

Barbara Bransom Fraser

329 Garden Rd. Lexington, KY 40502 | 859-221-2470 | fraserbarb@hotmail.com

August 17, 2021

KHSAA

2280 Executive Dr.

Lexington, KY 40505

Re: Jim Komara's nomination for the Hall of Fame

To whom it may concern:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter recommending Jim Komara for the KHSAA Hall of Fame. He has been instrumental in guiding and counseling many students down the right path. In that regard I was one of those students. I understand later in his career he did highly commendable work with coaching education within the KHSAA.

I will share a very small slice of his career that I spent with him. There are only a few people in my life that I can say had a profound effect on the adult I became. I know I am not alone in saying that Jim Komara was one of them. He was my gymnastics coach/teacher for three years at Southern Jr. High School in the late 60's. He was our coach, as well as teacher and friend. He worked tirelessly with boosters to raise money for uniforms and proper equipment for our team. I can remember him referencing gymnastics books, publications and manuals to learn all that he could to be a better gymnastics coach, which at that time gymnastics in Fayette County was at its infancy and we were all learning together.

He was the most dedicated coach I have ever had and there were many. We would practice in the mornings before school and every afternoon after school. He drove us to Louisville and various other communities to have competitions with other teams on weekends in preparation for the county and state competitions. He modeled behavior that he wanted to see in his team, and he got it. I can't remember for sure, but I think we won the Fayette County Championship every year but one that he was the coach. In 1969 four gymnasts on the Southern Jr. team was asked to compete with the Tates Creek High School team as we were a feeder school. The Tates Creek coach was Lillian Delaney, a wonderful lady. Jim Komara was there with the four of us every step of the way. The Tates Creek team went on to win the State Championship in 1969. From Southern Jr., Kim Roller won the trampoline competition. I won the balance beam competition, came in 3rd in tumbling and 3rd in the all-around competition. Peggy Skidmore and Karen Kendall were also on the Coach Komara's team.

Jim Komara taught me much more than gymnastics. I learned about hard work and extra effort, and from that a solid work ethic develops in whatever you do from then on. He was my coach from age 13-15, formidable years when you're not sure who you are or where you're going. I feel so fortunate to have had benefited from his guidance at that time. The things I learned from him helped me become a responsible, successful, happy adult. I will list a few things that come to mind when I reflect back. Attributes he taught his teams that have helped me throughout my 44-year career in business management and my personal life:

- **How to be a winner** –He promoted good sportsmanship and support for one another. Gymnastics is an individual sport, yet it takes a team of individuals to win the championship. He made sure that everyone shared in the victories while always staying humble. He gave praise when it was earned and admonished when it was deserved and always had our backs.
- **Self-discipline** – He taught us to keep trying until we got it right. We didn't stop until we made progress. When you felt like quitting because you fell, couldn't get it right, or were too tired, you didn't quit, you never quit. You reached inside for the extra drive you didn't realize you had and pushed on.
- **Focus** – He taught us to block out the world when doing a routine, totally focus on the task at hand - you had one chance, no do overs. He would tell us to visualize the routine in our minds over and over until it was second nature when you performed the routine.
- **Mental & physical toughness** – There was no whining allowed. If you fell off, adjustments were made, and you got back on the equipment and finished. We were always learning under his tutelage, always moving forward with a positive attitude. Every practice we knew what the expectation was; warm up exercises and rotate on equipment. If he caught you slacking, there were consequences and no favoritism.
- **Enjoy what you do** – We had fun! He expected a lot from us and at the same time allowed us to have fun!

I'm one person. I know as a football coach, gymnastics coach, and Physical Education teacher at Southern Jr. he touched many lives - students, teachers and parents in similar ways He set a great example for every one of us. Jim Komara is forever in my Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,*Barbara Bransom Fraser*

KING & SPALDING

King & Spalding LLP
1180 Peachtree Street N.E. Ste. 1600
Atlanta, GA 30309-3521
Tel: +1 404 572 4600
Fax: +1 404 572 5100
www.kslaw.com

J Kevin Buster
Partner
Direct Dial: +1 404 572 4804
Direct Fax: +1 404 572 5100
kbuster@kslaw.com

September 9, 2021

Hall of Fame Committee
Kentucky High School Athletic Association
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505 Chairman, Membership Committee

Re: Jim Komara

Dear Hall of Fame Committee Members:

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Jim Komara's induction into the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Southern Junior High School in Lexington first opened its doors in the Fall of 1966. Jim Komara, fresh out of UK where he had played football, was a brand new teacher and athletic coach there; I was an 8th grade student. Over the next five years I came to know Coach Komara very well—as a teacher, coach, mentor and friend. He influenced my life and character in important ways, and I will forever be in his debt. Thus, while I am certainly aware of Jim's many accomplishments throughout his career as an educator and high school athletics figure in Kentucky—Principal at Crawford Middle School and Assistant Principal at Bryan Station High School; Athletic Director of the Fayette County Schools; Director of Physical Education and DARE Program in Fayette County; architect of the Coaches Certification program for the KHSAA that I understand is still used today—I write here of my personal knowledge of Coach Komara, and specifically of examples reflecting his dedication to his students and student-athletes.

My first detailed interaction with Coach Komara was in connection with something called the President's Physical Fitness program, a national program for junior and senior high school students which "tested" fitness through a series of exercises/activities (such as pull-ups, sit-ups, a sprint, a longer distance run, a softball throw for distance, etc.). This was not an official sport or anything, but simply something that you did in PhysEd class. Each year, the top three boy and girl scorers at each Fayette County junior high would have a competition at the UK track. Coach Komara took it upon himself to stay after school to help anybody who wanted

to actually train for the competition, and on his own time he stayed after school every day for weeks to help us all improve. Both years we won the countywide boys and girls competitions. This proved to be a harbinger of things to come.

In the mid-1960s the sport of gymnastics was in its infancy as a junior high/high school sport. In the 1967-68 school year some Southern Junior girls (including Leah Little and C. M. Newton's daughter, Debbie) were interested in having a girls gymnastics team. Coach Komara again volunteered to help coach them as part of Tates Creek High School's relatively new team as there was no junior high school competition. To fully appreciate this, here is a guy who grew up playing football in the late 1950s and early 1960s in rural western Pennsylvania in the middle of hard-scrabble coal and steel country and then went on to play football at UK, and knew absolutely nothing about gymnastics. So he did what he has always done: he went all in. He studied the sport in whatever way he could and began coaching the girls. He also formed a Tates Creek boys team. His approach was simple: practice until you got better, then practice some more. I know, because even though I mainly played other sports he talked me into being on the boys team. (He thought I would be good on the parallel bars, though I never was as good as he thought I could be). All through high school we practiced before school—at 6:30—and then we practiced after school. Because I practiced/played other sports after school, he would stay late to work with me and a couple of the other boys. In the Spring of 1969, the Tates Creek girls gymnastics team won the state championship, with Coach Komara coaching five of the girls personally. Then in 1972 the Tates Creek boys team won the state championship, with Coach Komara at the helm.

The fact that he took these girls and boys from ground zero in gymnastics to state championships in such a short period of time is remarkable. Without question, he is the reason these teams succeeded when they did. And not just because he made us practice more than others; but because he instilled in us the desire and confidence to do well. One of my best friends was Richard Schwartz, who was a surgeon and faculty member at the UK Medical School for many years until he died way too early of cancer. Richard played football at Tates Creek, and because he was a linebacker he was directly under Coach Komara. Not long before he died we were reminiscing about our high school days and how lucky we were to have had the teachers and coaches we had at Tates Creek. When Coach Komara's name came up Richard said simply: "I would have run into a brick wall for him."

As I reflect back on all this, I am humbled by what Coach Komara did for me and for so many others. As a teenager I didn't realize, much less appreciate, the remarkable sacrifices he made—all of his own volition, all far beyond what was required of his job, and all without personal gain—just to make us better. And not just better at the sport, but better able to succeed at our endeavors. Better able to deal with challenges and adversity. These are life lessons few can impart, and even fewer actually do.

I left Lexington for college in 1971, went to law school elsewhere after that, and have been practicing law in Atlanta for 42 years. For the first few years after I left Lexington I visited

with Coach Komara from time to time. But as I got busier and raised a family we for the most part lost touch. But when my Dad died in 1983, Coach Komara was there. When my mother died in 2011, he was there. And every time he has seen me he has told me he is proud of me.

I hope these personal reflections have succeeded in conveying some additional perspective on the type of man Jim Komara is. I realize he has had a long and accomplished career in education and high school athletics, and that he has distinguished himself by his dedication to his work in that field. But what I can say and know to be true is that he is a good man. I know that he cared about me and about all the other students he taught and coached, and he did so selflessly. We would be a lot better off if we had more like him.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J Kevin Buster". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with a large initial "J" and "K".

J Kevin Buster
Partner

JKB:frm

Jim Watkins, CMAA
1730 Griffin Gate Road
Louisville, KY 40205
502-473-1813

Hall of Fame Committee
Kentucky High School Athletic Association
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is in support of Mr. Jim Komara, to be inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Jim Komara has been a tireless champion of high school athletics in Kentucky.

Upon his graduation from the University of Kentucky, he became a teacher, coach and served as the Director of Athletics for the Fayette County Schools. He was instrumental in establishing many new programs and policies for the benefit of the student/athletes in Fayette County.

Mr. Komara also was a valuable member of the Kentucky High School Athletic Directors Association. Jim served as a KHSADA Board member for over 10 years. Jim also assisted in the development and operation of the KHSADA State Conference, serving as a conference committee member.

Mr. Komara was a person of vision. Jim saw a need for coaches in Kentucky to be better educated on how to assist in the development of the student/athlete. He championed the development of the Kentucky Coaches Education Program. Through his leadership and by meeting with coaches, athletic directors, principals and school superintendents across Kentucky the KHSAA passed a Bylaw approving KCEP in Kentucky.

Jim served as the Director of KCEP for over 15 years. He developed an instructor application and training process to become a certified KCEP instructor, setup educational classes for all KHSAA coaches across the State and maintained a database of those who completed KCEP to meet the KHSAA requirement to become a high school coach in Kentucky.

I can't think of anyone more deserving to be inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame than Jim Komara. His professional life consisted of making athletic participation better for the student/athlete. He worked tirelessly to educate coaches to be better communicators, better teachers and to help the athlete to become a better person.

Sincerely

Jim Watkins, CMAA
KHSADA Executive Director, Retired

Leah Little
4009 Bacopa Place
Lexington, KY 40509
859-227-1328

October 30, 2021

Kentucky High School Athletic Association
Hall of Fame Committee
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

Dear Hall of Fame Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of Jim Komara to the KHSAA Hall of Fame. I am pleased to be able to provide information to help this nomination move forward to a most deserving candidate. Mr. Komara is deserving of this recognition both as an educator, coach and contributor to Kentucky High School Athletics.

I came to know Coach Jim Komara as a middle school student in 1967. Little did I know at the time that this would change my life. I was chosen for the Southern Middle School gymnastics team that was coached by Jim Komara. At the time, there were no gymnastics teams in schools and Coach Komara took it upon himself to learn the sport and form a team. He studied and gave of his time so we could be successful and we were. We were very successful winning several Fayette County championships and were the feeder system to Tates Creek High School. We were known as "Komara's Kids" as our execution was flawless and our team was very disciplined. It was there that I learned so much about success. Coach Komara demanded excellence and for him there was no

other option than to have the mindset of a champion. He was passionate and driven and stood strong for the things he believed, often to others disapproval. He was dedicated and passionate about what he believed in and that rubbed off on his students. He taught character, integrity, discipline, sacrifice, commitment and work ethic. And he led by example. He was an impact teacher and coach. He never accepted less than your best and he changed lives including mine.

The girls he coached at Southern went on to compete for Tates Creek High School, some even competing for them as middle school students because they were so good. Those athletes were the nucleus of a team that won a state championship for Tates Creek High School in 1969. Three of them, Barbie Bransom, Kim Roller and myself, became individual state champions. He also formed a boys' team at Tates Creek that also went on to win a state championship in 1972. He also coached football in at Southern Middle and was an assistant football coach at Tates Creek High School. I know many of those gymnasts and players and they will all tell you the same thing, that Jim Komara impacted their lives.

His contribution to sports in our state did not end with his coaching career. He was a Principal at Crawford Middle School and Associate Principle at Bryan Station High School. Coach Komara went on to make a huge impact by creating the coaches' education and certification program for the KHSAA that still exists today. He was Director of the program for 15 years. He was also Athletic Director for the Fayette County Schools where he was responsible for overseeing sports in Lexington and Fayette county schools. He was a board member of The Kentucky Athletics Directors Association for many years. He was recognized for his contributions by being awarded the NIAAA Kentucky State Award of Merit in 1996. He also received the Blanton Collier Award in 2008 as a member of the 1962 University of Kentucky football team. The Blanton Collier Award was established by the KY Chapter of the NFL alumni in 2007 to honor individuals who not only excelled on the football field, but utilized the platform given them through their athletic careers to give back off the field.

This man has made many contributions and received many accolades but to me he is just "Coach". The man who became my father figure and directed my path when life at home was not so great. There are not enough words or paper to express everything he taught me. Because of his guidance, I went on to become the Head Coach of Women's Gymnastics at the University of Kentucky. There I used many of the tools I learned from him to become a successful coach and mentor. In my current position, mentoring student athletes at the University of Kentucky, I often hear his voice in my head. To this day we remain closely connected and I still seek his guidance. He has always been there for me throughout my entire life in triumph and tragedy, checking in, giving advice, and being a friend.

We need more leaders and mentors like Jim Komara. Teachers and coaches that change lives and make an impact. He is a role model for others to follow that worked to make sports better and safer for student athletes. As the Marketing Director of the KHSAA, I would stand before my clients and tell them "I would not be here in front of you today if not for my experience as a high school athlete and my Coach, Jim Komara". This is why we need high school sports and your support! He exemplifies the reason we need high school coaches to lead, guide and direct the lives of their students. Why not honor those who served tirelessly to make a difference. It would be my greatest moment to see him honored before his peers for a life well lived. I ask you to strongly consider the nomination of Jim Komara to the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Leah Little Glass

TATES CREEK H. S. BOYS' GYMNASTICS TEAM 1972 K.H.S.A.A. STATE CHAMPION



(Left to Right) Front Row: Steve Wides, Bil Blount, Scott Wilkes, Ricky Schweet. Second Row: Coach J. Komara, Mitchell Cooper, Kevin Wilkens, Jerry Kinderknecht.

Link, Jesse W., Rt. 3, Box 169, Franklin, 586-6415
 Lipker, Robert E., 1505 S. 9th Street, Ironton, Ohio, 532-4337
 Lloyd, Vanous Paschal, Box 15, Brownsville, 597-3745, 597-2932
 Logan, Michael, Box 693, South Shore, 354-7551 (Bus.)
 Logsdon, Charles, 550 Gates Road, Elizabethtown, 769-2253, 765-4125
 Lovell, Monty Joe, 201 New Broadway, Richmond, 623-3269, 623-4959
 Lovely, Johnnie, Salyersville, 349-3624, 349-3148
 Lutz, Dennis, Manitou, 249-3319, 821-7221
 Lynch, Lester F., 702 N. Main, Elizabethtown, 765-2060, 765-4174
 McCamish, Danny L., 160 Spring Street, Radcliff, 351-4812, 351-3167
 McClelland, John M., 2063A Spring Station Drive, Lexington, 293-1050, 258-8868
 McClelland, William Glenn, 316 Manhattan Drive, Lexington, 299-8552
 McConnell, Michael J., 7304 Garrison Road, Apt. 4, Louisville, 366-9904, 533-6651
 McCord, Floyd D., 336 Scott Avenue, Paris, 987-1619
 McCoy, Wendell, Wheelwright
 McDowell, Charles V., 2419 Roosevelt, Ashland, 325-2386, 325-8511, Ext. 731
 McKinney, Adelle, Radcliff, 357-5299
 McMillin, Larry, Rt. 3, Box 71, Crestwood, 241-8998, 222-9461
 Markham, James R., 305 Spring Street, Louisville
 Markham, Stan, 1409 21st, Bowling Green, 781-2379, 842-1674
 Marlette, Ronald L., P. O. Box 623, Shepherdsville, 957-5333, 564-3925
 Marshall, Barry J., 448 Hollow Creek Road, C-9, Lexington, 299-0757, 277-1159
 Martin, Charlie, Box 206, Sharpsburg, 247-2141
 Martin, Roger K., Box 174, Park City, 749-8425, 749-2860
 Mason, George, 20 Summerhill, S. Newport, 581-3434, 421-1685
 Mastin, Bert Tim, Box 128, Clay City, 663-2025, 663-2024
 Mattingly, Charles "Pete", 3813 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, 459-5793, 448-2761
 May, Douglas D., Rt. 3, Box 531, Pikeville, 437-6512
 Metcalf, Ken, Route 3, Mumfordsville, 524-9704, 524-9465
 Meyers, John, Box 513, Maysville, 549-2717, 759-7141
 Middleton, Johnny, 209 Leimaur Drive, Richmond, 623-1682
 Milak, Joseph R., 1219 Pierce-Ford Tower, Bowling, Green, 748-4151, 745-3348

Milby, William C., Box 322, Greensburg, 932-5692, 932-5391
 Moonevhan, James H., 810 Henry Street, Franklin, 586-4989, 586-3201
 Morgan, Richard, Rt. 6, Box 64, London, 864-6511, 864-6240
 Morrison, Daniel G., 707 State Street, Bowling Green, 843-9633, 842-0800
 Morse, Richard K., 163 N. Deepwood Drive, Radcliff, 351-3748, 624-4454
 Mulligan, J. T., 427 Center Street, Erlanger, 341-5628, 341-5628
 Mullins, Arthur, Elkhorn City, 754-4041, 754-7981
 Mullins, Charles E., Schultz Road, South Shore, 932-3388, 836-5931
 Mullins, Ronnie, P. O. Box 245, Elkhorn City, 754-8969
 Murphy, Roy Frederick, P. O. Box 141, Grayson, 474-5987, 474-5714
 Newsome, Ronald, 1406 Rochester, Middlesboro, 248-6572, 248-1000
 Noland, Douglas, 305 Herndon Avenue, Stanford, 365-2609, 365-2619
 Norwood, Thomas R., 811 Henry Street, Franklin, 586-3614, 586-3541
 Nucci, Donald D., 102 Main Street, Hazard, 436-2741, 436-2741
 Omer, William Keith, Route 1, Clay, 333-2529, 333-4008
 Palko, Edward T., 302 Noel, Frankfort, 875-4018, 227-7341
 Pardue, Israel L., Sr., Rt. 2, Box 482F, New Albany, Ind., 944-0279, 774-6431
 Parkey, Cecil E., 109 Greenwood, Middlesboro, 248-6148
 Patterson, Joe C., Harrodsburg, 734-2119
 Penner, Merritt D., Jr., Rt. 5, Box 392, Manchester, 598-3711
 Pierson, Oscar, P. O. Box 385, Owenton, 484-3303, 484-3878
 Pietrowski, Paul, 108 Bishop, Corbin, 528-6391, 528-1630
 Pinson, David Lee "Bo", Rt. 4, Box 566, Pikeville, 437-4639, 437-6361
 P'Pool, Steve Keith, Rt. 4, Princeton, 365-5968
 Price, Patrick Eugene, G-320 Cooperstown, Lexington, 255-6098
 Primm, James T., 137 N. McPherson, Hopkinsville, 886-8445, 886-2233
 Pursiful, Larry, College Heights, Hodgenville, 358-4267, 358-3195
 Quisenberry, James M., 1900 Farnsley Drive, Apt. 9, Louisville, 448-6152, 366-0940
 Rames J. W., 1117 Lebanon Road, Danville, 236-3380, 236-6334
 Rall, James Bates, 105 Reservoir, Frankfort, 227-2355



(<https://ada.8to18.com/khsada/>)

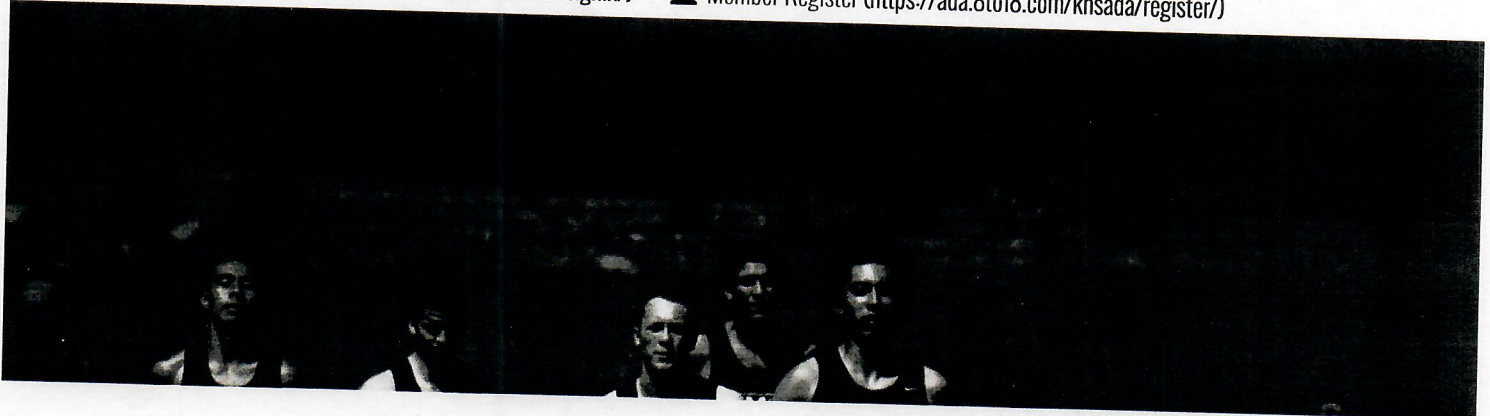
Kentucky High School Athletic Directors Association

(<http://www.8to18inc.com>)

Powered by 8to18 | The AD's Best Friend

➔ Member Login (<https://ada.8to18.com/khsada/member-signin/>)

👤 Member Register (<https://ada.8to18.com/khsada/register/>)



NIAAA State Award of Merit

Year	Winner	School/District
1988	Fr. Harry Jansing	Trinity High
1989	Bob Jacobs	duPont Manual High
1990	Jim Watkins	Southern High
1991	Stan Steidel	Dayton High
1992	Paul Dennison	Western High
1993	Karen Vanover	Lafayette High
1994	Jerry Mayes	St. Xavier High
1995	Kathy Johnston	Bourbon County High
1996	Jim Komara	Fayette County High
1997	Russ Kline	Pleasure Ridge Park High
1998	Tasso Harris	Valley High
1999	Faye Thornton	Harrison County High
2000	Bob Ball	Moore Traditional High
2001	Gary Kidwell	Lewis County High
2002	Jeff Perkins	Somerset High

**NIAAA AWARDS****NIAAA HALL OF FAME****CURRENT YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS****AWARD OF MERIT HISTORY****FRANK KOVALESKI
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AWARD
HISTORY****THOMAS E. FREDERICK
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
HISTORY****DISTINGUISHED SERVICE
AWARD HISTORY****STATE AWARD OF MERIT
HISTORY →****QUALITY PROGRAM AWARD****NFHS CITATION HISTORY****NIAAA STUDENT ATHLETE
SCHOLARSHIP**

State Award of Merit History

The State Award of Merit is may be selected and presented annually in each state. It is an award presented by the state to an NIAAA member who demonstrates outstanding leadership and meritorious service and achievement in the vocation of interscholastic administration. Selections and presentations are made by each state athletic administrator association and the award is provided by the NIAAA.

Previous Recipients

*Alabama**Alaska**Arizona**Arkansas**California**Colorado**Connecticut**Delaware**District of Columbia**Florida**Georgia**Hawaii**Idaho**Illinois**Indiana**Iowa**Kansas**Kentucky*

Rev. Harry Jansing, Louisville (1988)

Bob Jacobs, Louisville (1989)

Jim Watkins, Louisville (1990)

Stan Steidel, Dayton (1991)

Paul Dennison, Louisville (1992)

Karen Vanover, Lexington (1993)

Jerry P. Mayes, CAA, Louisville (1994)

Kathy Johnston, Paris (1995)

**Manage
membership profile
or become a
member**

Select here to access your membership profile or to become a member!

NIAAA Membership

Learn more about the benefits of NIAAA membership.

Jim Komara, Lexington (1996)
Russ Kline, Louisville (1997)
Tasso Harris, Louisville (1998)
Faye Thornton, CAA, Cynthiana (1999)
Bob Ball, Louisville (2000)
Gary Kidwell, Vanceburg (2001)
Jeff L. Perkins, CAA, Somerset (2002)
Gene Heffington, CAA, Buckner (2003)
Jeff Edwards, CAA, Louisville (2004)
S. Gale Travis, CMAA, Madisonville (2005)
Phil Rison, CMAA, Mount Sterling (2006)
Hugh McReynolds, CAA, Russellville (2007)
Mitchell F. Irvin, CAA, Crestwood (2008)
Charles W. Temple, CAA, Nicholasville (2009)
Scott Greenwald, CAA, Louisville (2010)
Arthur Ballard, CAA, Irvine (2011)
Joe Ruddell, Lexington (2012)
Jerry Wyman, Louisville (2013)
Victor Black, CAA, Liberty (2014)

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota

Mississippi

Missouri

Montana

Nebraska

Nevada

New Hampshire

New Jersey

New Mexico

New York

North Carolina

North Dakota

Ohio

Oklahoma

Oregon

Pennsylvania