



## Honoree Leads From Behind The Scenes

MHSAA NEWS

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Posted Tuesday, January 28, 2014

By **Geoff Kimmerly**  
Second Half editor

Off to the side somewhere, where athletic directors generally reside, Teri Reyburn often enjoys her favorite part of leading DeWitt's athletic department – watching her school's athletes shine.

As head of one of the Lansing area's most successful programs, she has celebrated more often than not. But while her contributions to those successes usually fall outside of fanfare, they hardly go unappreciated by those who understand the inner workings of high school sports.

Reyburn's faithful support of her school and continuous service to Michigan High School Athletic Association programs will be celebrated Sunday, when she receives the MHSAA's 27th Women In Sports Leadership Award during the WISL banquet at the Crowne Plaza Lansing West.

In addition to heading a department since 1999 that annually produces winning teams, Reyburn was a key voice in the creation and growth of the Capital Area Activities Conference a decade ago and has hosted more than 80 MHSAA tournaments at various levels in various sports.

"I absolutely love the kids. And I take a huge amount of pride in being able to put on and prepare an event, have hundreds or thousands walk in and sit down, enjoy themselves and walk out and leave not knowing the amount of work it took," Reyburn said. "We have a large amount of volunteers who make that happen. I have some of the most amazing coaches, and the parents support their kids too. It doesn't get any better than here, and I love what I do."

Each year, the Representative Council considers the achievements of women coaches, officials and athletic administrators affiliated with the MHSAA who show exemplary leadership capabilities and positive contributions to athletics.

Both DeWitt's girls and boys golf teams have won two MHSAA Finals championships apiece during her tenure. The football program has played in four Finals and both the boys basketball team and competitive cheer teams have finished MHSAA runners-up.

The Panthers girls basketball team has advanced to three MHSAA Semifinals, and the boys and girls soccer teams and baseball team have combined for five Semifinal appearances during her time guiding the program.

DeWitt has a strong athletic tradition going back decades. But there's no question Reyburn has played her part well in continuing that legacy.

"DeWitt teams are always hard-working and always the model of good sportsmanship. Many people would assign the credit to the coaches for such behavior," wrote Lansing Catholic athletic director Rich Kimball is recommending Reyburn for the WISL award. "Having been a coach, I know they deserve a lot of credit for how their teams perform and act, but without the leadership from the 'boss' those things don't usually happen. Teri makes sure her program operates with class at all times."

Her contributions to athletics off the field of play have been similarly significant, if also understated.

Since taking over the DeWitt program as interim athletic director in March 1999, and then fulltime that summer, Reyburn regularly has hosted five MHSAA tournaments per school year plus a total of more than 20 rules meetings and a number of clinics in coordination with statewide coaches and officials associations.

Reyburn, 59, also was among athletic directors who played a significant role in the formation of the CAAC, which combined schools from four leagues into one in 2003. She also was a leading voice in the formation of DeWitt High School's Hall of Fame, which has inducted 35 athletes and nine teams since 2008.

Reyburn has spoken at WISL conferences on both the role of Title IX in high school athletics and "Tackling the Media Blitz" for young coaches and athletes. She has served on the WISL planning committee as well as on Scholar-Athlete Award, athletic equity, competitive cheer rules, site and officials selection committees.

"Teri Reyburn has provided nearly two decades of quiet, steady leadership in her school district and serves as a mentor for those who are following her in the athletic director role," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "She's a role model for not just women, but anyone who aspires to a career in educational athletics. We're pleased to honor her with the Women In Sports Leadership Award."

Reyburn graduated from Cedar Springs High School in 1972, the same year as the enactment of Title IX and the first MHSAA tournaments in girls sports. Her school offered three sports, and she played intramural volleyball and was a cheerleader. She also was a championship-caliber horseback rider during high school summers.

Soon after graduation, Reyburn married her high school sweetheart Kris (they will celebrate their 41st anniversary in November). Her sons were born not long after – Mike, now a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army stationed in South Korea, and then D.J., who will begin his first fulltime season as a Major League Baseball umpire this spring.

Reyburn took college classes, worked as a study hall aide at Cedar Springs and later served on the Portland Public Schools board of education for 11 years before her family moved to DeWitt. She had intentions of earning a college degree, and discussed the possibility again after joining DeWitt schools a media specialist, middle school sports coordinator and assistant to the high school athletic director in 1994. But after five years in those roles, a sad circumstance led to her taking over the DeWitt program fulltime.

She was brought into athletics initially by previous director Jim Lutzke, who also worked in the human resources department and served as the Panthers boys basketball coach. He relied on Reyburn to coordinate middle school events and serve as a game manager for many at the high school.

Lutzke was diagnosed with cancer early in the 1998-99 school year, and Reyburn took on additional roles including game setup and equipment ordering. Lutzke died that March, and Reyburn and girls basketball coach Bill McCullen took over the high school athletic director duties on an interim basis. She was then hired as Lutzke's successor for the following fall – and continues to employ lessons she learned under his mentoring.

"The biggest thing I got from Jim was just learning not to react quickly. To think, to understand a situation and know all of the facts before I do anything," Reyburn said. "Jim was extremely good at that. He was even keel and level with everything he did."

Reyburn also received plenty of tutelage and support from local athletic directors including longtime Haslett leader Jamie Gent, Williamston's Jeff Lynch and then-Fowlerville athletic director Jack Wallace.

Now Reyburn is among those passing the knowledge forward. She's one of the longest-serving athletic directors in the CAAC and was recognized as her region's Athletic Director of the Year in 2006 by the Michigan Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.

"There are few, if any, athletic directors who are more capable, more organized or more in touch with high school sports than Teri," Lansing Catholic's Kimball also wrote. "Teri is the perfect person to win this award – passionate, smart, humorous, organized, but most of all an advocate for educational athletes."

### **Past Women In Sports Leadership Award recipients**

1990 – Carol Seavoy, L'Anse  
 1991 – Diane Laffey, Harper Woods  
 1992 – Patricia Ashby, Scotts  
 1993 – Jo Lake, Grosse Pointe  
 1994 – Brenda Gatlin, Detroit  
 1995 – Jane Bennett, Ann Arbor  
 1996 – Cheryl Amos-Helmicki, Huntington Woods  
 1997 – Delores L. Elswick, Detroit  
 1998 – Karen S. Leinaar, Delton  
 1999 – Kathy McGee, Flint  
 2000 – Pat Richardson, Grass Lake  
 2001 – Suzanne Martin, East Lansing  
 2002 – Susan Barthold, Kentwood  
 2003 – Nancy Clark, Flint

2004 – Kathy Vrugink Westdorp, Grand Rapids  
 2005 – Barbara Redding, Capac  
 2006 – Melanie Miller, Lansing  
 2007 – Jan Sander, Warren Woods  
 2008 – Jane Bos, Grand Rapids  
 2009 – Gail Ganakas, Flint; Deb VanKuiken, Holly  
 2010 – Gina Mazzolini, Lansing  
 2011 – Ellen Pugh, West Branch; Patti Tibaldi, Traverse City  
 2012 – Janet Gillette, Comstock Park  
 2013 – Barbara Beckett, Traverse City

**PHOTO:** DeWitt athletic director Teri Reyburn walks the Ford Field sideline before the Panthers Division 3 Final against Zeeland West this fall. (Click to see more at [HighSchoolSportsScene.com](http://HighSchoolSportsScene.com).)

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# sally grayvold

Wednesday, January 29, 2014 1:23 PM

Teri...

Your h.s.class advisor here!!

I am SO proud of you and pleased that you achieved this award!! Please accept my Congratulations and you and hubby keep up the great work!!

Sally Grayvold

# Vicki Tingley

Thursday, January 30, 2014 7:34 PM

I cannot think of a more deserving person for this award. Teri rightly joins a list of women whose selfless dedication and strong organizational skills have not only 'put on' sporting events but created life long memories, bonds and touch the lives of thousands. She has helped countless kids develop good character through athletics and sportsmanship. All the while with a smile and a quick laugh.

# Retha Doane

Saturday, February 1, 2014 12:54 PM

Congratulations Teri,

Always knew you were smart, but did not know you were so involved in sports. You are so modest about it all. If it were me, I'd probably be shouting it from the housetops. But,,,,, If it were me,,,,, I would have a reason.... . It would be a great feat for a woman at age 91 !!

The kids are so lucky to have someone like you who really cares about them and their endeavors .  
Keep up the good work Teri, With your love for sports, and for the kids, you will probably never retire.

Love and the best of everything,

Aunt Retha

# Roxanna Doane

Wednesday, February 5, 2014 10:09 PM

Dear Teri,

Congratulations for recieving the Women in sports leadership award. I am so glad that you were chosen for it. You have inspired many students over the years. Keep on encouraging your students.

Love,

Roxie

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