



2024 NATIONAL GIRLS & WOMEN IN SPORTS DAY-MINNESOTA HONOREES ANNOUNCED

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Minnesota Coalition of Women in Athletic Leadership Communications Committee

The 2024 National Girls & Women in Sports Day-Minnesota award winners have been announced. The honorees, representing some of Minnesota's most inspiring and influential individuals, groups, and organizations in girls' & women's sports, will be recognized at the National Girls & Women in Sports Day-MN Celebration on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. The celebration, which will be conducted in conjunction with the 38th-annual National Girls & Women in Sports Day, will honor 15 groups or individuals in seven separate categories. Award recipients are nominated by individuals, schools, community organizations, recreation centers, and amateur & professional sports organizations. Details about each award honoree are below.



Breaking Barriers Award – Ryan Adams. For more than 15 years, Ryan Adams has been creating opportunities for members of the LGBTQ+ community to compete together in the Twin Cities. After leading an adult soccer club from 2012-17, Adams saw a need not only for a place for the LGBTQ+ community to come together to play soccer, but for women to compete, and the Gray Ducks were born. The Gray Ducks are Minnesota's largest adult soccer club and are competitive at a national and international level. The first women's only teams debuted in the club in November 2018. After growing from five to nine teams in 2022, the club grew to more than 15 teams in the 2023 season. Even though the Gray Ducks are inclusive of all genders and orientations, Adams made sure to create a space in the club for LGBTQ+ and female-identifying members of the community. With Adams at the helm, the Gray Ducks believe that competing as your most authentic self helps athletes have the greatest enjoyment and creates the best performing teams. When Adams started the Gray Ducks in 2017, with the help of volunteers, he pulled together a few teams with an inclusion focus. In January 2023, the Gray Ducks officially had as many men as women with active profiles in the organization, along with 20 nonbinary players. There are multiple levels of play that range from the most competitive of recreation

players through levels where athletes may be just learning to play organized soccer. After more than five years organizing women's teams and 10 years organizing soccer for the LGBTQ+ community, Adams' teams – and organization – are taking off. The active playing pool is now at 570 women. One of the Gray Ducks women's teams took first place at the Las Vegas Sin City Classic in January. Winter women's soccer grew from 86 participants to more than 120, summer women's soccer ballooned to 195 players, plus 115 women competing on coed teams, and pickup soccer for women and LGBTQ+ athletes was played on 38 dates across the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Including the women's teams, the Gray Ducks have more than 50 active teams across several divisions of soccer, and all are administered by Ryan. With his guidance, the Gray Ducks have become more than just about soccer, the teams become family. They plan dinners, celebrate milestones, and go to events together. They help people new to the community find a place to make friends, get involved, and create a welcoming environment for athletes of all ages and levels, on and off the pitch. Adams has also served on the International Gay and Lesbian Football Association, and he helped launch the North American Gay Soccer Association. He's led teams to Paris and Australia, all while paving the way for women of all ages and skill levels to find a team that best suits them, and welcomes them with open arms.



Breaking Barriers Award – Cynthia Bryant. Cynthia "Red" Bryant will be the first to tell you that football was never her favorite sport, it was basketball. Growing up in North Minneapolis, Bryant was a standout basketball player first at Patrick Henry High School and later Minneapolis Community & Technical College, and she had dreams of playing professionally. Bryant joined a rec league basketball team at the Uptown YMCA after having her son, Talon, and that's where she was given an opportunity that would change her life – and her sport of choice. During her time with the rec league, Bryant was recruited by JT Turner, a former Minnesota Viking, to come play on one of the first teams in the Women's Professional Football League. Bryant decided to give it a try, and she was one of 200 women from all over the U.S. and the world who showed up in 1999 vying for a spot on one of two teams, the Michigan Minx and the Minnesota Vixen. Tryouts were held at Augsburg University and the Metrodome, and at the end of the tryouts, 80 women were split onto the two rosters, and they traveled around for the Barnstorming Tour to help other states start their own teams. In the team's early days, Bryant – who stuck with the Vixen for 25 years before retiring after the 2022-23 season – and her teammates practiced on the dirt field at St. Paul's Jimmy Lee Recreation Center. In the years

that followed, they competed at venues around the country, including the Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton, Ohio, for the Women's Football Alliance championships. Over the course of her impressive career, Bryant, a defender for the Vixen, earned a spot on the all-star team 18 times, was a 12-time Defensive Player of the Year, an 11-time All-American, and her team MVP five times. She led the league in tackles and sacks in multiple seasons. In 2018, Bryant was part of the first class of women inducted into the Women's Pro Football Hall of Fame in Las Vegas. While dominating opposing offenses on the field, Bryant also broke down barriers off the field and helped youth in North Minneapolis find a place to succeed. She has worked at Plymouth Youth Christian Center (PCYC), an alternative high school dedicated to giving students a positive, rigorous, and community connected education, for more than 18 years. She graduated from the alternative high school and has worked her way up from an after school program leader to the school's assistant dean and works to make sure every kid who comes through the doors knows they have the chance to succeed. While Bryant retired from football in July 2023 as one of the most dominant defensive players in league history, it has never been about the stats, the awards, or the honors. For her, seeing flag football added to the Olympics and watching women's tackle football grow in the U.S. and around the world is more important than any individual honor or title. The most important piece of her legacy is the barriers she's broken down for girls and women to continue to play football, the sport she's grown to love.



Breaking Barriers Award – Lori Gislason. Lori Gislason is the first to admit that her career path has been unconventional, but she also recognizes that her work at the University of Minnesota has helped break down barriers for women in field maintenance and equipment at the collegiate level. In 1982, Gislason was hired as the Junior Scientist Trainee for the U of M agronomy department where she oversaw the weed physiology and grass seed production test plots in Roseau for two summers. She is still the only female to hold that position. In 1989, she was hired full-time as a landscape specialist for the U of M Landcare Department, and in 1993 she was hired as the first, and only, full-time female employee to work on the women's softball and soccer fields and the men's baseball stadium. She helped build the original soccer field for the Gopher women's soccer team and was overjoyed when the women's softball team moved into a new complex that was more on par with the men's facility. During her tenure with the athletic grounds team, Gislason made sure all of the U of M's outdoor fields were in pristine condition to keep playing surfaces safe and game ready. From mowing to irrigation to painting the practice football field and maintaining the infields for softball and baseball, Gislason set high standards for all the Gophers' outdoor facilities. In 2000, Gislason made the shift from field maintenance to the equipment room for the Gopher athletic department. She was one of two women on the seven-person staff, and her job was overseeing equipment needs for the volleyball team and both the men's and women's basketball teams. She was one of few women overseeing equipment needs for a men's basketball program at the collegiate level, and less than a handful of women hold that position yet today. Eight years later, Gislason was promoted to the director of equipment for the U of M athletic department. She oversaw the equipment staff and teams, including football. Typically, one person oversees all the Olympic sports and a second member of the team, usually male, oversees football. The Gophers saw Gislason's talent, drive, and work ethic, and promoted her to oversee the whole equipment unit. She remains one of just a handful of women in all of college athletics overseeing the entire equipment staff. In her current role, Gislason makes sure each of the Gopher athletic teams has what they need for practice and competition. She manages the school's Nike contract and has direct oversight with each sport's equipment manager and their purchasing needs. In her time with the Gophers, Gislason has worked diligently to recruit and train other women, including interns, to join her in this unconventional career.



Breaking Barriers Award – Martha Stewart-Arradondo. Growing up in the 1950s and 60s, Martha Stewart-Arradondo, like many women at the time, did not have the chance to compete in organized sports. After moving from foster home to foster home, she also lacked a sense of community and connection. Now as an adult, Stewart-Arradondo has created opportunities for everyone to compete – and connect with others. Stewart-Arradondo, after finally landing back in Minneapolis where she grew up, has tried a variety of activities: softball, racquetball, golf, swimming, and pickleball, just to name a few. When she finds a sport she likes, she dives right in and works to find ways to create a place where others can enjoy the sport with her. Stewart-Arradondo is currently in a pickleball league at Mega Pickle & Paddle, on the board of Minnesota Masters Swimming, a goal liaison with the Minnesota Golf Association, and president of the Brookview Women's Thursday golf league. She's a co-founder of Black Women on Course (BWOC), a golf league for black women, and is working with V3 Sports, a planned fitness and swimming facility in North Minneapolis, to start the Ebony Mermaids – a swim club for black women. Creating the golf league and the swim club isn't just a way for Stewart-Arradondo to participate in another sport that she loves. It's also about creating safe spaces for black women

to participate in sports where they haven't traditionally been allowed access. For many years, African Americans weren't allowed on golf courses or in swimming pools across the United States, and Stewart-Arradondo is trying to help more people of color get involved in sports where they are still underrepresented. BWOC was created 13 years ago to give women of color a space to learn and practice golf. The league currently hosts women between the ages of 30 and 80 with a variety of skill levels and knowledge of the game. Not only does BWOC give them a place to compete, but it also opens up business opportunities for the women to join their business partners or clients on the golf course, something they may not have been comfortable with prior to joining the league. Stewart-Arradondo didn't start swimming until later in life as a way to stay healthy. She joined Minnesota Masters Swimming and started competing, and she also became a certified swim instructor to help other adults learn to swim. Ebony Mermaids is currently in the planning stages, but, as with BWOC, Stewart-Arradondo is excited to give adults of color a safe place to learn how to swim – something they may have never had the opportunity to do, or something they may have been afraid to do if they didn't grow up around the water. Professionally, Stewart-Arradondo started the Arradondo Planning Group, and has worked as a corporate meeting planner for 25 years. By combining her skills to organize people and events and her love of competition and trying new things, Stewart-Arradondo has created spaces for women of color to learn and compete, and has built a safe, supportive community to support those women through all stages of their competitive journeys.



Breaking Barriers Award – Paula U'Ren. For nearly three decades, Paula U'Ren's name was synonymous with softball at St. Cloud State University and in Central Minnesota, and a generation of women found success both on and off the field thanks to her leadership. U'Ren, who came to SCSU as a graduate assistant softball coach in 1995 and retired from coaching at the end of the 2021 season as the winningest coach in St. Cloud State softball history with 768 wins in 26 seasons. She guided the Huskies to seven NCAA tournament appearances, including a third-place finish in 2004 and an at-large bid to the NCAA Regional in 2019. Under U'Ren's guidance, the Huskies won North Central Conference titles in 1998, 2003, and 2004, and appeared in 16 conference tournaments. She coached seven All-Americans, 22 All-Region honorees and five SCSU Female Athlete of the Year honorees. Off the field, six of U'Ren's athletes earned Academic All-American accolades, and more than 100 athletes were named to academic all-conference teams in her more than a quarter century of coaching. While she was busy coaching her athletes and preparing her teams for long seasons and postseason play, U'Ren was also busy training and coaching her graduate assistants. Throughout her career at St. Cloud State, U'Ren never had a full-time assistant coach, just graduate assistants who had to be re-

hired and re-trained every two years. Coaching at SCSU did not come without complications. In 2016-17, she appeared in federal court to testify against the school in a Title IX trial following cuts to athletic programs in 2016. Thanks in part to her testimony, in 2019 a judge ruled that the university did indeed violate Title IX when the cuts impacted female athletes more than male athletes, and the school was ordered to take action to make reparations. During her time at St. Cloud State, U'Ren – a three-time Division II All-American catcher and the 1995 conference player of the year at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, S.D. – earned her terminal degree and became a professor of Kinesiology at the university. Her dissertation topic, "The Division II Female Student-Athlete: self-identification, identity foreclosure, and career maturity," strove to help others understand how to best serve female athletes at the university and at Division II schools around the country. U'Ren is currently the chairperson of the Kinesiology Department and teaches Sport Management and Clinical Exercise Physiology graduate students and Recreation and Sports Management and Exercise Science undergraduate students. U'Ren spent her coaching career sharing her passion for softball with her athletes and teaching them how to play the game the right way. Her athletes continue to carry on her coaching philosophy and passion for the game as U'Ren has a coaching tree of former players currently coaching NCAA Division I and II and amateur-level teams around the country. She made it clear that success off the field was important as stats and playing accolades and used her voice to ensure that the next generation of female athletes at St. Cloud State will have equal opportunities to compete in the sport that they love.



The Wilma Rudolph Courage Award – Taylor Williamson. Every athlete's worst nightmare is a career-ending injury, or worse: a career-ending health condition. No one knows that fear better than Taylor Williamson. In her four-year career with the Minnesota Gopher women's hockey team, Williamson received not one but two potentially career-ending diagnoses. The first was an arachnoid cyst on her brain, the second was being diagnosed with myasthenia gravis (MG), an incurable disease, but she did not let that stop her. With the help of medication, physical therapy, and a lot of determination, Williamson was able to finish her career on the ice, and help the Gophers reach college hockey's biggest stage. Williamson, who skated with the Gophers from 2015-19, started noticing strange symptoms following her sophomore season in 2017. During a trip to Arizona with teammates, she found she had difficulty speaking late at night. She told her mom, and an MRI revealed a fluid-filled sac the size of a fist on her brain. She underwent emergency surgery less than 24 hours later. The symptoms cleared up, and Williamson went to Germany for the summer to study. While abroad, the symptoms returned en masse. Now, along with difficulty speaking, she had muscle weakness, a droopy right eye, and trouble eating and swallowing. Several of her teammates that were with her in Arizona before

her cyst was removed were also abroad that summer, and they quickly realized their friend still wasn't right. When Williamson reported to Minneapolis for preseason training in July 2017, things went from bad to worse. Her shot lacked the speed and snap it once had. She struggled skating. And now, she had double vision. She put in the work and was in the lineup for the team's first game of the 2017-18 season. After the first period when the team went to the locker room, Williamson told a teammate that she wasn't doing well, and she did not return to the game. Instead of returning to the ice, Williamson made another visit to the emergency room. An MRI ruled out anything neurological, and a physician suggested MG. Williamson was prescribed three medications, which helped, but she was struggling to regain strength – she couldn't even put her hair in a ponytail because her arms were so weak. She sought out the help of Neil Sheehy, a family friend and former NHL player who practices neuromuscular therapy. After her first session with Sheehy, Williamson could do a burpee with her hands over her head, and she regained hope. She continued working with Sheehy, and on Jan. 13, 2018, she returned to the Gopher lineup against Vermont. That season, she recorded three goals and three assists, including the game-winning goal in the WCHA final to help Minnesota secure the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament. While Williamson – who won a national title with the Gophers in 2016 – wasn't able to add a second national title to her resume before graduating, she said she's just blessed to be back on the ice, playing the game that she loves. Williamson knows others haven't been nearly as lucky, and not everyone who suffers from MG is able to gain back control of their life. In order to raise awareness for the disease and money to establish a Myasthenia Gravis and MDA Center of Excellence for people and families in Minnesota, Williamson and her dad, Dean, rode in the 2022 Triple Bypass Bike Race, a one-day, 116-mile bike ride from Evergreen to Vail, Colorado, with more than 10,000 feet of elevation change. In 2023, they hosted the #picklingforaprayer pickleball tournament to bring their total to nearly \$250,000 to support other families who receive the same diagnosis Taylor did nearly six years ago, helping them get their lives back.



The Marie Berg Education Award – Randy Glasmann. Randy Glasmann has had an impressive career as a golfer, but equally as impressive is her dedication to teaching the game she loves to the next generation of female golfers, and helping to ensure they have the opportunities to compete that she did not. Glasmann started golfing at age 10 and went on to compete at the University of Minnesota in a pre-Title IX landscape where women's golf looked very different from modern athletic programs. She graduated with a degree in physical education in 1969 and taught physical education and health for 29 years at Northview Junior High in the Osseo School District. While she made her career teaching, she continued to pursue her passion of golf. Glasmann won the Minnesota Public Links Championships in 1973, 1976 and 1977, and qualified for numerous United States Golf Association national championships. She has had the opportunity to meet golf legends Nancy Lopez, Annika Sorenstam, and Ben Crenshaw, and played at the most famous courses in the U.S. and Ireland. Eventually, Glasmann transitioned from playing to volunteering for the Minnesota State Women's Golf Association. In 2019 she received the Minnesota Golf Association's Giles Kobilka Award, which is presented annually to a volunteer whose career includes exceptional contributions to the association. She has served more

than 20 years with the MGA and USGA as an officer and rules official. In addition to volunteering and working with the various golf associations, Glasmann became the first girls' golf coach at Maple Grove High School in 1997, and she's been there ever since. In 26 years, she has helped girls at Maple Grove transition from beginners to competitive players and has passed her knowledge of the game on to a new generation of female golfers in the state. In 2023, Glasmann led the Crimson to the Minnesota State High School League's Class AAA championship, the first in program history. The state title comes after back-to-back runner-up finishes in 2021 and 2022 to wrap up the most successful stretch in program history. Four of Glasmann's former golfers at Maple Grove are currently competing at the Division I level in college. From an impressive competitive start on the course to a 20-plus year career as a coach, volunteer, and official, Glasmann has made her mark on the game of golf in Minnesota and made sure that girls will have the opportunity to compete for generations to come.



The Marie Berg Education Award – Dr. Pat Rosenbrock. Dr. Pat Rosenbrock helped write the history books for women's athletics at Bemidji State University, literally and figuratively. Not only was Rosenbrock a successful coach of three different sports and the school's women's athletic director for a short time, but she also helped research and fill in the gaps in the early days of women's athletics at Bemidji State. Rosenbrock – who was hired in 1969 and worked at BSU until her retirement in 2006 – spent time as a physical education professor, director of women's studies, women's athletic director, coach, and resident historian. She served as the women's athletic director for two years, and coached gymnastics, track and field, and volleyball, for a combined 20 years. She coached the gymnastics program its first six years of existence from 1969-75 and found immediate success as her teams won six straight Minn-Kota Conference championships. She coached track and field from 1971-82 and won two MAIAW state team titles while coaching numerous individuals to state titles. Rosenbrock took over the volleyball program in 1974 and came out as the winningest volleyball coach in BSU history when she left the program in 1989 with a 293-219-4 record. She won seven Minn-Kota titles, finished second in the MAIAW state tournament three times, won NAIA District 13

titles in 1978 and 1988, and shared the 1988 Northern Sun Conference title with Minnesota Duluth. While her coaching accomplishments are many and impressive, Rosenbrock was also the driving force behind capturing the history of Bemidji State women's athletics. Rosenbrock knew there were many athletes and coaches who deserved to be remembered for their accomplishments at BSU, but there was no written history of the women's athletic department. She wanted to change that. In an effort to ensure that the history of women's athletics at Bemidji State in the post-Title IX landscape would not be forgotten, Rosenbrock worked to research and write the history of those early BSU women's teams. A lack of records made it difficult to fill in some of the gaps, but she was able to make some headway and give credit to those early athletes and teams at BSU. As part of her research, Rosenbrock helped spearhead a celebration for the 30th anniversary of women's athletics at Bemidji State in 2000. Thanks to her work, many female athletes from the 1970s and 80s came back for the events, and they were able to grow the school's history even more. Twenty years later, she was honored with the title of Historian of Women's Athletics at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of women's athletics at BSU. Thanks to Rosenbrock's efforts, the pioneers that made women's athletics

at Bemidji State possible will not be forgotten, and coaches and athletes in the future will have a better understanding and respect for the people who paved the way for female athletes at BSU.



The Kwame McDonald Media Award – Marney Gellner. Sports have been a part of Marney Gellner's life for as long as she can remember. Growing up in Minot, N.D., she played four sports at Bishop Ryan High School, then went on to the University of Mary where she was part of the volleyball team for four years and the Marauder softball team for two years. While in college, Gellner majored in communications, and she found a way to incorporate sports into her professional life as an on-air sports reporter. In 1996 she started her career as a weekend sports anchor and sports reporter for KXMB-TV in Bismarck, N.D., and held that same position at WDAZTV in Grand Forks, N.D., and later WISC-TV in Madison, Wis. In 2002, Gellner joined Fox Sports North in Minneapolis, and she's been there ever since. She still remembers her first broadcast because the clipboard with her script fell off of her lap just as the broadcast started. More than 20 years later, Gellner has become a familiar face in front of the camera, and a popular TV personality for Twin Cities sports fans. She has served in a variety of roles including sideline reporter for the Minnesota Twins and Timberwolves, and play-by-play for the Minnesota Lynx and many of the Gopher women's sports, including volleyball and basketball. Gellner made history in 2018 when she became the second woman ever to serve as

the lead television play-by-play announcer of an NBA game when she called a Timberwolves game against the Chicago Bulls with analyst Jim Petersen. She downplayed the significance of her role at the time – saying that women calling NBA games should be happening more frequently – and she approached the job like any other: professional, prepared, and with her well-known quick wit. The following spring, Gellner made history again, this time becoming the first woman to call a Twins' game in the club's history. She called games for Fox Sports North and WCCO Radio for three days in a row and went viral for her catchphrase "better call mama" when Twins players hit home runs. While Gellner can be seen at sporting events at all levels across the Twin Cities, her most consistent gig has been with the Lynx. For 14 seasons, she has worked as the play-by-play announcer for Minnesota's WNBA team and called the game for fans across the country as the Lynx won four WNBA titles. While Gellner is a staple on the sidelines and in the booth at local sporting events, she also tries to be present at home for her two children. She avoids 10-day West Coast road trips with the Timberwolves and missed Derrick Rose's 50-point game in 2018 so she could go trick-or-treating with her family. Whether she's on the sidelines or in the booth, Gellner knows that girls around the Metro, and the country, are watching her, and she understands how important it is for those girls to see a woman on TV talking about sports. Gellner has a career doing what she loves, and while she's entertaining and informing sports fans about their favorite teams, she's also helping young girls see that if sports are their passion, there are no boundaries to where they can go.



Special Merit Award – Annie Adamczak-Glavan. Annie Adamczak-Glavan had the opportunity not only to compete in three sports in high school, but to excel in all three, and after competing professionally abroad, she returned to her home state to make sure the next generation of high school girls have these same opportunities. Adamczak-Glavan had a high school career that most athletes only dream of, one that hasn't been forgotten 40 years later. After playing Little League baseball with the boys and watching her older sister win a state volleyball title with Moose Lake in 1975, Adamczak-Glavan started playing organized girls' sports in high school, and she thrived. She played volleyball, basketball, and softball at Moose Lake where she won five state titles. As a senior, she accomplished the unbelievable as she helped all three teams to undefeated seasons: a perfect 79-0 record from fall until spring. In her junior and senior years, she helped her three teams to 148-2 record with back-to-back state titles in volleyball and softball. A pitcher for the softball team, she finished her junior and senior seasons with an ERA of 0.00. She finished her four-year career 50-3 on the mound. She was named Minnesota's Ms. Basketball as well as the Hertz Rent-a-Car #1 Minnesota Athlete of the Year. After high school, Adamczak-Glavan received a full athletic scholarship to the University of

Nebraska where she played volleyball – which wasn't her main sport. She had been hoping to play collegiate basketball, but scholarships were hard to come by. Her coaches helped improve her approach as an outside hitter, taught her how to dive to the floor, and the work paid off. She was a starter by the second month of her first season with the Huskers, and by the time she was a senior, she was named the Big 8 Player of the Year and a Division I All-American. Adamczak-Glavan played professional volleyball for TSV Rudow in Germany for one year before returning home to play professionally for the Minnesota Monarchs in the team's 1987 inaugural season. The next season, she started coaching and hosting her own volleyball camps, which proved to be an instant success. In 2008 she took over as the club director of the CLUB 43 Volleyball program in Hopkins, and she's been there ever since. In 2016, Adamczak-Glavan was a nominee for the national JVA Coach of the Year, and in 2023 her CLUB 43 U16 team finished fifth at AAU Nationals in Orlando. Adamczak-Glavan has received many awards and accolades for her athletic prowess: she is a member of the Minnesota High School Softball Hall of Fame, the Moose Lake High School Hall of Fame, the Minnesota State Basketball Hall of Fame and the Star Tribune Sports Hall of Fame. In 2020 the Duluth News Tribune named her the Best Athlete of All Time in Minnesota, and in 2021 she was named Minnesota #1 Greatest Athlete of All Time by Tell'em Sport. While she has accomplished so much on the court and the field, one of Adamczak-Glavan's proudest coaching accomplishments came in her personal life. Her son, Matthew, was born with cerebral palsy, and she was told he would never walk or talk, but she would not accept that diagnosis. Using her coaching skills – and refining them as they went along – she taught Matthew to walk and talk, and he graduated as a member of the Dean's List from Augsburg University in 2021. From her playing days to her coaching days, Adamczak-Glavan has excelled, and she will forever be remembered as one of the top female athletes the state of Minnesota has ever seen.



Special Merit Award – Evonne Fix. At the age of 11 when Evonne (Young) Fix first stepped on the ice to referee a hockey game, she was just looking for a way to get more ice time, and help out at her little brother's hockey games. Forty years later, officiating has taken her around the world and opened doors for her and female officials at all levels of hockey. After officiating for her brother's games in Litchfield for a year, she became a registered official with the Amateur Hockey Association of the United States, now USA Hockey, and the rest is history. After high school, Fix started college at St. Cloud State University, and before long she was officiating high school boys' hockey games. She has since been selected to work multiple state high school tournaments, including the first Minnesota State High School League Girls' State Tournament in 1995. In 1994, Fix was recruited by the International Ice Hockey Federation to work international games, starting with the 1994 Women's World Championships in Lake Placid, N.Y. From there she earned a spot as an official at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan – the first year that women's hockey was included in the Olympics. She was on the ice for the bronze medal game that year. She has also officiated at all levels of collegiate hockey including the WCHA, MIAC, and the WIAC, and worked as a Division I official for more than

10 years. In that time, she officiated two NCAA Women's Frozen Fours, including the 2001 inaugural tournament at Mariucci Arena. Fix started refereeing para ice hockey, also known as sled hockey, in 2016. She continues to work with World Para Ice Hockey to promote getting more women involved in officiating the para games so that young girls can see women in the rink as players, coaches, and officials. In August 2022, Fix was part of the first-ever all-women's officiating crew at a World Para Ice Hockey event in Green Bay, Wis. In addition to her time as a referee, Fix has also spent countless hours

serving as an instructor and a mentor to up and coming officials. Since instructing at the first USA Hockey Officials Camp for Women in 1994, she's instructed at three US Women's National Camps, two USA Hockey District Officiating Seminars, and numerous seminars in Minnesota. She was also instrumental in developing the Minnesota Hockey Officials Association's Women's Camp. 45 years after she put on skates for the first time and 40 years since she first started officiating, Fix continues to referee in her home district for youth and college hockey games, as well as international para ice hockey. She works tirelessly to continue to train rising female officials so that girls and women can reach their officiating goals and make a career of their passion, just like Evonne Fix.



Special Merit Award – Helen Swanson. When Helen Swanson was growing up in the 1940 and 50s, opportunities to play sports looked very different for girls. Games were very informal, not competitive or organized, and everything was for fun. National organizations were concerned that competition might be too stressful on a female body. Swanson had been introduced to volleyball, in a very informal capacity, during her time at Henry Sibley High School. When she got to the University of Minnesota in 1955, the Women's Physical Education Department sponsored intramural activities for women. One of the activities was the class tournament, where the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors played together as a class for fun. It was during that time that Swanson learned more about volleyball and grew to enjoy it even more. She was invited to join the Latvian players on campus who played competitively at the local and Midwest level. The Latvian women played what was then known as 'power volleyball,' and on the Latvian leagues, Swanson fell in love with competitive volleyball. Eventually, competitive women's leagues formed outside of the Latvian leagues, and Swanson was a part of the Bungalow team, named for their local sponsor. While on the Bungalow team, Swanson met Anna Bergstrom Anderson. As the popularity of competitive volleyball began to grow at the high school and college level, the need for officials grew, and as young women who knew the game, Swanson and Bergstrom Anderson found themselves in high demand. Together with Bergstrom Anderson, Swanson created the Metro Volleyball Officials Association to help respond to the demand for officials. The duo held clinics and rules meetings, helping to both grow the number of local volleyball officials and increase their level of expertise. This effort was instrumental in the growth of girls' and women's volleyball in Minnesota, and eventually the Minnesota State High School League took over by hosting statewide rules meetings and registering officials. When the first MSHSL state girls' volleyball tournament was held in 1974, Swanson was there. The volleyball standards were weighed down with sandbags, and the electricity in the gym went out just as the first match was set to begin. It was the first of many challenges, and many tournaments. Swanson remembers the second year of the state tournament when there was a blizzard just days before the tournament. One team followed a snowplow from Windom to Hallenbeck Hall on the St. Cloud State University campus, and another team was driven to the gym by families with snowmobiles. In November 2023, the MSHSL State Girls' Volleyball Tournament celebrated its 50th anniversary at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, and that is thanks in no small part to Swanson and her work in recruiting and training officials in the 1960s and 70s. Her love of the game and determination to find more opportunities for girls and women to play paved the way for the next generation of volleyball players in Minnesota.



Dorothy McIntyre Legacy Award – Georgene Brock. With three national championship teams in the past 20 years – all women's teams – and numerous conference titles, the athletic department at Minnesota State University, Mankato is making a case for itself as one of the best in the state. The success as of late, which includes national titles in women's basketball, softball, and indoor track field, is thanks in no small part to Georgene Brock. Brock was the face of MSU, then Mankato State, women's athletics for more than 30 years. She was the Director of Women's Athletics from 1970-1998, and in that time, she also served as a head coach for bowling, tennis, and volleyball. Her volleyball team won three Minnesota Athletic Intercollegiate Association for Women (MAIAW) state titles and went to nationals twice. She led the Women's Intramural Department in the late 1960s and served as the chairperson and on committees in the MAIAW, Region 6 American Intercollegiate Association for Women, and the Northern Sun Conference for many years. While running the athletic department and making sure women had every athletic opportunity possible, Brock also served as an Assistant Professor of Physical Education from 1964 until her retirement in 1998. In 1976, Brock became chair of the Conference Development Committee, which created the Northern Sun Conference. Under Brock's guidance, the committee helped develop the conference rules, eligibility, operating codes, and constitution to become the well-respected conference it is today. She went on to become the NSC President in 1980-81. Brock received many awards during her illustrious career, and her name will forever be synonymous with women's athletics at MSU thanks to the Georgene Brock Award. Since 1978-79, the award has been presented to the strongest all-around female student-athlete at Mankato. Along with having an award named after her, Brock received the Faculty Performance Award and the Claire Faust Public Service Award in 1990 and the Student Senate Student Friendly Award in 1993. She is a member of the MSU Athletics Hall of Distinction, the North Central Conference and Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Halls of Fame, and the Tempe (Ariz.) Union High School Hall of Fame. Brock fought for opportunities for female athletes to compete when there were none and put in the work to make sure women at Mankato State, and across Minnesota, would have those opportunities for years to come. The impact of her work is still being seen today in the Mavericks' athletic success and will continue to grow as the next generation of athletes makes their way to Mankato.



Dorothy McIntyre Legacy Award – Marian Bemis Johnson. Marian Bemis Johnson's life work has been spent looking for answers to a question that so many girls and women have faced throughout the decades: "Why wasn't I allowed to play?" Bemis Johnson graduated from Waterville High School in 1948 in a time when there were no opportunities available for girls and women to play sports at the high school or collegiate level. This did not make sense to Bemis Johnson, who grew up hearing about her mother's time on the girls' basketball team in Faribault in the 1920s. In her quest to find answers, Bemis Johnson started doing research. She learned that basketball came to Carleton College in 1892 shortly after its inception, and it was an instant hit. Girls' basketball teams popped up around the state – boys' teams came later – and by the 1920s, most schools had girls' teams competing against one another and playing in local, district, and regional tournaments. In the 1930s, however, the national attitude changed, and sports were deemed too risky for women. By 1942, all Minnesota girls' basketball teams were gone, leaving girls like Bemis Johnson wondering why they couldn't play for decades. Bemis Johnson found a way to help bring athletics to girls and women throughout her career. She started the competitive synchronized swimming team at Stillwater High School in 1953, and she coached synchronized swimming at Hamline during her time there from 1957-64. During the years 1968-88 she developed the women's sports program at Lakewood Community College, now Century College, and she served as the Women's Athletic Director as well as the head coach of the volleyball, basketball, softball, and tennis teams. While she was building opportunities for women, Bemis Johnson decided she wanted to learn more about the women who competed on those early sports teams in Minnesota and to share their stories. In the 1980s she traveled around the state and interviewed women who had competed in the 50 years that girls' basketball was played before being shut down in 1942. Marian heard stories about girls traveling by train and horse drawn sleighs to get to games and having to heat gyms with wood-burning stoves. She listened and took notes as these women,

now senior citizens, got teary eyed talking about how they were told that they no longer had a team, because running and jumping was not healthy for them. Bemis Johnson teamed up with Dorothy McIntyre. They formed their own publishing company, wrote, and published “Daughters of the Game – the First Era of Minnesota Girls High School Basketball, 1891-1942.” The 396-page book was filled with all the stories and photos provided by the women who had played. Since the book was published in 2005, Bemis Johnson has traveled around the state sharing stories from the book with schools, libraries, and historical organizations. The book received a national award for preserving local history. Because of Bemis Johnson’s lifelong curiosity and determination to find out why she couldn’t play, and her detailed storytelling, the first era of girls’ basketball in Minnesota has been preserved and will be remembered for generations to come.



Milestone Award – The Bonnie Spielers. A state with an affinity for winter sports, Minnesota is home to one of the oldest and largest curling clubs in the United States. The Saint Paul Curling Club was founded in 1912 and, like many athletic organizations, was exclusively male for the first several decades of its existence. That changed in October of 1951 when eight women and three male members of the club met to discuss plans for the formation of a women’s curling club. The landscape of sports was changing, and women no longer wanted to be relegated to watching and cheering from the sidelines. By January 1952, four women’s curling teams had been formed, and that same year, a club constitution was adopted, and officers were elected to serve a two-year term. With the formation of the women’s club came the need for a name, and The Bonnie Spielers was born. The St. Paul Bonnie Spielers was founded with 21 members: Sandy Anderson, Paula Arnold, Dorothy Bateman, Ann Bayliss, Betty Blilie, Jean Braun, Ellie Cafferty, Betty Clasen, Fran Dillon, Ginny Edgerton, Mary Franklin, Jean Gross, Celia Hauer, Ruth Jamieson, Florence Lindholm, Joanne Schwab, Lorraine Simandl, Marilyn Taylor, Muriel Walker, Todd Williams, and Yvonne Williams. Creating a curling club just for women was groundbreaking in the 1950s. The vision and foresight by the 11 who voted to create the club – and the 21 original members – set the stage for hundreds of women in St. Paul and across Minnesota to compete in curling. Since 1951, more than 1,500 women have been members of the Bonnie Spielers. Historically, the women’s league competed during the day so the men could continue to compete during the evening. Today, it is a night league with 19-20 teams competing each year. After becoming a club in 1951, it took 25 years for the Bonnies to become full members of the St. Paul Curling Club. The following year, 1977, two Bonnies were elected to the club board, paving the way for future female board members and one female club president. With the Bonnies leading the way, curling organizations around the state popped up in the years following to give women more opportunities to compete on the ice. The Gopher State Women’s Curling Association was formed in 1970 to promote women’s curling, and the Gopher State Women’s Championship was the premiere competitive curling event for many years. The Bonnies have won several titles, and four Bonnies have served as association president. In 1952, the Bonnies joined the United States Women’s Curling Association, and have competed in many national events sponsored by the organization. Three Bonnies have served as national president, and five times the Bonnies have won the National Bonspiel, a tournament hosted by the USWCA that features the top teams from around the United States. Two Bonnies have also had the opportunity to represent Minnesota and St. Paul in the Scot Tour – a curling event that rotates between the U.S. and Scotland every five years and features 20 U.S. members. A Bonnie Spieler team won the right to represent the U.S. at the 1986 World Championships in British Columbia, Canada, and teams from St. Paul have participated in Olympic trials and national championships after curling became an Olympic sport in 1988. For more than 70 years, women in St. Paul have had the opportunity to compete at a high level thanks to the drive and determination of the founding members. The Bonnie Spielers have become a robust group of women of all ages who come together to compete and support one another in a curling club of their very own.

About National Girls & Women in Sports Day - Minnesota

National Girls & Women in Sports Day-MN is organized by the Minnesota Coalition of Women in Athletic Leadership, a volunteer group whose mission is to advocate for Title IX by celebrating and commemorating Minnesota individuals and organizations that inspire the participation of girls and women in sports. The 2024 National Girls & Women in Sports Day-MN celebration will take place on Wednesday, February 7th at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, Minn. Exhibits will open at 11 a.m. and the honoree event will begin at 12 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. For more information about National Girls & Women in Sports Day-MN and the 2024 event, visit www.ngwsd-mn.com.