

## Inspiration Awards

### **WCHS/Unit 9 Athletic Inspiration Award WCHS/Unit 9 Academic Inspiration Award**

The “Inspiration Award” was established by Iroquois County CUSD #9 in September 2007 to recognize and honor men and women connected with Unit 9 schools whose accomplishments, service and character have exemplified, developed, and encouraged positive traits and attributes to enhance future achievements by Unit 9 students. Those selected should have a widespread reputation, at least in their peer group.

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this award is:

- ❖ To show our youth what they can dream of and aspire to do.
- ❖ To provide role models for present as well as future Unit 9 students showing them how hard work and dedication can lead to significant success.
- ❖ To focus on the quality of education that Unit 9 provides and has fostered over the years.
- ❖ To showcase our schools and communities as a place that provided support for the honoree’s accomplishments.

#### **II. General Organization**

The “Inspiration Award” will be divided into two (2) categories with each having a display area called Wall of Inspiration at Watseka Community High School. One category will be athletics and the other category academics with each group having its own Selection Committee. It is expected that similar selection processes, awards and displays will be used for both groups. For the purpose of cohesive development and continuation of this award the following three formal organizations will provide cooperative governance of the Inspiration Award and the Selection Committee including direction for the overall guidelines, selection of committee members and financial support:

Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Board of Education  
Witseka High School Athletic Boosters  
Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Academic Foundation

Each Selection Committee will consist of six (6) to twelve (12) members each serving a three (3) year term with the no more than two (2) consecutive terms. The following Selection Committee members are exception to the three (3) year term and the two (2) consecutive term limits because of their positions as:

Unit 9 Superintendent, Watseka Community High School Principal, Watseka Community High School Athletic Director, the selected elected officer of the Watseka Athletic Boosters, and the selected director of the Unit 9 Academic Foundation.

The initial committee members will be divided into one (1), two (2) and three (3) year terms so there will always be committee members remaining with experience in the process. The

term of office will run from October 1 through September 30. Each year, at their initial meetings in October, both committees will select one of their committee members to serve as chairperson. Since some members of the Selection Committee may reside outside the local area, each Selection Committee will need to decide how to conduct the selection process, the election of a chairperson, and election of new committee members without “face-to-face” meetings.

If for any reason a member of the Selection Committee needs to be replaced, the Selection Committee will be responsible for finding an appropriate committee member. The new member will serve the remaining term of the member who he/she is replacing.

#### **A. Specific Organization Guidelines – Athletic Selection Committee**

Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Board of Education and the Watseka Community High School Athletic Boosters will provide the overall direction and financial support for the Athletic Selection Committee. The Athletic Selection Committee consisting of at least six (6) members and not more than twelve (12) members must include at least the following members:

- A current officer from the Watseka High School Athletic Boosters (*This person should be selected by the Watseka High School Booster organization prior to October of the year he or she will serve. This person will serve a one year term, but may be appointed for additional terms by the Booster organization as long as he/she is an officer of the Boosters for the upcoming year.*)
- Current Watseka High School Athletic Director
- Current Watseka High School Principal
- At least two (2) members living within the Unit 9 School District
- At least two (2) alumni of Watseka Community High School

The current chairman of the Watseka Athletic Boosters and the current Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Superintendent will be responsible for selecting the first members to the Athletic Selection Committee. After the first committee has been established the current Watseka High School Principal, the officer representing the Watseka Athletic Boosters and one (1) additional Athletic Selection Committee member will serve as the nomination committee for future committee members. This nomination committee needs to prepare a list of candidates for approval by the present Athletic Selection Committee during the month of June. Candidates need approval by a simple majority of the current committee members to begin to serve their term beginning in October of the same year. All nominees to serve on the Athletic Selection Committee should have or had a high interest in the athletic program at Watseka High School.

#### **B. Specific Organization Guidelines – Academic Selection Committee**

Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Board of Education and the Unit 9 Academic Foundation will provide the direction and financial support for this process and selection of the Academic Selection Committee. The Academic Selection Committee consisting of at least six (6) members and not more than twelve (12) members must include at least the following members:

- A current director from the Unit 9 Academic Foundation (*This person should be selected by the Unit 9 Academic Foundation organization prior to October of the year he or she will serve. This person will serve a one year term, but may be appointed for additional terms by the Unit 9 Academic Foundation organization as long as he/she is a director of the Foundation for the upcoming year.*)
- Current Unit 9 Superintendent
- At least two (2) members living within the Unit 9 School District
- At least two (2) alumni of Watseka Community High School
- At least one (1) retired teacher or retired administrator from the Unit 9 schools

The current chairman of the Unit 9 Academic Foundation and the current Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Superintendent will be responsible for selecting the first members to the Academic Selection Committee. After the first committee has been established the current Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Superintendent, the director representing the Unit 9 Academic Foundation and one (1) additional Academic Selection Committee member will serve as the nomination committee for future committee members. This nomination committee needs to prepare a list by candidates for approval to the present Academic Selection Committee during the month of June. Candidates need approval by a simple majority of the current committee members to begin to serve their term beginning in October of the same year. All nominees to serve on the Academic Selection Committee should have or had a high interest in the academic studies and programs within the whole district.

### **III. Selection Process for Inspiration Award**

#### **A. Submission of Nominations**

Nominations for the Athletic or Academic Inspiration Award can be made by anyone, but must be submitted on the designated form, which contains specific guidelines and criteria. The Nomination Form and all supportive information should be submitted starting March 1<sup>st</sup> but no later than April 15<sup>th</sup> for the year to be considered by the respective Selection Committees. Please remember when nominating an individual or team that while you or his/her contemporaries might know him/her well, we must have documentation justifying the selection to a total stranger who might review the material. We also need enough information to create a biographical sketch that will accompany his/her award.

Nomination Forms are available at the following locations:

- Unit 9 District Office, or any of the Unit 9 school offices.
- Downloaded from the Unit 9 Web Site at [www.watseka-u9.k12.il.us](http://www.watseka-u9.k12.il.us).
- If you are unable to pick up an application, please call the Unit 9 District Office, 815-432-4931 and an application will be sent to you.

The nomination forms may be mailed to the following locations:

WCHS/ Unit 9 Athletic Inspiration Award nomination forms should be mailed to:  
Athletic Inspiration Award Selection Committee  
% Watseka Athletic Boosters, P.O. Box 144, Watseka, IL 60970

WCHS/ Unit 9 Academic Inspiration Award nomination forms should be mailed to:  
Academic Inspiration Award Selection Committee  
% Unit 9 Academic Foundation, 109 S. Second Street, Watseka, IL 60970.

Nomination Forms for either Selection Committee may also be delivered to at the Unit 9 District Office or may be faxed to the Unit 9 Office – 815-432-6889.

## **B. Eligibility Criteria**

### **WCHS/Unit 9 Athletic Inspiration Award**

Nominations for the WCHS/Unit 9 Athletic Inspiration Award will fall into three (3) categories: Athlete, Coach, or Honorary. These are the minimum qualifications for each of the athletic categories:

1. **Athlete Category** – Individuals or teams that are recognized for their athletic accomplishments. These accomplishments should be significant enough to over time be recognized not only by his/her peers but also by those outside the immediate Watseka area. The nominee must be a Watseka Community High School graduate and has been out of high school a minimum of ten (10) years. Any one of the following minimum requirements are expected to be met to make an athlete a possible candidate for this category:
  - An athlete with overall athletic talent shown by receiving at least eight (8) varsity letters in different sports at WCHS.
  - An athlete who earned at least two (2) varsity letters in a particular sport at WCHS and received state recognition in that sport.
  - A team, which received state recognition i.e. basketball elite eight, status while competing for WCHS.
  - An WCHS alumni, who received special recognition as an athlete at the college level, in professional sports, or athletic performance at the national or international level.
2. **Coach Category** – A coach for the Unit 9 school system who was recognized beyond the local level for his/her accomplishments as a coach and/or during of his/her lengthy service, minimum of ten (10) years for the Unit 9 school system, inspired athletic excellence during his/her coaching career. At least five (5) years must have past since being a Unit 9 employee.
3. **Honorary Category** – The nominee must have been connected to Unit 9 athletics for a minimum of ten (10) years and over that time shown meritorious service or been a loyal friend to the Unit 9 athletic program. The

nominee cannot presently be a Unit 9 employee. If ever employed by Unit 9, a minimum of five (5) years must have past since being employed by the Unit 9 school district.

### **WCHS/Unit 9 Academic Inspiration Award**

Nominations for the WCHS/Unit 9 Academic Inspiration Award will fall into three (3) categories, Alumni, Educator, or Honorary. Overall nominees must have made a “lasting legacy” impact on the students or school system. These are the minimum qualifications for each of the academic categories:

1. **Alumni Category** – An Watseka Community High School alumnus who is recognized for his/her accomplishments. These achievements could be at the local, state, national or international levels. These accomplishments should be significant enough to be recognized by his/her peers but also by those years afterwards and/or by those outside the immediate Watseka area. These accomplishments could be in any the following areas but are not limited to these areas:

- Career Achievement – Recognized as a respected leader in his/her profession who has demonstrated unique talents and/or career achievements and has helped improve the quality of life.
- Cultural/Performing Arts – Recognized for achievements in the cultural, visual, performing arts and/or for contributions to the promotion of cultural activities on a local, state and/or national level.
- Business/Industry/Entrepreneur – Recognized locally and beyond for his/her creation, development, and/or leadership in the world of business and related areas.
- Service Professions – Recognized as a leader in his/her field (i.e. education, religion, politics, law, medicine, etc.) locally, statewide, nationally or internationally for excellence in their field or service to humanity.

The nominees must be a Watseka Community High School graduate and been out of high school a minimum of ten (10) years.

2. **Educator Category** – A teacher or administrator for the Unit 9 school system, who was recognized for his/her accomplishments as an educator including inspiring academic excellence during of his/her lengthy service, minimum of twenty (20) years for the Unit 9 school system. At least five (5) years must have past since being a Unit 9 employee.

3. **Honorary Category** - The nominees could be support staff, volunteer or community member who has been connected to Unit 9 schools for a minimum of ten (10) years and over that time shown meritorious service or been a loyal friend to the Unit 9 school system. Recognized for promoting the Unit 9 schools and, by example or by sustained contribution, serving as a major influence in the lives of Unit 9 students. The nominee cannot presently be a

Unit 9 employee. If ever employed by Unit 9, a minimum of five (5) years must have past since being employed by the Unit 9 school district.

### **C. Selection Process**

During the month of May, and if necessary June, the two (2) Selection Committees will review all nominations with that year's recipients notified before August. Consideration should be given to announce this year's recipients at the alumni banquet. No more than three (3) nominees will receive the WCHS/Unit 9 Athletic Inspiration Award and no more than five (5) nominees will receive the WCHS/Unit 9 Academic Inspiration Award during any given year. (The reason for more possible honorees under the Academic Inspiration Award is that this award has a larger possible nominee "bank" than the Athletic category.) A nominee must receive at least 75% of the votes of the members of the appropriate Selection Committee. The actual process of voting on the nominees will be decided by each Selection Committee prior to the beginning of the selection process, which begins in May. Any nominee who is not selected will remain in the selection process for two additional years following the first year of his/her nomination. After three (3) years as a nominee, the name will be eliminated from the selection process but may be nominated again. Nominees chosen by the respective selection committees will be forwarded to the Unit 9 Board of Education for final approval. An individual is honored with the "Inspiration Award" when their selection is affirmed by a simple majority of Board of Education members present at a Board of Education meeting.

### **D. Award Ceremony**

Permanent plaques, commemorating each "Award of Inspiration" member, will be displayed at Watseka Community High School. Each plaque will include a picture of the honoree and a brief biographic sketch. The appropriate Selection Committee and the honoree will mutually select a date for the honoree to receive his/her award.

## **IV. Guideline Changes**

Both Selection Committees shall yearly review the selection process to determine if any corrections or additions to the guidelines should be made. Any significant changes to these guidelines need to have the final approval of the three (3) formal governing organizations:

Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Board of Education  
Witseka High School Athletic Boosters  
Iroquois Co. CUSD #9 Academic Foundation