

**NEW MEXICO  
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**



**News Announcement**  
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**NMAA ANNOUNCES HALL OF FAME 'CLASS OF 2022'**

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM** - The New Mexico Activities Association, in conjunction with the NMAA Hall of Fame Committee, announces the Class of 2022 for induction into the NMAA Hall of Fame. The NMAA Hall of Fame induction ceremony and luncheon will take place at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Albuquerque during the State Basketball Championships in March.

**Larry Chavez – Rio Rancho Public Schools, Santa Rosa Schools, Tucumcari Schools**

Larry Chavez is the 112<sup>th</sup> inductee into the NMAA Hall of Fame, with a career in education that spanned over 38 years. He devoted his entire career to serving the youth of New Mexico.

A native of Las Vegas, N.M., Chavez graduated from Las Vegas Robertson High School in 1977, where he was a three-sport student-athlete in basketball, cross country, and track & field. Following high school, Chavez attended Eastern New Mexico University, earning a bachelor's degree in 1982 and his master's degree in 1987.

Chavez started his career in education in 1982 in Santa Rosa, as a middle school and high school PE teacher, while also assuming the roles of head cross country and track & field coach and assistant basketball coach for the Lions. In 1984, Chavez moved to Tucumcari, N.M., where he spent the next 8 years, serving as a junior high PE teacher and social studies teacher. During that time, Chavez also coached junior high football, boys' basketball, and boys' track, as well as high school boys' track & field.

From 1992-97, Chavez again served the students at Santa Rosa Public Schools, this time as Athletic Director, while coaching cross country, baseball, basketball, and track. Then, in 1997, he made the move to Rio Rancho, N.M., where he served for 23 years, as a teacher, coach, athletic director and district athletic director.

During his time with Rio Rancho High School, Cleveland High School and the Rio Rancho Public Schools District Office, Chavez earned the New Mexico Track and Cross Country Coaches Association (NMTCCCA) Coach of the Year twice, the New Mexico High School Coaches Association (NMHSCA) Coach of the Year for Track & Field in 2008-09, the NMHSCA Region 8 Coach of the Year in 2009 and was a finalist for the NHSACA Track & Field Coach of the Year in 2010. Chavez was inducted into the NMTCCCA Hall of Fame in 2010 and the Rio Rancho High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2019. He also earned the 2011 New Mexico Athletic Directors Association (NMADA) Rookie AD of the Year, the 2015 NMADA Class 6A AD of the Year and the 2004 Rio Rancho Mid High Teacher of the Year.

Under his guidance, Chavez guided Cleveland High School to NMAA Director's Cup Championships in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2017-18 and to top-3 finishes four times.

Over his career, Chavez served on several committees, including the NMAA Commission, the NMAA Golf Sports Specific Committee, and the NMAA Cross Country Sports Specific Committee. He also served as the meet director for the State Cross Country Championships from 2006-09 and was instrumental in bringing the first NMAA Championship event to the City of Rio Rancho.

Chavez also served on the NMTCCCA Board as President and Vice President, is currently the President of the NMADA Board of Directors, also currently sits on the NMAA Foundations Board of Directors and served on the NMHSCA Board of Directors and was the District 1-6A Chairperson for 11 years.

Chavez and his wife of over 40 years, Rose, have four children, Larry, Orlando, Hilaree and Lawrence, and seven grandchildren.

### **Gary Schuster – Gallup-McKinley County Schools, Wingate HS**

Gary Schuster, the 113<sup>th</sup> inductee into the NMAA Hall of Fame, served the northwest part of New Mexico in a variety of roles, both administrative and coaching, for over 32 years.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, Schuster graduated from Denver City High School in 1975, earned his bachelor's degree from Southwest Texas State University in 1981 and his master's degree in 1988 from Western University.

In high school, Schuster competed in football and track & field, and was a member of the school's student council. At Southwest Texas State, he worked for the University Star as the sports editor.

Schuster started his career in education at Thoreau High School in 1984, where he taught English and coached football and track & field. Then, in 1987, Schuster moved to Gallup High School and, for three years, guided the Bengals football and track & field teams, while also teaching English in the classroom.

In 1990, Schuster began his administrative career at Wingate High School, where, over the next 13 years, he served as assistant principal, athletic director, football coach and track & field coach. Schuster left New Mexico in 2003 to take the District Athletic Director position at Window Rock School in Arizona for one year but returned to Gallup High School in 2004 as the school's athletic administrator and assistant principal, a position he held until 2007.

Schuster's first principal's position came in 2007 at Church Rock Elementary, where he served the elementary students of Church Rock for three years. In 2010, Schuster accepted the position as District Athletic Director for Gallup McKinley County Schools, holding that position for three years. From 2013-2016, Schuster was the grant program manager for Gallup McKinley County Schools, writing grants for the school district.

Over the years, Schuster has served on numerous committees, including the NMAA Commission, the New Mexico High School Coaches Association (NMHSCA) Board of Directors, the New Mexico Athletic Directors Association (NMADA) Board of Directors, the NMAA Sportsmanship Committee, the NMAA Hardship Committee, and the NMAA Track & Field Sports Specific Committee. He also served as the District 1-AAA Chairperson and was a member of the New Mexico Officials Association (NMOA) for 20 years as a track and field official. Gary represented the sport of track and field on the NMOA Executive Board for two years.

Schuster also garnered several awards over his 32 years of service, including the New Mexico Assistant Principal of the Year in 2000 (Wingate High School), District 1-AAA Coach of the Year,

NMHSCA Milestone Awards for Levels 1 thru 4, Athletic Director of the Year, the Natural Athlete's Strength Association Hall of Fame in 2010 and the NMAA Distinguished Service Award.

Schuster and his wife, Beatrice, have two children, Dean and Ronna and a grandson, Cassian.

### **Jamie Widner – Melrose Schools, House Schools, Corona Schools, Roswell HS**

The 114<sup>th</sup> inductee into the NMAA Hall of Fame is Jamie Widner, longtime teacher, coach, administrator, and superintendent. Widner served the kids of New Mexico for over 34 years.

Born in Clovis, N.M., Widner graduated from Melrose High School in 1979, where he was a three-sport athlete in football, basketball, and track. He earned second team All-State defensive end and honorable mention tight end honors for the Buffaloes and was also a member of the Melrose FFA Chapter. Widner attended New Mexico State University and earned bachelor's degrees in 1983 and 1985. He then earned a master's degree in 1993 from Eastern New Mexico University.

Following college, Widner worked for Corona Schools from 1985 to 1989 as an Agriculture teacher, while coaching football, basketball, and track, and served as the FFA Advisor. In 1989, he began working at Roswell High School, again teaching Agriculture, and serving as the FFA Advisor. In 1992, Widner moved back to where it all started and accepted an Agriculture teacher and coaching position at Melrose Schools. He held that position until 1995, before becoming the Superintendent of House Schools from 1995 to 1997.

After the 1997 school year, Widner again returned to Melrose Schools and became the high school principal, a position he would hold for 13 years, before being named the Superintendent of Melrose Schools in 2010. During his time as the Melrose High School principal and Superintendent, Widner helped guide the Buffaloes baseball team and football team, while leading the entire athletic program to multiple state championships and NMAA Director's Cups.

Besides teaching and coaching, Widner has served the kids of New Mexico in other capacities, serving on several boards and committees, including the NMAA Board of Directors, the New Mexico Secondary Schools Administrators Association (NMSSAA) Executive Council, the New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NMCEL) Board of Directors, the New Mexico FFA Board of Trustees, the New Mexico Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers, and the New Mexico Vocational Association and the REC 6 Executive Council. Currently, he serves with the New Mexico Association of Educational Retirees and the NM Association of Retired Superintendents.

For his service, Widner has received several awards, including the Outstanding Young Ag Teacher of New Mexico (1986), an Honorary New Mexico FFA Degree (1987), an Honorary American FFA Degree for Administrative Support (2015), the New Mexico Superintendent of the Year (2019) and was inducted into the NMCEL Hall of Fame (2019).

Widner and his wife of over 36 years, Robin, have four children, Lauren, Lainey, Lance, and Landry, three sons-in-law, Tyler, Kevin and Sterling, a daughter-in-law, Cydnee, along with seven grandchildren and one more grandkid on the way in the summer of 2022.

The NMAA Hall of Fame was established in 1976 and is comprised of an elite group of 111 accomplished individuals who have made significant contributions to interscholastic athletics and activities in New Mexico. In order to be considered, nominees must show great support of the NMAA's philosophy and objectives, they must have a combination of involvement in formulating regulations and procedures for various interscholastic education programs, and they must have a minimum of 25 years of service, 20 of which must have been in New Mexico. Nominations are

then screened by the NMAA Hall of Fame Selection Committee which consists of current and former leaders within interscholastic athletics and activities. The committee meets in October each year and then selects a maximum of four individuals for induction. The Class of 2022 – Larry Chavez, Gary Schuster, & Jamie Widner – will represent the 112<sup>th</sup>, 113<sup>th</sup>, and 114<sup>th</sup> members of this prestigious group.

For additional information pertaining to this release, please contact Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director at (505) 977-5385 or [dusty@nmact.org](mailto:dusty@nmact.org).

