

MIAC honors Rich Mies with Mike Augustin Award

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – For 15 years, Rich Mies shared the stories of Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) student-athletes in his iconic feature series, "*Profiles of Excellence*," which aimed to pay tribute to young men and women who embodied the true spirit of college athletics in competition, the classroom and the community.

On Friday, the MIAC repaid the favor, recognizing Mies for excellence in his own right and announcing the longtime sportswriter as the Conference's 2017-18 Mike Augustin Award recipient, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the MIAC in the areas of media and sports information.

The Conference's sports information directors (SID) selected Mies for the honor during their annual meeting, and MIAC Assistant Executive Director BJ Pickard will present Mies with the award on Saturday, January 13, 2018 at halftime of the men's basketball game between St. Olaf College and the University of St. Thomas at Schoenecker Arena in St. Paul, Minn.

"I'm still kind of in shock about this," Mies said. "I look at the list of past recipients – heavyweight journalists like [Patrick] Reusse, [Jon] Roe, [Gregg] Wong [Bob] Schabert, [Frank] Rajkowski, and [Steve] Thomson – I'm honored and slightly overwhelmed to see my name added to the list with them."



A native of Watkins, Minn., Mies became a fan of MIAC athletics very early in life. As a child, he routinely attended Saint John's University home football and basketball games with his father, and went on to enroll at St. Thomas, where he became a student-manager of the basketball and baseball teams. Mies began writing as a hobby in the mid-1990s and was able to put his passion and knowledge for Division III athletics to work during the 2001-02 basketball season, first with weekly recaps of MIAC contests for College Sporting News (CSN), then with a series of feature pieces that "sang the praises of the well-rounded student-athletes of the MIAC."

That series came to be known as "*Profiles of Excellence*." It launched in January 2002 with a profile of Hamline University's Tyler Petrich and quickly became Mies' signature publication.

"I wanted to share the stories of some of the amazing young women and men that the MIAC produces," Mies said. "They play the sport they love with no expectation of a pro career, but play it for the love of the game, their school, and personal pride. They excel not only on the playing field but in the classroom and find time to give back to their community. They go on to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, business executives — people who help make the world around them a better and richer place."

From 2002-2017, Mies wrote 526 pieces spotlighting 553 student-athletes, along with a handful of features on administrators and coaches. When he announced his retirement in August of 2017, Mies said he was overwhelmed with the thanks and congratulations he received from around the MIAC.

"I received many messages from former POE subjects, which really meant a lot to me," Mies recalled. "Perhaps the one that sums up those messages best came from Nate Ohme (Concordia, 2004): 'I'll never forget the article you wrote on me. I used it to help get my first job out of college! I still have it. You touched a lot of lives and gave kids a lot of confidence.' That floored me because, all this time, I was grateful to be able to share with the world what amazing young men and women we are blessed with here in the MIAC and how honored I was to tell these kids' stories. I never realized how important being the subject of a *Profiles of Excellence* was to them."

Profiles of Excellence became a regular CSN feature during the 2002-03 academic year and was so well-received that Mies began publishing full collections of the pieces in bound-book form from 2004-2010. The series then ran on MIACathletics.com from 2010 to its conclusion in 2017.

"On behalf of the MIAC, our sports information directors and everyone who has been informed and entertained by *Profiles of Excellence* over the years, I would like to sincerely thank Rich for all he has done to help promote our student-athletes, and congratulate him on a very well-deserved honor," MIAC Assistant Executive Director BJ Pickard said. "Rich's gift for storytelling has enabled millions of readers across the nation to learn about what it means to be a MIAC student-athlete. His work has had a positive impact on hundreds of young men and women and our Conference is better because of his involvement."

Mies – who published his first fictional novel, *Lessons in Life, Lessons of Love*, in August – is the 16th recipient of the Mike Augustin Award.

"I want to thank the various SIDs, coaches and MIAC administrators who helped facilitate meetings with subjects, and helped in many ways with making the series succeed." Mies said. "I especially want to thank Dan McKane and Ralph Wallace, for without these two, there would be no *Profiles of Excellence*. Finally, I'd like to thank each and every one of the POE subjects for allowing me to tell their story and for the inspiration they gave me."

The Mike Augustin Award was first presented in 1999. Mike 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.

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

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