

# Athletic director earns George E. Killian Award of Excellence

HOLYOKE – Tom Stewart, director of athletics and student engagement at Holyoke Community College, is the recipient of the 2024 George E. Killian Award of Excellence, the highest award bestowed each year by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

The award is given to those who demonstrate the ideals of voluntarism, achievement, service, leadership, and excellence. It is named after George E. Killian, the first executive director of the NJCAA, which led for nearly 40 years.

“Thank you for all you do to ensure a great student-athlete experience and for your dedication to the NJCAA,” Christopher J. Parker, NJCAA president and chief executive officer, said in the award letter.

Stewart, a resident of Westfield and a graduate of Westfield State University, has worked in college athletics for more than 35 years, the past 26 at HCC, where

he has been director since 1999.

At HCC, he oversees nine intercollegiate sports programs and manages the David Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation. He serves on the NJCAA Board of Regents as the representative for Region 21. He chairs the NJCAA Division III Men’s Golf Committee and the NJCAA Division III Women’s Golf Committee while also serving on the NJCAA Track and Field Committee.

During his career, HCC has hosted nine NJCAA cross country championships and a track and field championship. In 2016, he was elected second vice president for the association’s men’s division. In that role, Stewart oversaw the complete budgetary activity of the association. He has previously served as the co-chair of



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the finance and budget committee.

Stewart and other award winners were recognized April 17 in Charlotte, North Carolina, during the 2024 NJCAA annual convention.

Representing 550 schools, the NJCAA is the largest athletic association for two-year colleges in the United States.

Stewart is the first recipient of the George E. Killian Award from any college in New England since it was first presented in 2006.

“That means a lot,” Stewart said. “It’s kind of a culmination of all my work for all these years. And as I’m winding down towards the end of my career, it’s kind of nice to be recognized, even though I’m not big on getting these kinds of awards.”

Stewart started his career in higher education at Westfield State where he

worked for seven years as student activities administrator and director of intramurals and coached cross country. He was hired at HCC in 1996 as student activities director and became assistant athletic director in 1999 and athletic director in 2007. He now also supervises the Student Engagement department at HCC, which includes Student Activities and the Student Senate.

In October, he was inducted into the Westfield State University Athletics Hall of Fame. As an undergraduate there, Stewart was a four-year member of the WSU Owls cross country and track and field teams. An all-conference runner in 1985 and 1987 in cross country, he won the Westfield State Invitational and was an all-New England runner in steeplechase his sophomore year. The WSU cross country and track teams won conference titles all four years he was on the team.