



Contact: Susan Stoga/Donna Scherner
847/884-0000

ARA ANNOUNCES NATIONAL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD FINALISTS

List includes Collegiate Football Standouts Who Do Good On and Off Field By Volunteering As Tutors, Mentors and Fund Raisers

Glenview, Ill., (Dec. 8, 2006) – The Awards and Recognition Association (ARA) has named 10 finalists for its annual sportsmanship award, given to one outstanding NCAA Division I collegiate football player who best personifies the spirit of sportsmanship.

Finalists for the 2006 sportsmanship award represent a variety of schools of all sizes and locations throughout the United States. Award criteria take into consideration the athlete's conduct both on and off the field.

“The ARA Sportsmanship Award was created to recognize outstanding character and leadership as it translates to sportsmanship,” said Rich Zydonik, president of the ARA. “As expected, each finalist is an athletic stand out and consistently performs on the field. It's encouraging to see so many of today's collegiate athletes who consistently conduct themselves in a highly sportsmanlike manner.”

To qualify for the award, an athlete must be a starting player or significant contributor on his team, be a senior in good academic standing, demonstrate great respect for competitors, school, teammates and coaches, show an ability to accept victory and defeat graciously, convey a high degree of humility and integrity, and demonstrate commitment in the classroom and to the community.

Former Brigham Young University Head Football Coach LaVell Edwards chairs the selection committee. The 2006 award recipient will be announced in mid-December. The finalists, in alphabetical order, are:

- **Rusty Clayton, University of Memphis.** A native of Sumrall, Miss., Clayton is pursuing his master's degree in criminal justice, achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and is a volunteer with many local youth organizations.
- **Doug Datish, Ohio State University.** Datish, of Warren, Ohio, works with underprivileged youth in both Columbus, Ohio, and Phoenix, and volunteers with the Ohio Food Bank.
- **Janiah Downing, Illinois State University.** Downing, of Reddick, Fla., is actively involved with Boys & Girls Clubs, Harvest of Hope canned food drive and the Renovation of Washington Elementary School's playground.
- **Brian Leonard, Rutgers University.** The Hailsboro, N.Y., resident volunteers in a promotional campaign for the University and is an Academic All-American.
- **Clint Marks, Middle Tennessee State University.** Marks, of Fort Myers, Fla., is involved with Special Olympics, Boys & Girls Clubs and serves as a mentor and tutor for grade schoolers.
- **Brad Maurer, Lafayette College.** Maurer, a resident of Loveland, Ohio, participates in EXCEL scholar research in both neuroscience and Latin American culture.
- **Joe Newton, Oregon State University.** A Roseburg, Ore., resident, Newton assists youth at local football camps.
- **Darnell Smith, Oklahoma State University.** Smith, of San Antonio, volunteers with the YMCA, Kids Across America and Willard Hall, an organization that helps children.
- **Scott Smith, University of California, Berkeley.** Smith, a resident of Brea, Calif., organized a clothing and school supply drive for a school in Ghana, West Africa, serves as a peer advisor to incoming freshmen and performs with the "Theatre for Charity" group at Cal.
- **Eric Weddle, University of Utah.** A resident of Salt Lake City, Weddle tutors learning disabled children, is a speaker at Utah Youth Correctional Facility and volunteers with the Utah Food Bank.

All NCAA Division I schools were eligible to submit nominations for the ARA Sportsmanship Award. The finalists were selected in a blind process. The winner will be selected by a blue-ribbon panel of former football coaches, sports

and media professionals and representatives from ARA and other complementary organizations.

The Awards and Recognition Association is the official sponsor of the ARA Sportsmanship Award. ARA is a membership organization of 4,000 companies dedicated to increasing the professionalism of recognition specialists and advancing the awards and engraving industry.

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