

**NEW MEXICO
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**



News Announcement
For Immediate Release
August 1, 2022

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**NMAA COMMEMORATES HALL OF FAME OFFICIAL
WITH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AND FLIPPING COIN**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — The New Mexico Activities Association is excited to announce the creation of a memorial scholarship and commemorative coin to honor the legacy of longtime sports official, Lt. Colonel Cecil A. Lynn Jr.

“Cecil not only served his country but spent countless hours serving schools and student-athletes across New Mexico through his work as a sports official,” said NMAA Executive Directory Sally Marquez. “He was an inspiration to other officials and a huge advocate for education-based athletics. Cecil will be missed but his legacy will live on through the NMAA Foundation’s Memorial Scholarship that was created with his family and in his honor.”

An avid athlete and coach, Col. Lynn spent nearly 45 years officiating sports at the high school, collegiate and USA levels. He was integral in increasing both the quantity and quality of sports officials in New Mexico. Col. Lynn loved officiating high school sports because he recognized that athletics offered a unique opportunity for students to fund all or part of their college education. Both Col. Lynn’s surviving siblings, Betty Lawrence and Bobby Lynn remember Col. Lynn was quick to emphasize the critical importance of education and on the word student before athlete.

“Education was the core of my brother’s life”, said brother, Bobby Lynn. “My brother understood that education was the key to a happy and successful life during this short journey on Earth. He would be blissfully thrilled that his scholarship will be a part of the overall quest for knowledge.”

Col. Lynn provided officiating trainings and hosted various athletic tournaments and conferences throughout the state. In 2018, Col. Lynn was inducted into the New Mexico Officials Association (NMOA) Hall of Fame. He was a mentor to many current New Mexico sports officials, including Debbie Garcia who remembers Col. Lynn as a man of grit, integrity and honor who was always advancing the ball to take officiating and officials to the next level.

“No matter the phase or facet of Cecil’s life in which one encountered him, the term ‘opportunity’ comes to mind” recalls Garcia. “It was truly what his life was about. Cecil was always envisioning something new, seizing an existing situation, or creating opportunities for others to learn and grow. He made an indelible impression on those that were blessed to have crossed his path on his earthly journey. His legacy will live on and continue to make a difference in this world for years to come.”

Former NMAA referee Jimmy Jackson agreed. “Cecil was passionate about officiating sports and helping young people. I learned how to officiate basketball and softball while enhancing my personal discipline, values, love for sports and life. He was a great friend and a great mentor.”

The annual scholarship that will be distributed through the NMAA Foundation is aimed at graduating high school students who will continue their academic and athletic pursuits at colleges and universities in New Mexico and beyond. There will be two scholarship recipients each year and will be selected with input from Col. Lynn's family, including his daughters, Barbara and Denise Lynn, his son, Cecil Lynn III, and their mother, Eartha Lynn.

The 2022 inaugural scholarship recipients were RyLee Crandall of Artesia High School and Maleki Jones of Espanola Valley High School. Jones, a basketball standout for the Sundevils has been accepted to the University of New Mexico. Crandall, who led the Artesia Lady Bulldogs to three straight state softball championships, has signed to pitch at Baylor University.

"It was an honor to receive the scholarship in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Lynn Jr.," said Jones. "He was an amazing man who gave so much to his country, community, and youth. It was a major highlight in my life to learn about him and to get to know his family." Crandall added, "Getting to know Cecil Lynn's family has been such a blessing and a joy! From all the stories I have been told about Cecil he was an amazing man. I hope I can live up to his expectations through the next four years and my life."

"We are so proud of both Rylee and Maleki", said Barbara Lynn. "Both are ideal recipients of the scholarship in our dad's honor. We wish them both success with their college pursuits and will continue to offer them our encouragement and support."

In addition to the scholarships, the family commissioned a two-inch bronze coin featuring the image of Col. Lynn in uniform on the front with the NMAA logo and depiction of the sports he officiated: basketball, football, baseball, softball, and volleyball. While coin tosses are used primarily at the beginning of football games and volleyball matches, many officials in the state referee multiple sports. As such, the Lynn family donated 1500 coins to the NMAA to be distributed at officiating camps and events across the state.

"We wanted to put a coin in the hands of every official in the state as a way to honor my brother's love of Service and his love of sports." Said Col. Lynn's sister, Betty Lynn.

The coin was a frequent fixture during the summer volleyball season at not only tournaments statewide but also in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Hawaii. The coin is expected to be widely used in high school football coin tosses this fall and the family is working to have the coin flipped at the start of this year's New Mexico vs. New Mexico State Rio Grande Rivalry Football Game.

While Col. Lynn died on Thanksgiving Day last year, through the scholarship and coin, his family, friends, and NMAA colleagues have ensured that his legacy will continue for many years to come. Checks in support of the scholarship should be sent to the Cecil A. Lynn, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, % the NMAA Foundation; 6600 Palomas Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

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

