

IHSAA NEWS RELEASE

Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.

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Earl Smith, Jr. to be honored with Ray Crowe Award

The Indiana High School Athletic Association is pleased to announce that Earl Smith, Jr. of Gary, IN has been named the recipient of the IHSAA Ray Crowe Excellence in Leadership Award.

The IHSAA annually presents this award to an individual on the merits of their achievements, civic contributions, and community legacy, and who exemplifies the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character.

Smith will be recognized on the court at halftime of Saturday's Class 3A state championship game at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. He is the second recipient after last year's inaugural award was presented to the family of Ray Crowe.

A 1952 graduate of Gary Roosevelt High School, Smith went on to a 56-year career with Gary Schools retiring in 2013 as City Athletic Director.

Considered a great coach and teacher, Smith is widely regarded in the Gary Community as an outstanding mentor, father figure, and advisor for so many and has set an example of responsibility, sportsmanship, how to be a good citizen, and the value of giving back to the community.

Smith coached at Tolleston, Froebel, West Side, Emerson and Lew Wallace high schools during his career and was the first African-American head coach at Froebel, Emerson and Lew Wallace. He coached football, track and field, golf and basketball during that time. His basketball teams won 323 games in 26 seasons, five conference titles, three sectionals, three regionals and reached the Elite Eight twice. His 1977 Emerson team won the inaugural Hall of Fame Classic and reached No. 1 in the state polls.



He was inducted into the Indiana Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1990, the Indiana Football Hall of Fame in 2007, and the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 2018.

A multi-sport star in high school, Smith played football, basketball and track and field. He won the state championship in the long jump in 1951 and repeated in 1952 as a senior when he set the state record of 23-2.5 and helped Roosevelt win the first two state championships in school history both years.

Smith would go on to the University of Iowa where he was the 1954 Big Ten indoor and outdoor long jump champion and was a Big Ten honorable mention selection that year while leading the conference with 11 touchdowns and 66 points while playing for the Hawkeyes football team.

He earned his bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Iowa and earned post-graduate degrees from Indiana University.

He and his wife, Roberta, reside in Gary.

The award is named in honor of the late Ray Crowe (1915-2003) who served his community as a basketball coach, educator, school administrator, and later a government official. Crowe was best known as the head basketball coach of Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis in the 1950s when he established what would become one of the greatest eras of Indiana high school basketball while serving as a pillar of Indiana's African-American community.

About the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA)

The IHSAA is a voluntary, not-for-profit organization that is self-supporting without the use of tax monies. Since its founding in 1903, the Association's mission has been to provide wholesome, educational athletics for the secondary schools of Indiana. Its 407 member high schools - public, institutional, parochial and private - pay no annual membership fee or incur entry fees to play in the Association's tournaments. A state tournament series is conducted annually in 22 sports, 10 for girls, 10 for boys and two co-eds (unified flag football, unified track and field). A 19-person board of directors, elected by member school principals, governs the organization.