blessed to have officiated 1 state final, 2 semifinals, 5 quarter finals and numerous district and regional games. He has mentored many new officials over the years as well. Don has also served on the MSHAA Representative Council since 2015, and is a current member on the Upper Peninsula Athletic Committee.

Other area coaches sing Don's praises as well. Some of the comments we received include: "Don has truly always had a "kid-first mentality" in all facets, and officiating is no different. As a coach, I greatly appreciated his patience and even-keel when it came to high pressure situations." – Adam Stefanski, Boyne City

"The ultimate diplomat: thorough, fair, pleasant and a good sense of humor." - Matt Tamm, Petoskey

"I always enjoyed Don's ability to keep the flow of the game going and communicate with coaches and players. He had the ability to talk with people which made the game more enjoyable." - Jimmy Suggitt, Rudyard

"I have had the pleasure of coaching in many games over the past 20+ years that Don officiated. The example he sets of how to work with our student athletes is difficult to beat. His contribution to high school basketball in Northern Michigan has made it one of the best areas in the state to coach and play in." - Barry Salter, Cheboygan

"Don has been an incredible champion for school sports over his entire career. Very few people have made such contributions as an administrator, coach, parent and official. Don has been one of the most significant positive forces in our state, and especially for the upper peninsula, over his stellar career." - MHSAA Executive Director Mark Uyl

Don lives in St. Ignace with his wife Sherrie. His children are Bradley, Lucas and Linnie.

## **ASSISTANT COACH, OFFICIAL**

### **Robert E. Zaranek – Grosse Pte Area, MI**

Robert Zaranek has over 1000 basketball wins under his belt. Even more if you were to add in his 15 years of AAU coaching experience. And I suppose if you wanted to consider all the games played while coaching baseball, track, and softball, you might be able to add several hundred more wins to that total! The list goes on and on of the League Championships and Catholic Youth Organization titles Robert has amassed. Since 1982 this man has coached at least one sport and sometimes more than one sport at more than one school at a time. St. Clare Parish, Grosse Pointe South, Brownell Middle School, and Grosse Pointe North have all benefitted from Robert's coaching talents over the years.

If this weren't enough, he has also been a registered MHSAA official since 1979, officiating games in 6 different sports over the years—baseball, softball, basketball, track, cross country and volleyball. We are not sure how, but he also found time to have a wife and family. He has been married to Betty for 37 years and has one daughter Amy, who was an all-state softball player at MSU and coaches softball now with Robert at GPN.

Robert says probably the most rewarding part of coaching is seeing kids when their hard work, time, effort and dedication pays off with positive results. "Work hard and prepare" is the lesson he tries to teach all his players. It will pay off in the classroom, at home, at work and in life.

Robert wishes to thank his wife, daughter, parents, and brothers, as well as Dave Charvat (fellow basketball coach for 40 years) and Kevin Richards (friend and GPS head coach for 15 years).

