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29th Annual PIAA Officials' Convention

Nearly 100 officials honored for 30-years of service

MECHANICSBURG, PA – The 29th Annual PIAA Officials Convention took place August 2nd and 3rd, 2024 at the Hilton Harrisburg. The Officials' Convention was launched by current PIAA Executive Director Dr. Robert Lombardi in 1994. It started with only 75 officials in attendance and has grown to a record 1,474. This year's attendance was the largest one since the conferences' inception. This convention has also become the largest interscholastic sports officials' convention in the country and continues to hold its place! This is a chance for officials to gain educational knowledge, review rule changes for the upcoming sports season(s), and participate in numerous sessions of the recruitment, retainment and the training of officials.

The Conference also featured a few specials guests. The first on Friday was Dave Raymond. He's the original Phillie Phanatic. He made a presentation entitled "The Evolution of Happiness." Then, on Saturday, a keynote speaker from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), Dana Pappas spoke on the value of sports officials in educational based athletics. Pappas is the NFHS Director of Officiating Services.

Beverly Owens-Gaither Meritorious Service Award: Debrah Rosenberger

This award is bestowed upon a registered or non-registered PIAA official who has consistently shown a devotion to PIAA, interscholastic athletics and the athletes we serve. The award winner shows a constant and consistent devotion through their working relationship with PIAA in its many activities. This person will have gained this award through a distinctive period of service to PIAA.

Born and raised in northern York County, Deb Rosenberger is a graduate of Northern High School.

As one of the mainstays of the PIAA office where she has been employed for the past 16 years, she is an active grandmother, mom, wife of 40 years and is often referred to as the first lady of the PIAA. She has worked in the business department, official's department and most recently as the office manager and dedicated support staff member for Dr. Lombardi.

She will be missed by the PIAA family as she heads for retirement.



**PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC
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Left to right: Frank Majikes, PIAA President, Beverly Owens-Gaither, Debrah Rosenberger and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director.

Mario J. Donnangelo Distinguished Service Award: Robert J. Kepler

This service award is the highest award PIAA bestows on a registered sports official. This award is reserved for those registered sports officials whose leadership and efforts have been of great assistance to PIAA, interscholastic athletics, and the high school athletes of Pennsylvania.

Robert J. Kepler is this year's recipient. He's a proud graduate of Penn State University and a retiree from IBM. Kepler has been a registered softball umpire since February 1993, receiving his 30-year gold watch on Saturday evening.

During his umpiring career, Kepler has umpired countless league and district championships and has been fortunate enough to work three state championships contests. Kepler once had the privilege of working a game that went so long, he had a local reporter call his wife to let her know he would be late getting home.

He has served the Central Penn Softball Chapter for 17 years as its President and Interpreter and was a representative for the District III recruiting seminar, held this summer.



Left to right: Frank Majikes, PIAA President, Robert Kepler and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director.

Most recently, Kepler has served as a PIAA ambassador while working security at various Hershey sports venues. He can be counted on to support PIAA at all its championship events.

PIAA Award of Merit: Thomas F. Brady

The PIAA Award of Merit, sponsored by the Board of Directors, is given to those individuals who have served PIAA member schools, their student-athletes and registered sports' officials for many years with devoted and exemplary service.

Thomas F. Brady of Norristown has been a registered PIAA official since 1983. During that time, he was a registered official in basketball, volleyball and softball. Brady retired from the U.S. Postal Service after a 35-year career. He currently serves as the director of the Donofrio High School's Men's Basketball Classic at the Fellowship House in Conshohocken. The tournament has been in existence for over 60 years.

Brady has been married for 49 years and has four beautiful children. He officiated the AAA Girls PIAA Basketball Championship game in 1993. Brady was a 2015 recipient of the Mario J. Donnangelo Distinguished Service Award. He recently retired as the District I Male Officials Representative, a position he held for 28 years. Brady has epitomized the position of an Officials Representative through his service of nearly three decades.



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Left to right: Frank Majikes, PIAA President, Thomas Brady and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director.



Left to right: Gus Tornetta, Norristown Football Officials' Chapter, Thomas Brady and Craig Gilinger, Norristown Officials' Chapter.



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He became an official after encouragement from longtime friends Butch Andrey and Steve Javie. Fun fact, Brady was a college teammate of Geno Auriemma, who is the longtime head coach of the University of Connecticut Women's Basketball team.

Chapter Secretary of the Year Award: Kurt Kesneck

To be nominated for this award, PIAA looks for chapter secretaries who go above and beyond the ordinary duties of recording attendance and sending notices to chapter members. The Chapter Secretary of the Year must show tremendous attention to detail, keep records with the utmost accuracy.

This year's recipient, Kurt Kesneck, has displayed all those qualities and more. When he initially took the secretary position, Kesneck modernized the record keeping of the Washington County Chapter. He established a process that allowed interested coaches to sign up and receive the latest electronic updates. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, he developed a system that allowed the Chapter to meet remotely, and for those who did not have computer skills, he arranged for them to join the meetings via phone.



Left to right: Frank Majikes, PIAA President, Kurt Kesneck and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director.

Chapter Recognition Award: Mr. Michael P. Heisler, York Chapter President

The Chapter Recognition Award goes to the Officials Chapter with the most representation at the Officials' Convention. This year's recipient was the York Officials'



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Chapter. With 450 Chapters across the state, the York Basketball Officials' Chapter had 47 attendees, the most from a single chapter. The President of the York Chapter, Michael P. Heisler was present to accept the award.



Left to right: Frank Majikes, PIAA President, Michael Heisler, York Officials' Chapter and Dr. Robert Lombardi, PIAA Executive Director.

Combined with the awards above, the two-day convention capped off by recognizing PIAA officials for their years of service to its member schools and student-athletes in Pennsylvania. The culminating banquet on Saturday honored nearly 100 officials for their 30 plus year dedication to high school athletics.

Below are the officials who received a gold watch for 30 years of service:

Leonard L. Alansky, Jr.	Mary S. Brenner	James C. Canaday
Sean A. Albright	Thomas E. Brenner	James J. Carbo
Peter J. Andrasko	Stanley Brown	Jeffrey B. Carr
Michael J. Bergold	Timothy E. Burke	Anthony P. Cavallaro
Joseph P. Bidoli, Jr.	Robert E. Butts, Jr.	Mark C. Clarke
Robert J. Bosak	Margie Byers	William Cordero



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Bruce E. Currier	Margaret J. Killian	Rolland N. Paulus, Jr.
Gary R. Davis	Gary Kost	John B. Perkowski
Darren DeFranco	Robert E. Lasagna	John D. Piho
Larry A. Deiter	Raymond R. Lasher	Brian J. Rabenold
Richard S. Demski	John W. Lenick	Kyle J. Raupers
Stephen Disangro	Martin R. Linn	Stephen H. Rhodes
Thomas J. Dormer	Guy H. Longstreth	Kathleen Ridilla
Kevin M. Doverspike	Randy L. Lose	Mark Riesmeyer
Robert P. Eble, II	Andrew Lubert	Edward M. Rogers
Rebekah J. Elliott	John P. Luft	Thomas L. Ryan
Keith A. Ely	Robert J. Lynn, Sr	Robin L. Scherer
David L. Fine	Jason D. Magditch	Ronald R. Schmalzle
Jaimee L. Fisher	Melissa K. Maiolino	Paul J. Schofield
William A. Garrison	Jeffrey R. Mallas	Steven L. Searer
Gerard F. Gavin	Kathryn R. McCarron	Tony Sheftic
Joseph Gebhard	John A. McGowan	Matthew Shenk
Brian J. Golas	James E. McKelvey	John R. Skovran
John J. Grogan	Mark Michelucci	Richard M. Snyder, Jr.
Charles F. Gunderman	Thomas W. Musselman	David M. Spizzirri
Robert Hamilton	Mark E. Nitowski	Ronald H. Stahon
Lynn Henderson-Ford	Anthony W. Nixon, Sr.	Amy K. Sten
Jonathan T. Hoffman	Brian J. Nolan	Christopher C. Thomas
Phil Houm	Paul Orzel	James P. Toomey
John P. Jesberger	Edgar T. Parks	Wiley S. Vansant



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Pamela Whalen

Carl H. Wischner

David E. Williams

John Zimbardi

The PIAA has over 14,700 registered sport officials across the state, but this still isn't enough. With the growing number of sports and student-athletes in Pennsylvania, there's always a need for more officials. If you or someone you know would like to become an official, visit <http://www.piaa.org/officials/become/default.aspx>.



"Our purpose is to serve, our mission is to achieve, and our goal is excellence."

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association

Beginning in Pittsburgh, on December 29, 1913, PIAA was given the privilege of serving its member schools and registered officials by establishing policies and adopting contest rules that emphasize the educational values of interscholastic athletics, promote safe and sportsmanlike competition, and provide uniform standards for all interscholastic levels of competition.