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Contact: Sharon Bond
Marketing Manager
847/375-4836

DeANGELO WILLIAMS SELECTED FOR INAUGURAL ARA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

University of Memphis Standout a Role Model for Others

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE – The Awards and Recognition Association today presented University of Memphis tailback DeAngelo Williams with the inaugural ARA Sportsmanship Award – a new national award for NCAA Division I College Football.

“We’re very fortunate to have a first recipient to set a standard by which others will be judged, and we have a good one in DeAngelo Williams,” said former Brigham Young University Head Football Coach and College Football Hall of Famer LaVell Edwards, who chairs the selection committee for the ARA Sportsmanship Award.

“He truly represents what you want to have in a college football player. He’s achieved on the field, in the classroom and off the field, in the community. How great it would be if all college athletes conduct their lives as he has,” Edwards said.

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.

“ARA has really hit the nail on the head with this award,” said former Syracuse and New England Patriots’ Coach Dick MacPherson, who presented the award to Williams on behalf of the ARA. “This is something that’s so needed right now; sportsmanship is something that is learned, and I give a lot of credit to both DeAngelo and Coach West.”

“DeAngelo has an outstanding work ethic, he is a team leader on and off the field, he supports the decisions of his coaches, and he is quick to turn the spotlight on the rest of the team – especially the offensive linemen who have made his rushing accomplishments possible. As a team spokesman in interviews, he has maintained a positive attitude in victory and defeat, and has complimented the performance of his team’s opponents,” said MacPherson.

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“He is very giving of his time to the community, and he frequently speaks to local students about the importance of staying in school. What’s impressive is that he backs up those words with his actions. Recognizing the importance and value of a college degree, DeAngelo is following through on his promise to earn that degree,” MacPherson noted.

Williams is majoring in marketing management with a minor in accounting and is expected to graduate in May.

Tommy West, the Memphis head football coach, added that “DeAngelo is the type of athlete that coaches love to coach. He does everything asked of him on the field and off the field and he always carries himself in a classy way.”

Williams set a new NCAA career record with 7,337 all-purpose yards and earned Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year honors three straight seasons. He tied another NCAA career mark for most career 100-yard rushing games with 33. This season he was named to the first-team Walter Camp All-American squad and was one of three finalists for the Doak Walker Award, presented annually to the best running back in college football. Williams led C-USA and finished second nationally with 1,726 rushing yards, rushing for 200 or more yards four times and scoring 15 rushing touchdowns this season.

“Williams will conclude his career as one of the nation’s all-time great college running backs,” said ARA President Charles Miles. “But more important, he is the type of role model we envisioned when we established the ARA Sportsmanship Award.”

All NCAA Division I schools were eligible to submit nominations for the ARA Sportsmanship Award. The finalists were selected in a blinded process, and the winner was 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. The ARA is headquartered in Glenview, Illinois.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Sharon Bond, Media Relations, ARA

(847) 375-4836

Dave Bergeson, Executive Director, ARA

(847) 375-4866

Jennifer Rodrigues, Director of Athletic Media Relations

(901) 678-2397

University of Memphis