

# MIAC honors St. Cloud Times' Rajkowski with 2015 Mike Augustin Award

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. -- The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) annually presents the Mike Augustin Award to honor outstanding contributions to the conference in the areas of media and sports information. Friday, the MIAC announced that Frank Rajkowski of the St. Cloud Times has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the prestigious honor, and the conference will honor him with a formal presentation Saturday during halftime of Saint John's University's football game against Buena Vista University.

Rajkowski certainly fits the criteria of the award thanks to his outstanding coverage of Saint John's, the College of Saint Benedict, and the MIAC as a whole. He was voted the winner of the award at the MIAC Sports Information Directors' Council Meeting on Aug. 4, and he will be presented with a plaque during an on-field presentation Saturday.

"I'm very grateful to the MIAC SIDs for selecting me as the recipient of this award," Rajkowski said. "Their assistance has been invaluable to my work over the years, as has their infinite patience as I've finished stories in press boxes and at courtsides across the league."

"On behalf of the MIAC, I would like to congratulate Frank on this outstanding honor," said Matt Higgins, MIAC Assistant Executive Director. "He is an excellent reporter and writer, and he excels in all facets of the job - breaking news, game coverage, in-depth feature stories and additional online coverage has been second-to-none. He is extremely deserving of this award as a token of our appreciation for his outstanding contributions to the MIAC."

Rajkowski began his career in journalism as a student reporter and editor at Winona State University and St. Cloud State University. Following graduation, he spent a year-and-a-half at the Hibbing Daily Tribune before returning to St. Cloud to work for the Times in 1998. He began covering Saint John's and Saint Benedict then, and added the Johnnie football beat in 2000. Rajkowski has approached his Division III assignments with the same vigor and thoroughness that most reporters apply to Division I and professional beats.



**Frank Rajkowski, St. Cloud Times**



"Frank is exceptional at his job," said Saint John's Athletic Media Relations Director Ryan Klinkner. "The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University are grateful for his fairness and hard work over the past 18 years. Frank has provided coverage of CSB and SJU athletics at a high level; a level that is hard to find in NCAA Division III."

During his 17 years covering SJU and CSB, Rajkowski has proven to be adept at breaking stories, analyzing the ins and outs of each sport he covers, and telling stories beyond the games and box scores. He has seamlessly incorporated technology and social media into his coverage by incorporating blogs, live online chats, and in-game updates on Twitter.

Though his focus has been on Saint John's and Saint Benedict, the MIAC sports information directors selected Rajkowski for the honor for his work to promote the conference as a whole. His fair, accurate reporting and professional approach have benefitted all 13 MIAC schools, and his reporting often extends beyond the Johnnies and Blazers to include a conference-wide perspective.

"Although his primary focus has been on the Johnnies and Blazers, Frank has certainly helped to shine a spotlight on the MIAC and its other member schools in Central Minnesota and beyond," said Klinkner. "For that, I know I am joined in appreciation by the other MIAC sports information directors."

Recently, Rajkowski was assigned to a new beat at the Times, and is currently the newspaper's Neighborhoods and Heritage Reporter. However, he hasn't completely left sports as he still maintains the Saint John's football beat. During his time as a sports writer, he also assisted with Minnesota Vikings and area high school coverage in addition to his college responsibilities.

"I'd like to thank the SIDs at Saint John's - Michael Hemmesch, Ryan Klinkner - and at Saint Benedict - Mike Durbin, Pat McCabe and now Leah Rado - for all their help since I first began covering sports at SJU and CSB in 1999," Rajkowski said. "There have been many memorable moments over that time. And I've gotten to know so many athletes, coaches and administrators. I've been very lucky to be able to work at a job that I have enjoyed this much."

Rajkowski is the 14th recipient of the Mike Augustin Award, which was first presented in 1999. He is the sixth newspaper reporter to claim the honor, and the first from the St. Cloud Times. Augustin was a longtime sportswriter at the Pioneer Press and was an articulate friend, follower and advocate of the MIAC. The conference established the award in his honor following Augustin's death from a sudden illness in December of 1997. Augustin also worked at the St. Cloud Times prior to his time at the Pioneer Press, a coincidence that wasn't lost on the most recent recipient.

"I'm extremely humbled to receive an award named for Mike Augustin, a reporter who set the standard when it comes to coverage of small-college sports in Minnesota," Rajkowski said. "Mike spent many years covering both Saint John's and the MIAC - at the St. Paul Pioneer Press and, before that, here at the Times. I was never able to meet him, but through talking to those he worked with, and delving back into his stories for countless bits of information, I understand why he was held in such wide regard by so many. To receive an award that bears his name is truly a great honor."

The MIAC's [Mike Augustin Award web site](#) includes complete details and past recipients.

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