

FROM THE PODIUM

RANDY DEAN

Michael Lenard's Olympic-size Commitment to Hard Work

On October 17, 2025, the National Sports Law Institute (NSLI) presented its Master of the Game Award to Michael Lenard in the Lubar Center at Marquette Law School. Lenard is vice-president of the international Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), based in Lausanne, Switzerland, whose jurisdiction includes resolving disputes in connection with the Olympic Games; he is a longtime member of the NSLI's board of advisors. Among the presenters of the award was Randy Dean, a Milwaukee native and former NFL quarterback, whose remarks focused on Lenard as a person.



Michael Lenard, flanked by Professors Paul Anderson (left) and Matt Mitten, in Eckstein Hall after receiving the National Sports Law Institute's Master of the Game Award.

I am honored to have been asked to make some brief remarks about Michael Lenard in connection with this Master of the Game Award. The résumé, the achievements, and the awards and recognitions are all testament to a remarkable, dedicated, highly intelligent individual, leader, athlete, teammate, and friend.

The friendship, essentially a brotherhood, among my twin brother, Rob, Michael, and me,

started in elementary school, maybe even kindergarten. And even in the fall of 1972, during our senior year at Whitefish Bay High School, little did the three of us know that the arrival of alum Dennis Berkholtz, captain of the 1972 U.S. Olympic handball team, to introduce the new sport of team handball into the PE program, would lead to a seemingly quixotic journey for the three of us to the Olympics—and, for Michael, to decades of service to and leadership of the integrity of Olympic and international sport. Forty-five years later, in 2017, Michael would be the recipient of the United States Olympic Committee's Torch Award, in recognition of his outstanding service to the U.S. Olympic movement.

As Michael admits and coaches have assessed, he was not blessed with the athletic ability of some other players. This only motivated him to work harder, in the Olympic spirit of “faster, higher, stronger.” Michael's assets included being smarter than all of us about

the game of handball, and just generally smarter, and being that perfect teammate who made everyone around him—and ultimately the team—perform better.

Rob and I were fortunate to be selected for the 1976 Olympic handball team. Michael would have made the 1980 Games, but the United States boycotted. He earned a spot on the 1984 team, winning multiple national championships and international competitions along the way. He did this while balancing demands of practicing at a major law firm and investing his skills and talents in the U.S. Olympic organization in support of athletes.

His playing career in the past and despite national and international demands for his professional expertise, Michael has always been available to serve and support teammates and friends. He skipped the ceremony for the Torch Award because of his commitment to attend the wedding of his dear friend and colleague John Coates in Australia. He is the “go-to” person for eulogies, which, though not something anyone desires to do often, is an honor. Two and a half years ago, when my brother, Rob, passed away suddenly, Michael pivoted and coordinated the delivery of an Olympic flag to Rob's funeral.

This past week, it was a rare gift to have dinner with Michael, to catch up and reminisce about our youth together, intense backyard 2-on-2 basketball games, handball training camps, teammates, competitions, and perspectives on our journeys. It was an overdue and heartfelt reminder of how much I admire Michael and all that he has accomplished—and even more so, how fortunate, grateful, and blessed my late twin brother and I have been to have Michael as a lifelong friend and teammate.

Congratulations, Michael. ■