

## **FIAAA – A Brief History**

Prior to 1974 the athletic directors from Florida were very loosely organized as part of the Florida Athletic Coaches Association (FACA) and were afforded an opportunity to meet together while attending the FACA Football Coaches Clinic.

In December of 1974, several Dade County athletic directors attended the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) National Conference for Athletic Directors in Hershey, Pennsylvania. It was while attending this conference that Wayne Taylor, Miami Palmetto Senior High Athletic Director, had the opportunity to meet with Tom Fredericks from NFHS. In their discussions the possibility of Florida athletic directors organizing was addressed. The following January, the athletic directors in attendance at the FACA Football Clinic met with the leadership of FACA and asked if they could have more of a role in the planning of the clinic as to meet the needs of athletic directors. This discussion was not well received by the FACA and as a result the possibility of formally organizing the Florida athletic directors into their own organization was born.

The athletic directors of Dade and Hillsborough counties took this new idea back to their county athletic directors for approval and at the NFHS National Conference for Athletic Directors in St. Louis, Missouri in December of 1975 discussions regarding how other state associations organized ensued. During all of 1976, many meetings were held regarding Florida's efforts to organize the state's athletic directors. One such meeting was held between Wayne Taylor, Chuck Holland, East Bay High School Athletic Director, and Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Commissioner Floyd Lay asking for the support of the FHSAA in this organizing effort. Not only was support given but also financial resources from the FHSAA were promised.

Subsequently, in January of 1977 at the FACA Football Clinic, Wayne Taylor proposed that the Florida athletic directors separate from the FACA and form the Florida Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (FIAAA). This was overwhelmingly approved and a Constitution and a slate of officers were then presented to the state athletic directors. In December of 1978 under the direction of President-Elect Chuck Holland and the other charter officers: President Ward Burgess, Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High; Past President Clarence Noe, Broward County Director of Athletics; Secretary John Morgan, The Bolles School; and Treasurer Tom Stoll, St. Stephen's Episcopal held the first FIAAA State Conference in Tampa at the Holiday Inn-Stadium at which FSU Football Coach Bobby Bowden was the keynote speaker.

The FIAAA hosted the NFHS National Conference of High School Directors of Athletics for the first time in December of 1983 with Past Presidents Chuck Holland and Wayne Taylor serving as Host Chairmen. The FIAAA hosted the national conference again in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2005.

FIAAA Past President Dr. Clarence Noe was the first FIAAA member to serve on the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Board of Directors and served as president of the NIAAA in 1983. Past President Wayne Taylor served as NIAAA President in 1989. Past President Ron Balazs is the only other FIAAA member to serve on the NIAAA Board of Directors.

FIAAA Past President Ward Burgess was the first FIAAA member to receive national recognition when he was presented with a NIAAA Distinguished Service Award in 1979. FIAAA Past President Wayne Taylor was the first FIAAA member to receive the NFHS Citation in 1980. Fifteen other FIAAA members have been recognized with NIAAA Distinguished Service Awards or NFHS Citations.

In 1988 six FIAAA members were amongst the first to receive the designation of "Certified Athletic Administrator" (CAA). They are: Michelle Berry, Paul McLaughlin, Clarence Noe, Wayne Story, Wayne Taylor, and Russica Tighe. In 2001 FIAAA member Robert Piero earned the first "Registered Athletic Administrator" (RAA) designation and in 2002 FIAAA member Michael Colby earned the first "Certified Master Athletic Administrator" (CMAA) designation.

The FHSAA has always been very supportive of the FIAAA and in 1996 discussions ensued for the two organizations to become more closely associated and for the FHSAA to take a more active role

with the FIAAA. Subsequently, the FIAAA is included in many of the committees that have been created in the re-organization of the FHSAA. Additionally, the FHSAA began collecting membership dues of behalf of the FIAAA from all FHSAA member school and in 2001 the FIAAA Board of Directors voted to make FIAAA membership a school membership and thus the dues paid covers all athletic administrators associated with the school.

In 1989 the FIAAA began awarding scholarships to deserving high school scholar athletes in honor of the late Mandy Marie Stoll daughter of FIAAA Past President Tom Stoll. Mandy was tragically taken from us in April of 1988. In May of 1989 four \$500.00 were presented at the annual state conference which was later increased to six scholarships and at the May 2004 conference the number of recipients of Mandy Stoll Scholarships was doubled with twelve \$500.00 scholarships being awarded to deserving graduating scholar athletes. In May 2007 twelve \$750.00 scholarships were awarded.

During the 2000-2001 Administrative Year the FIAAA began an ambitious Professional Development campaign as it joined forces with the NIAAA by appointing a State Leadership Training Program (LTP) Coordinator to oversee the program. Michael Colby, CMAA was appointed as the first State LTP Coordinator in May of 2000. In May of 2001 the first Leadership Training Course (LTC) was presented at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference in Ft. Lauderdale. In May of 2002 Andy Chiles, CAA was appointed as a second State LTP Coordinator. In May of 2006 the FIAAA appointed its first State Certification Program Coordinator when Dan Comeau, CMAA, a member of the NIAAA Certification Committee, was appointed to oversee this program.

In May of 2003 the FIAAA passed a milestone as it celebrated its Silver Anniversary Conference in Orlando under the direction of then President-Elect Trish Highland, CAA, County Athletic Director of Orange County Schools. Additionally in 2003 the FIAAA embarked on a three prong corporate sponsorship program under the direction of Michael Stutzke, CMAA. The program defined three tiers of sponsorship with a \$5000.00 Directors Partner level, a \$2500.00 Presidents Partner level, and a \$1500.00 Committee Partner level. Each level is to have 3 sponsors with a total possible three year commitment of \$27,000.00 cash and/or in kind contributions each year for the organization.

In May of 2005 the FIAAA appointed it first Executive Director naming FIAAA Past President Ron Balazs, CAA to that post.

In June of 2006 FIAAA Past President Wayne Taylor, CAA was inducted into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame.

In May 2007 the FIAAA Board of Directors authorized the creation of a special committee under the direction of Past President Tom Catanzarite, CAA to develop the FIAAA's first Strategic Plan. This follows the development of the FIAAA's Mission Statement which was developed by a special committee under the direction of Andy Chiles, CAA.