



MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

**NEWS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Thompson, Wendell-Pohl, Van Norman among 12 individuals selected to MSHSL's Hall of Fame**

Induction ceremony set for Oct. 22 at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront Hotel

Two former University of Minnesota standouts headline the Minnesota State High School League's 2017 Hall of Fame class. But before Darrell Thompson and Krissy Wendell-Pohl achieved success at the collegiate levels, they left their marks in Minnesota State High School League athletic programs.

Thompson was a three-sport star at Rochester John Marshall before performing heroic feats on the football field at the collegiate level and being drafted by the Green Bay Packers. Wendell-Pohl was the most prolific girls' hockey scorer in the country while playing two seasons at Park Center High School. She went on to lead the Gophers to two national titles and then played with Team USA in two Olympic Games.

The others selected for induction are: Minnesota prep track legend Heather Van Norman, who led Windom to two state titles; high school officiating pioneers Larry Gallagher of Crystal, Richard Eldridge of St. Paul and Harry Kitts of Bloomington; Becker football coach Dwight Lundeen, former Wayzata cross country and track coach Bill Miles; administrators Marv Peters of Rochester and Kevin Merkle of Mahtomedi; Eastview speech and debate coach Todd Hering and choral music icon Bruce Phelps of Shoreview.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony for this outstanding group is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 22 at 1 p.m. at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront Hotel. The event is open to the public. For event tickets, contact the League office at 763-560-2262 or visit the League's website --- [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org) --- and click on the 2017 Hall of Fame Invitation link on the home page.

The League's Hall of Fame, sponsored by Wells Fargo, started in 1991. The 2017 class is the 22nd group to be inducted. With this class, there now are 220 individuals in the hall.

Here is a look at the 2017 inductees of the Minnesota State High School League's Hall of Fame:

### **RICHARD ELDRIDGE, OFFICIAL**

A 1960 graduate of North St. Paul High School, Dick Eldridge was a three-sport standout in football, basketball, and track. He participated in the 1959 and 1960 state boys' basketball tournament before embarking on a 39-year career in officiating. Eldridge began his high school officiating career in volleyball in 1978. That was followed by long officiating tenures in football, basketball, baseball, cross country and track and field. Since 1984, Eldridge has been selected to officiate in 28 state tournaments in football and track and field. He has also officiated at the NCAA Division II and III levels in football, basketball and track and field. Eldridge currently serves as the head timer for the state boys' and girls' basketball tournaments, as a football observer, and is a member of the track and field selection committee. He also has been a member of the St. Paul/Capital City Officials Association since 1978 and served in numerous leadership capacities with that association.

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### **LARRY GALLAGHER, OFFICIAL**

Larry Gallagher, 77, is in his sixth decade of umpiring baseball, an avocation that began as a 15-year-old in his native Columbia Heights. In his officiating career, he has given back as an umpire, a basketball official and an officials' mentor. He also taught and coached at Tartan High School for 33 years. Gallagher continues to serve as a baseball rules interpreter and a state baseball coordinator for the League. He still officiates junior varsity basketball games and about 100 baseball games per season. A recipient of many awards, Gallagher was inducted into the Columbia Heights High School Hall of Fame in 2009. The next year, he was honored by Northwest Umpires, and in 2011, he was inducted into the Minnesota Baseball Coaches Association's Class A Hall of Fame. In 2015, the Minnesota Twins honored him with the "Play Ball Minnesota Terry Ryan Award." Gallagher also served as a replacement umpire in the American League during the strike at the start of the 1979 season.

### **TODD HERING, SPEECH AND DEBATE**

Todd Hering began his career in speech and debate at Stillwater High School where he participated from 1989-91. He capped his high school experience with a state championship in 1991. After graduating, he served as an assistant debate coach at Stillwater for three years. In 1994, Hering became head debate coach at Stillwater, a position he held until 1997 when he moved to his current teaching and coaching job at Eastview High School in Apple Valley. Under his guidance, the Eastview debate team has averaged 98 participants annually over the past decade. Hering has coached 10 debate state champions, one national debate runner-up, four speech state champions and five national speech champions. In 2001, Hering was the recipient of the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association Jim Graupner Distinguished Service Award and he is one of only two coaches to ever be selected twice as Minnesota Debate Teachers Association Coach of the Year.

### **HARRY KITTS, OFFICIAL**

A 1961 graduate of Alexander Ramsey High School in Roseville, Harry Kitts is one of the pioneers of officiating. Kitts began officiating in 1963 and that career has spanned nearly six decades. In his MSHSL career, which began in 1969, he was selected to work in the state boys' basketball tournament 20 times, including three championship games. He also officiated adapted soccer and softball for eight seasons and he spent 25 years refereeing college women's basketball. In the early '80s, Kitts began working as a MSHSL basketball clinician and as a state tournament media steward, roles he still holds. In 1981, he became the basketball assignor of the Minneapolis Officials Association, one of the largest officiating groups in Minnesota. He served in that role for more than three decades. Kitts taught mathematics in the Bloomington School District from 1965-2005. He was an assistant football coach at Bloomington Lincoln from 1970-82 and also coached golf. From 1982-95, he was on the football coaching staff at Normandale Community College.

### **DWIGHT LUNDEEN, COACH**

Dwight Lundeen is the only football coach that Becker High School has ever had. He began the program in 1970 and has been on the sideline for 47 seasons. During his tenure, he has built the Bulldogs into a Minnesota State High School League power. He has compiled a 329-145-3 record and ranks third all-time in victories, trailing only Ron Stolski of Brainerd and Verndale's Mike Mahlen, both of whom still coach as well. Lundeen's teams have captured 22 conference championships, made 15 state tournament appearances, played in seven Prep Bowls and won state crowns in 2005, 2014 and 2015. In 2015, he was selected the "Man of the Year" by the Minnesota Football Coaches Association (MFCA). Lundeen, a 1965 graduate of Cokato High School, was Becker's activities director for 34 years. During his leadership, Becker grew from a school that offered seven activities to 35. He was inducted into the Minnesota Activity Director's Association Hall of Fame in 2014. In addition to serving with the MFCA, Lundeen has held roles with the MSHSL, including Board of Directors president in 1998-99. He also is the longtime site supervisor for the Class A golf tournament at Pebble Creek.

### **KEVIN MERKLE, ADMINISTRATOR**

Kevin Merkle transitioned from his full-time position with the MSHSL in August to a senior staff role after a 43-year career as a teacher, coach and administrator. After four years as a teacher and coach in Minnesota and Iowa, he began 23 years of service in Northfield, Minnesota, including the final 14 years as the high school's activities director. In 2001, Merkle joined the MSHSL executive staff as an associate director. Among his many responsibilities, he directed football, dance team, boys' basketball and baseball, and overseeing the officiating program. Merkle, a member of two Minnesota hall of fames, has served on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Football Rules Committee, the Officials' Advisory Committee and the National Athletic Directors Advisory Committee. In 2016, he received an NFHS Citation Award for his many years of service to educational-based activity programs and his contributions to the NFHS.

### **BILL MILES, COACH**

This cross country running and track and field coaching legend has been synonymous with success and championships for 45 years. Thirty-nine of those years were spent at Wayzata High School where he led the Trojans to eight championships in cross country and seven other state crowns with the track and field team. He also led Cretin High School in St. Paul to a cross country state championship in 1975. Miles has coached 55 all-state distance runners in track and had 13 champions (six individuals and seven relays). He retired after the 2014 season when the Trojans won the MSHSL's Class AA Cross Country championship. Miles was also selected the national coach of the year by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association following the 2014 season. A graduate of Cretin High School and the University of Minnesota, Miles ran track and cross country under legendary Gophers coach Roy Griak.

### **MARV PETERS, ADMINISTRATOR**

Marv Peters retired at the end of June to cap a 44-year career as the activities director at Rochester Lourdes. In his tenure, he directed the Lourdes' activities department in an ever-changing high school landscape. Along with the inclusion of girls' athletics, he was the administrator in charge of 170 combined trips to MSHSL state tournaments. Forty-five of those appearances resulted in state championships. The Eagles were state runner-up on 30 other occasions. Marv became the school's AD in just his second year on staff. In his first year at the school, he taught physical education and social studies, as well as coached football and hockey. From 1974-95, he was the defensive coordinator of the football team before becoming head coach through 2004. Marv has also served the MSHSL in numerous roles, including the Classification Task Force, District Football Task Force, Transfer and Residence Task Force, and working with the Athletic Directors Advisory Committee that helped develop sections and sub-sections.

### **BRUCE PHELPS, MUSIC**

Bruce Phelps spent 29 of his 34-year choral teaching career at Anoka High School. He had previous teaching stops in Luverne and Wayzata high schools. Known for his positive influence and energetic spirit, Phelps has served the MSHSL as an active music adjudicator and choral clinician since 1975. He was selected the Outstanding Music Educator of Minnesota by the National Federation of State High School Associations in 1995. He was honored by the Minnesota Music Education Association in 2000 with the Outstanding Music Educator Award for his work and leadership in the classroom. He also was inducted into the Minnesota Music Educators Hall of Fame in 2009. Phelps, a 1970 graduate of Concordia (Moorhead), has directed many church choirs in the Twin Cities, as well as the South St. Paul Male Chorus, the 3M Male Chorus and the Minnesota All-State Men's Choir. He also serves as a MSHSL Master Judge and coordinates all of the training for judges.

### **DARRELL THOMPSON, ATHLETE**

Darrell Thompson, a 1986 graduate, was a three-sport standout at Rochester John Marshall, excelling in football, basketball and track and field. He made his mark on the gridiron during a three-year varsity career, capped by a senior season when he rushed for more than 1,000 yards, scored more than 100 points and averaged nearly 10 yards per carry. At the University of Minnesota, Thompson became the first Big Ten Conference running back to rush for more than 1,000 yards in both his freshman and sophomore seasons. He finished his college career with 4,654 yards and scored 40 touchdowns. He was an All-Big Ten selection in 1986 and an All-American in 1988. He was selected 19<sup>th</sup> overall by the Green Packers in the 1990 NFL Draft. He played 60 NFL games, starting 28 of them, and rushed for 1,641 yards and scored eight touchdowns before retiring in 1995. Thompson served on the MSHSL Board of Directors from 2000-04 and was a commentator during the televised broadcasts of the MSHSL's Prep Bowl championship games. He's also a member of the University of Minnesota "M" Club Hall of Fame.

### **HEATHER VAN NORMAN, ATHLETE**

A Minnesota track and field legend, Heather Van Norman was an eighth-grader at Windom High School in 1984 when she finished third in both the 200- and 400-meter events at the state Class A meet. She would never lose again during her Minnesota high school career. Van Norman won the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter state championships in each of the next four seasons and finished her stellar career on a 147-race winning streak. In 1986, she single-handedly captured the Class A crown for Windom, recording 30 points. A season later, she and four teammates compiled 36 points for another Class A championship. After one season at the University of Minnesota, Van Norman transferred to Louisiana State University where she became an All-American in six events over three seasons. She won three-straight NCAA outdoor championships from 1991-93, two indoor national crowns in 1991 and 1993 and take first in both indoor and outdoor SEC meets in 1993 and 1995. Van Norman has coached track and field and cross country at the collegiate level.

### **KRISSY WENDELL-POHL, ATHLETE**

One of the most prolific scorers ever in high school girls' hockey history in the United States, Krissy Wendell-Pohl had an astonishing two seasons playing for Park Center. In the 1998-99 season, she scored 109 goals in helping the Pirates to a fifth-place finish in the state girls' hockey tournament. One season later, she topped that with 110 goals and 55 assists to power Park Center to the state championship. In two seasons, she finished with 314 points. Wendell-Pohl continued her dominance at the University of Minnesota, leading the Gophers to national championships in 2004 and '05. As an Olympian, she led Team USA to a silver medal in the 2002 Salt Lake City Games and a bronze medal at the 2006 Turin Games. Her many awards and recognitions include 2000 Minnesota Ms. Hockey Award, 2005 Patty Kazmaier, U.S. Hockey Player of the Year, MVP Women's World Hockey Championship, and induction in the University of Minnesota "M" Club Hall of Fame.