

DR. BILL WELKER

WUSA CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS OVAC WRESTLING

"DIRECTOR'S AWARD"

Dr. William "Bill" Welker received the prestigious "Director's Award" at the 70th Annual Ohio Valley Athletic Conference (OVAC) Ron Mauck Wrestling Championships (Wheeling, WV) for his contributions to the tournament forever 50 years. It is the largest conference of its kind in the United States with more than 50 member-schools from Ohio and West Virginia.



The citation on the plaque reads: *The 2024 Director's Award is presented to Dr. William Welker for his unwavering dedication and commitment to the success of the OVAC Ron Mauck Wrestling Championships for over 50 years.*

Bill Welker officiated in the OVAC Ron Mauck Wrestling Championships from 1980-91 and then served as the competition's rules interpreter from 1992-2017. He was also the OVAC Tournament's souvenir program coordinator and editor for 18 years (1979-96)

Dr. Bill Welker

Welker received the OVAC's "*Mr. Mat*" award in 1991. As a mat sport referee, he was tabbed the OVAC Wrestling Official of the Year in 2003. He also received the 2001 NFHS Mideast Section 2 Distinguished Active Official Award in 2001 and the 2002 National Wrestling Official of the Year Award and 2008 Master of Wrestling Award from *Wrestling USA Magazine*.

Welker was the WVSSAC Wrestling Rules Interpreter, Clinician and Supervisor of Officials at the state tournament from 1989-2017. He was also

a member of the NFHS National Wrestling Rules committee from 2012-2015.

Welker, an accomplished wrestling author has published four mat sport novels, *A Wrestlers Curse, The Novel Wrestler, One Wrestler's Courage, and The Eyes of a Wrestler*. His books can be purchased on Amazon.com. He now writes all the articles in the OVAC's annual souvenir wrestling program, and selects the officials for the championship finals.

As a wrestling writer, Welker was selected the 1987 & 2013 (with his son Rick) National Sportswriter of the Year by Wrestling USA Magazine for his "*Mat Talk*" column which appeared in a host of publications and was named that publication's West Virginia Wrestling Man of the Year in 2001. He was also tabbed the West Virginia Wrestling Sportswriter of the Year seven times.

Welker served as head wrestling coach at three Wheeling, West Virginia high schools: Wheeling High (1970-72), Wheeling Central Catholic (1972-76) and Wheeling Park (1979-80).

As an athlete at Shamokin (PA) High School, Welker was a three-time sectional and district champion; a two-time regional champion; a Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) State Champion in 1963 and a PIAA State Finalist in 1965. He earned a wrestling scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Bill Welker is a member of five halls-of-fame: the Pennsylvania (PA) Sports Hall of Fame, the PA District Four Wrestling Hall of Fame, the PA State Wrestling Hall of Fame, the OVAC Hall of Fame, and the National Wrestling Hall of Fame – West Virginia Chapter, which he co-founded in 2003.

Bill and his loving wife, Peggy, of over fifty years live on Wheeling Island, West Virginia. They have four grown children: Billy, Rick, Tiffany, and Daniel, 15 grandchildren and four great grandsons.