

# THE IHSAA RAY CROWE EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD

## Official Nomination Form



# RAY CROWE: AN INDIANA LEGEND

Ray Crowe served his community as a basketball coach, educator, school administrator, and later a politician and government official.

Best known as the head basketball coach of Crispus Attucks High School in Indianapolis in the 1950s, Crowe installed an up-tempo, aggressive style of play and established what would become one of the greatest eras of Indiana high school basketball.

The Indiana High School Athletic Association is proud to honor the memory of the late Indiana legend with this annual award recognizing excellence in leadership.

Crowe was born in 1915 and raised on a farm near Franklin, Indiana, one of 10 children. A standout student-athlete at Whiteland High School where he graduated in 1934, he was a four-year letterman in basketball, a three-year letterman in baseball, and the only Black player on both teams.

After high school, Crowe attended Indiana Central College (now the University of Indianapolis) where he earned a degree in education and lettered in basketball, track and baseball. He graduated in 1939 and worked at International Harvester before starting his career as an educator and coach at Indianapolis Public School 17.



Crowe became an assistant basketball coach at Crispus Attucks High School in 1948 and was appointed head basketball coach in 1950.

After reaching the IHSAA Boys Basketball State Finals in 1951, his first year as coach, he guided Crispus Attucks to three consecutive state championship games in Indiana's famed single class basketball tournament. In 1955, Crowe became the first African-American coach and Attucks became the first African-American school in the country to win an open state title. He then coached the Hoosier State's first-ever undefeated state champion in 1956 (31-0) and state runner-up in 1957. The "Flying Tigers" went 61-1 during their two championship seasons.

During his seven seasons (1950-57), Crowe coached the Tigers to a 179-20 record (.899) including a state record 45-game winning streak. Remarkably, all this success came despite playing all their games on the road or at a neutral site because they did not have a suitable school gymnasium to host games.

Crowe was known as coach, mentor, father figure, teacher and guardian to his players and other members of the Indianapolis African-American community.

While the team's success brought great fanfare, it did not shield them from the racism and discrimination of the time. Despite facing racial tensions and hostile playing conditions, coach Crowe always emphasized the importance of good sportsmanship and taught his players to remain calm, take the high road, and overcome adversity through discipline and achievement.



He coached several players that went on to great careers including the legendary Oscar Robertson, Hallie Bryant and Willie Gardner, both of Harlem Globetrotters fame, Willie Merriweather, Albert Maxey, Ed Searcy, Bill Brown, Bob Jewell, and Bailey "Flap" Robertson.

Following his final game as coach in 1957, he became the Crispus Attucks athletic director for 11 years during which he helped lay the groundwork for a modern gymnasium. Its playing floor is now named Ray Crowe Court and he holds a prominent place in the Crispus Attucks Museum which sits adjacent to the school gym.

Beginning in 1967, he was elected to the Indiana House of Representatives (1967-75) and ultimately became the Chairman of the House Education Committee. In 1976, he became director of the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation and later served on the Indianapolis City-County Council from 1983-1987.

Inducted into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1968, Crowe was also cast in the 1986 movie, *Hoosiers*. He didn't have a speaking role but played the part of the South Bend Central coach in the state championship game and could be seen consoling his players during the post-game scenes.

In 1991, Crowe was named a *Sagamore of the Wabash* by Indiana Governor Evan Bayh. The award is the highest honor an Indiana governor can bestow and is a personal tribute to someone who has rendered a distinguished service to the State or to the Governor.

Crowe passed away in 2003 at the age of 88.

Since his passing, a residence hall at the University of Indianapolis was re-named in 2012 for Crowe and his brother - Ray & George Crowe Hall where they both graduated. And Ray Crowe Elementary School in Whiteland, IN, was dedicated in July 2021 near the family farm he grew up on in Johnson County just south of Indianapolis.

In 2022, Crowe became the first Indiana high school basketball coach to be inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame.

# GENERAL CRITERIA

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Nominees must exemplify the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and moral character.

All candidates for the Ray Crowe Award must be at least 50 years of age prior to the application.

Individuals will be considered on the merits of their career achievements, civic contributions, and community legacy.

All candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contributions to the interscholastic athletic community.

Nominees for the Ray Crowe Award will either be 1) Approved and sent to the Selection Committee, 2) Put on “Hold” or 3) Placed in the “Inactive” category. The “Hold for Future Consideration” category means a nominee may be considered again and that additional information and supportive material would be helpful before future consideration. “Inactive” indicates that the nominee no longer will be considered for the Ray Crowe Award until renominated. A one-year waiting period is required before renomination.

The Indiana High School Athletic Association is committed to recognizing, preserving, and promoting the heritage of interscholastic sports in Indiana. Many individuals have made extraordinary contributions and have had superb accomplishments in high school sports. The Ray Crowe Award acknowledges the contributions and accomplishments of these individuals who are worthy of recognition as examples for others to emulate.

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**“The games won, the championships, those things are for the moment and then they are sweet memories. The enduring satisfaction has been watching young men turn their basketball experiences into successful lives away from the court. I don’t know what higher honor a coach could ever ask for.”**

*Ray Crowe*

# INSTRUCTIONS

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All information on this form must be completed and supporting letters of recommendation submitted by **March 1** for the candidate to be considered.

The completed nomination form and support materials may be emailed to [webmaster@ih saa.org](mailto:webmaster@ih saa.org) or mailed to:

**IHSAA, 9150 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46260.**

Once the nomination form is received by the IHSAA, all action necessary to the selection process shall remain confidential. All information submitted shall be retained by the Indiana High School Athletic Association.

A completed nomination must be accompanied by letters of recommendation from the nominator and not more than three individuals from the nominee's related career. In cases where other support material is difficult to obtain, additional letters may be in order to substantiate the individual's accomplishments or contributions. Letters of recommendation for other awards or honors should not be used as a substitute for this requirement. A maximum of five additional documents (newspaper clippings, magazine articles, old letters) should be included to help substantiate the accomplishments and contributions of the nominee. These materials should focus on accomplishments and contributions and be listed in chronological order.

The nominee or individual submitting the nomination shall furnish a hi-resolution, portrait-style, color photograph of the nominee.

In completing the nomination materials, please observe the following:

- 1) All copies should be 8½" x 11";
- 2) Nominators should sign their names on the form;
- 3) Please type all material;
- 4) Do not use notebooks with plastic sheet protectors;
- 5) Identify individuals in all photos.

An individual shall nominate only one inductee annually.

The recipient of the award will be notified in March of their selection.

The recognition ceremony will be held as part of the annual Brady Sports Achievement Awards in Indianapolis at a date to be announced.

# NOMINEE

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**Date:**

**Name of Nominee:**

## **Individual Submitting Nomination**

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Email:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

**Name of Nominee:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

**Date of Birth:**

**School Affiliation:**

**City:**

**State:**

**Is the nominee still active in any area of athletics?**

**If yes, please explain:**

**Date of Retirement (if applicable):**

**If deceased, date of death:**

**Name of Spouse or Closest Living Relative:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Phone:**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>City and State</b>	<b>Year Graduated</b>	<b>Degree</b>
High School:			
College:			
Post Graduate School:			

# **NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET**

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**Career Description as School Administrator, Coach, etc. [give complete background and information pertaining to involvement in athletics]**

**Special Honors and Achievements**



# **NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET**

## **Professional Affiliations and Achievements**

## **Other information (not previously listed)**