

The

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Keeping reporters safe to and from arenas

It's true that the safety of people should define our highest law.

That certainly applies to those in the media covering events who might feel uneasy or threatened upon exiting facilities late at night, something the United States Basketball Writers believe is a significant point worth following.

The USBWA, in conjunction with the Football Writers Association of America, College Football Playoff and College Sports Information Directors of America, recently wrote to the NCAA

in relation to our growing concerns regarding media parking locations for football and basketball events and how their placements pose potential safety risks for credentialed media representatives.

We have all been in this situation: Deadline comes and goes, stories and videos are filed, a final tweet is sent (except for Geoff Grammer, the only man passionate enough to chronicle a walk to his car in 140 characters) and it's time to depart.

Distance and darkness can pose safety problems for anyone, a particular concern for the growing number of female reporters who are departing football press boxes or basketball arenas in late night hours. Several instances nationally have been reported where female reporters have felt unsafe or threatened when returning to their cars.

Ed Graney
Las Vegas Review-Journal
First Vice-President



With more and more prime-time games featured across television, the conclusion of them have been pushed later and later. It's our hope the NCAA will encourage all schools and tournament directors to review their parking locations and policies as it relates to media.

"As athletic departments have pushed media parking farther away from stadiums and arenas in order to provide prime spaces for their top donors, we want to make sure safety also is a high priority," said Mark Anderson, president of the FWAA. "It's an easy fix to ensure that reporters safely return to their cars, and the FWAA is in agreement with the USBWA and encouraged that CoSIDA is taking this issue seriously and working with us on solutions. We hope athletic departments are as equally cooperative."

Quoting from the letter, here are some of the recommended media parking guidelines suggested to the NCAA:

- For distances longer than one-quarter of a mile, a golf-cart shuttle could be made available 2-3 hours before the game to help reporters move from the media lot to the sports venue. The pre-game shuttle would help address concerns for individuals where age, health, gender and the amount of equipment create concerns while moving from media lots that don't offer easy

access.

- A golf cart and/or walking escort or campus security representative could be made available after games upon request to ensure media representatives covering a late night event have coverage while returning to the media lot and their car.

- Provide a text service for reporters needing help either in going to the stadium or returning to the media lot. (The College Football Playoff is in the process of developing this approach along with Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, for the national championship game.)

- Media should be provided a detailed description of the location and distance from the venue of all parking areas, along with shuttle availability before or after

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Hall of Fame welcomes 'Final Four for ages'

By VAHE GREGORIAN

Steve Carp's path to the USBWA Hall of Fame started on subway rides from Brooklyn with his grandfather to see basketball at Madison Square Garden in the 1960s.

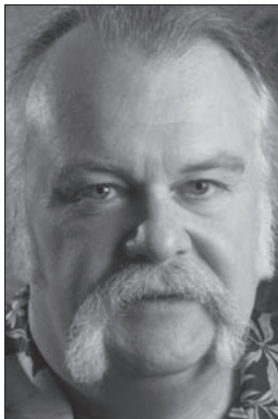
"The atmosphere just stuck with me for my entire life," he said.

David Teel's way to the Hall of Fame was kindled by his father, Bill, tucking local sports sections under his pillow every morning when he left for work.

It caught fire with the spectacle of Lefty Driesell flashing his patented "V" for victory as he took the court at Cole Field House.

"How can you not be enthralled by that?" said Teel, who 48 years later still has "in all their tortured cursive glory" some stories his dad encouraged him to write about games.

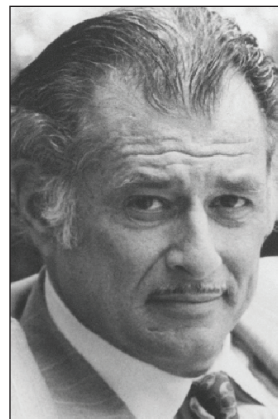
Tom Archdeacon's course from Ottoville, Ohio, to the Hall of Fame wasn't as linear, considering he became a sportswriter by happenstance.



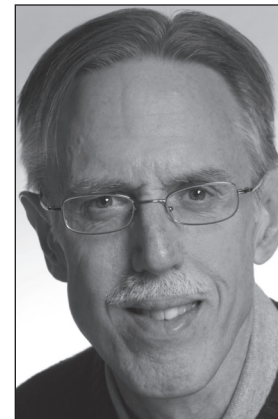
Tom Archdeacon



Steve Carp



Frank Deford



Dave Teel

he was hired in 1962 by *Sports Illustrated*, which he recalled had featured college basketball on its cover three or four times in its first eight years.

Because no one else was interested, the Princeton graduate became the basketball fact checker.

Still, when he pitched a story on the bright future of a fellow named Bill Bradley as he was about to join the varsity at Princ-

eton, many laughed.

But it became one of Deford's first major stories and led to simultaneously covering college basketball and the NBA for several years – and influential writing that inspired many to enter the business.

Add it all up, and it's what you might call a Final Four for the ages.

"Holy Smokes, that's a heck of a group," said Carp, who has covered 16 Final Fours and been with the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* the last 17 years. "It's very humbling."

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But the seeds were planted when he was just a few years old and a regular at the basketball games of his grandfather, L.W. Heckman, an accomplished coach. It was a family affair, in fact: Archdeacon's dad was an assistant coach who went on to referee for 37 years, and his mother was the scorekeeper.

"Basketball has been my friend since I was a tiny little boy," he said.

Then there is Frank Deford, whose trail began with some fortune.

The game was an afterthought nationally when

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USBWA, NCAA continue their strong relationship

The USBWA and the NCAA have had a strong working relationship dealing with media matters for the Division I men's championship ever since the USBWA was formed 61 years ago in 1956.

The two organizations have worked together on access to coaches and players, courtside seating, news conferences, media hotels and credentials.

This relationship has made for a better Final Four and for improved administration of regionals and first/second round tournament games hosted by member institutions and conferences.

The partnership kicked into high gear when Dave Cawood was named the NCAA Tournament media coordinator in 1975. Cawood, a former SID at Baylor, SMU and Arkansas, held the position for 22 years before leaving to enter private business. He passed away in 2008.

Cawood was the driving force behind improving services for the media and worked closely with the USBWA to develop policies to assist them.

"Dave deserves all the credit for initiating these policies," said Bill Hancock, who served as director and later consultant to the NCAA Tournament and is now Executive Director of the College Football Playoff.

It was Cawood, Hancock said, who fought for writers in basketball committee meetings.

"He was on their side," Hancock said. "He wanted the committee to know that writers had a job to do."

Jim Marchiony, now an associate athletic director at Kansas, followed Cawood at the NCAA and had to deal with a whole set of new media-related problems.

"We started to credential websites," Marchiony said. "At first, there weren't very many. The standards were very restrictive. We eventually loosened the restrictions. What helped was to have the support of committee chair Mike Traghese."

Hancock succeeded Marchiony at the NCAA and set out to follow his predecessors in improving existing media policies and adding new ones.

"We always had good dialogue with the USBWA," Hancock said. "We opened up the locker rooms to the media. We scheduled telephonic news conferences with the basketball committee chair in the weeks before selection Sunday. And we started news conferences with participating coaches and student-athletes on the days before all games and after games."

Hancock also said he worked with the USBWA on media-credentialing policies. "Our goals," he said, "were to make sure tournament news got to the most fans possible and to reward reporters who covered college basketball during the regular season and the tournament."

By far the most difficult – and likely the most contentious – matter the two organizations dealt with recently was courtside seating for the media, particularly at the Final Four.

Four years ago, the NCAA had plans to move the media off courtside, but the USBWA fought back. After meeting with the USBWA on several occasions, the NCAA restored most of the courtside seats and added additional seating behind the baskets to keep media members closer to the floor rather than moving them to the press box.

Joe Mitch

USBWA

Executive Director



Dave Worlock, the NCAA Tournament media director for the past 11 years, was a key player in retaining courtside seats for the media.

"This is just one of a variety of issues involving the media's coverage of March Madness that we've worked together on," said Worlock, a recipient of the USBWA's Katha Quinn Award last year for service to the media.

"I'm proud of what we've accomplished together," he said. "The importance of strengthening the NCAA's relationship with the USBWA has always been a priority."

Besides courtside seating, some other areas where the USBWA and the NCAA have recently worked together include:

- Wireless issues at venues, resulting in the NCAA installing hard-wire ethernet lines at every seat occupied by a member of the media;

- Breakout sessions for the Elite Eight teams on the day prior to the regional championship games;

- The mock bracket seminar to educate the media about the selection, seeding and bracketing process. The seminar has had more than 200 participants since it first began in 2007;

- Criteria for issuing credentials to bloggers so they would have an opportunity to cover the men's tournament, while managing to separate them from reporters and other media members;

- Pool reporters for all tournament games;

- A media survey for the tournament;

- An annual meeting at the Final Four with members of the basketball committee and the USBWA board and officers to give the USBWA a voice in such matters as the length of the cooling off period; the order of the winning and losing teams at postgame news conferences; how best to operate the media shuttle at the Final Four; and opening the basketball committee meeting room to enable a reporter to sit in on discussions during the selection and seeding of teams in the tournament.

The issue to allow a reporter in the basketball committee meeting room has been debated at the annual meeting with the NCAA many times now and remains controversial. To this point, there has only been resistance from the committee as a whole.

With several new members of the basketball committee showing indications of being "media friendly," the USBWA remains optimistic that the door is open for further discussion.

Hancock does see hope for the USBWA.

"If the NCAA ever decided to open the basketball committee to include people who don't work for schools or conferences," Hancock said, "then I'll bet they would include a retired reporter. It makes sense."

"But I can't see them including a current reporter. The candor in the room is just too important."

Once again, there's no shortage of courage

The USBWA presents a number of awards, but none more important or meaningful than the Most Courageous Award.

The Most Courageous Award was established in 1978. That year, the award went to John Kratzer, a cancer victim who played at William & Mary.

While overcoming a wide range of adversities, the recipients of the Most Courageous Award have embodied similar traits over the years, including strength, dignity, grace and an unshakable resolve to press on. Many have become advocates on behalf of others going through equally difficult circumstances. The award has been presented to players, coaches, administrators, even entire teams.

My first connection to the award came in 1992 when Pete Pavia received the honor. Pavia, a referee and Upstate New York native, officiated games even as he battled cancer for 13 years before passing away. I knew Pete as an outstanding referee, but more importantly, a sweet, caring man who loved the game and the people in it.

The award presentation is almost always the most emotional and memorable moment during the USBWA's annual meeting at the Final Four.

I doubt that anyone in the ballroom in Houston last April will ever forget Samantha Smith, the young widow of former Butler player Andrew Smith, and how she reminded everyone of her husband's fight against cancer and how she continues their efforts to raise awareness for a bone marrow registry.

The list of nominees for this year's award have each faced some tragedy. It's not just that each has battled against the adversity, but how they've handled the situation. They've pushed back or forged ahead. And in some cases, they've stood up for others.

Here are the nominees:

Chris Burns, Bryant: Burns, an assistant coach at

Mike Waters Syracuse Post-Standard Third Vice President



his alma mater, is the only openly gay men's basketball coach at the NCAA's Division I level. Burns revealed his sexual orientation to the Bryant coaches and players a little over a year ago and has spoken out publicly.

Kyler Erickson, Omaha: Erickson, a senior, was granted a sixth year of eligibility by the NCAA after he missed a year while dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. As a high school senior, Erickson witnessed a shooting at his school in which a student shot and killed a vice principal. Erickson was next door in the nurse's office.

Antonio Green, Texas-Rio Grande Valley: Raised by single mom in Memphis, Green became a father himself at age 17. He still managed to earn a scholarship to UTRGV. Last February, his older brother was shot and killed. Green has moved his mother and daughter out of Memphis.

Erkam Kiris, UT Arlington: Kiris, a freshman, was in Turkey last summer when military rebels staged a coup to overthrow the Turkish government. He was practicing with the Turkish National team when he found Istanbul in upheaval. He spent an extra 25 days in Turkey, trying to leave the country. He went to police stations and embassies three to four times a week before managing to secure the proper documentation to travel out of the country.

Bronson Koenig and Nigel Hayes, Wisconsin: The teammates have taken prominent stances on social issues.

Koenig, who is half Native American and a member of the Ho Chunk Nation in Wisconsin, has supported of the pipeline standoff at Standing Rock in North Dakota, traveling there on a fall weekend. Hayes has been outspoken on the plight of black Americans, especially in light of recent police shootings. As part of his protest, he stands two steps behind his teammates during the national anthem.

Trey McCrory, Northwestern State: McCrory is a legally blind graduate assistant. He can see up to about 5 to 7 feet before

his vision becomes blurry. He grew up a fan of Northwestern State's basketball teams. He was a team manager as an undergrad and continues to work with the coaching staff despite his physical limitations.

Emmanuel Omogbo, Colorado State: Omogbo, a senior, lost his parents, his niece and nephew in a house fire in Maryland last February. He played in a game two days after their deaths before taking a break for the funeral and then returning to Fort Collins.

Ray Smith, Arizona: After missing his senior year of high school and his freshman season at Arizona because of two separate ACL tears, Smith got back on the court earlier this season. But he suffered yet another torn ACL. Smith, just 19, made the difficult decision to retire from the game.

Josh Speidel, Vermont: When he was a senior in high school, Speidel had already committed to Vermont. However, he was involved in a serious car accident and sustained a traumatic brain injury. Two years later, he has made a remarkable recovery, defying his doctors' initial prognosis. He is currently a freshman on the team.

Matt Willms, UTEP: The 7-foot center has undergone two major surgeries. The first was in 2014 to repair a slat tear in the labrum of his right shoulder. The second was in January 2016 to repair a fracture of the navicular bone in his right foot, which can be career-ending for big men.

Farflung Hall of Fame class has much in common

CONTINUED from Page 1

Archdeacon was thrilled to know the "tall cotton" he is in. "I can't say just how it warms my heart," said Archdeacon, who has been with the *Dayton Daily News* since 1989.

Teel, who joined the *Newport News Daily Press* in 1984 and has covered 25 Final Fours, called it "an indescribable honor."

Especially to be recognized at the same time as Archdeacon and Carp and, as Teel put it, "I can't even bring myself to call him Frank: It's Mr. Deford."

As arguably the most-decorated American sportswriter, it might seem this would be just another honor for Deford. But Deford held forth for 40 minutes on the telephone as he described the "pleasant surprise" that took him back to his "golden youth."

Among them, the group has chronicled much of the explosion of the game's popularity.

If theirs were the first drafts of history, they've collectively documented these momentous times with grace and vision that will stand as the record for generations to come.

"We've helped it grow, I think," said Carp, under whose presidency in 2009-2010 the USBWA saw what was then its biggest membership jump.

For Carp, the timing is perfect as he transitions to covering the NHL expansion Las Vegas Golden Knights, who begin play next season.

As he reflected on covering basketball, Carp thought back to going to the Garden with his grandfather, Charles

Birnbaum, and of making enemies covering his high school team.

He thought of his start covering the college game in 1975 with the Manhattan College student paper, of his adventures covering UNLV at its peak of glamour and chaos and the scene around USA Basketball camps in Las Vegas.

"I had a seat," he said, "that very few people had a chance to sit in."

Teel, who won back-to-back free-throw shooting championships at Driessell's camps, is a 1981 graduate of James Madison.

He was already hooked on the game and becoming a sportswriter, but it was ramped up after the Dukes that spring qualified for their first NCAA Tournament and toppled Georgetown.

Two years later, he was working in Fayetteville, N.C., and covering N.C. State in the tournament on its way to what became the epic 54-52 title-game victory over Houston.

At 23, he thought, "How much better can it get?"

Answer: better and better, partly because of the fulfillment in the work itself and partly because of his friendships in the business.

After Archdeacon finished school at Dayton, he wasn't sure what to do with his life. He dabbled in journalism in college ... but not in sports.

He found himself in Florida, living with the family of a girlfriend who had broken up with him when her mother tried to nudge him along by pointing out a

want ad for a sportswriter in South Dade County.

He got the job and took to it ... only to get fired a year later when his response to an edict to stop covering African-Americans athletes was to ramp it up.

After a year or so of freelancing, he was hired by the *Miami News* and emerged as an elegant, empathetic writer who has won numerous USBWA writing awards.

"His huge heart allows him to see people where others only see games or topics," said close friend Todd Jones of the *Columbus Dispatch*. "His stories are about life, and so those stories will live forever."

If Deford's inclusion is overdue, that's because until 2003 the USBWA didn't induct non-members.

As one who was on the forefront of coverage of the game, he now stands as testimony to why that was a worthy change. From the first of UCLA's titles under John Wooden to the Texas Western-Kentucky title game, he was there - often wearing eyeglasses he didn't need to make himself look older and wiser. He would write what is widely considered the definitive story of Bobby Knight (*The Rabbit Hunter*), and as he reflects now he thinks of important pieces he did on the 1957 North Carolina title team and Al McGuire and Dean Smith.

He thinks, too, about how the game took him to places like Pocatello and El Paso that he'd never gone otherwise.

Just like the rest of the group, he knows basketball was the foundation of all else to come in an illustrious career.

"It was a wonderful, wonderful time," he said. "I look back on it very fondly."



Michigan State coach Tom Izzo was presented the Dean Smith Award by Malcolm Moran during a recent Spartans game.

Graney

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the game, in advance as part of the credential process. This information should also be available on game day in the press box and other appropriate areas.

Included here is the NCAA's response from David Worlock, Director of Media Coordination and Statistics, to the letter.

Know that this is an important matter in the eyes of the USBWA, and it's our hope all parties can work together to make things as safe as possible for everyone.

NCAA RESPONSE

Thank you for your recent letter regarding parking and security at venues hosting various rounds of the Division I men's basketball championship. I've also copied Rick Nixon, who is the media coordinator for the Division I women's basketball championship, in the event he has anything he would like to add.

As you are aware, the NCAA and its host institutions and conferences provide a shuttle to all credentialed members of the media to move them back and forth between the competition venue and the media hotel(s). With the exception of media members who are local to the host city, the expectation is for credentialed individuals to take advantage of this complimentary transportation. This is because, at many of the venues hosting the tournament, parking is limited. This is why the allotted parking passes go to the local media or to others who may be close enough to drive and commute back and forth from the host city to their city of residence. For example, if a beat writer covering the University of Cincinnati traveled to Indianapolis to cover the team, but was going back home after the game, we would provide that writer with a parking pass if requested.

Those who ride the shuttle are dropped off at the venue, typically right next to the primary media entrance. Those who are issued parking passes will park their vehicles in the media parking area as determined by the host institution or conference and personnel at the facility. While this location is almost always right next to the venues, there are occasionally tournament sites where parking is a significant challenge, such as New York City. Our hosts are instructed that the competition venue is responsible for providing maintenance and security in the parking areas.

As for your four recommendations, we currently provide the media with the shuttle operating hours and drop-off locations and any parking instructions for those approved for a pass. This information is typically shared by the host media coordinator at all preliminary round sites 1-2 days prior to open practice day. The same holds true for the Final Four. If at any time during the tournament a member of the media does not feel safe leaving the building, regardless of the distance to his or her car, they should let the local media coordinator at the preliminary round sites know they would like an escort of some sort. We can communicate this to our hosts in advance of the tournament. At the Final Four, they should notify me and I will see to it an escort is available. The same holds true for anyone with a health or disability issue that prevents them from walking. We will certainly accommodate those individuals upon request.

At some point before the tournament, I will connect with Gina to discuss the specifics of the text program you referenced in your letter, and see if there is something similar we can do at the Final Four.

Let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Thanks,
Dave

Elderkin, Rowe to share Pat Summitt Award

When it came to initially consider a recipient for the 2017 USBWA Pat Summitt Most Courageous Award, there was a sense of wanting to do something exceptional in the aftermath of the Hall of Fame Tennessee women's coach's passing last June after a nearly five-year battle against Alzheimer's disease.

By coincidence in announcing dual honorees for the first time since Summitt's name was placed on the women's award that she won in 2012, a way was found to present the plaques in both Summitt's spirit and now also her memory.

When it comes to spirit, Appalachian State coach Angel Elderkin has continued to guide the Mountaineers from their Boone, N.C., campus, since being diagnosed with Stage III Endometrial (ovarian) cancer last summer.

And when it comes to doing something memorable, ESPN sportscaster Holly Rowe has been very public in battling desmoplastic melanoma while continuing to stay on air doing the job she loves.

Rowe is the first USBWA women's most courageous recipient who is neither an athlete, coach, official or team public relations person. And she is one of a very few winners who did not have a direct connection to a university.

"Holly's battle with cancer represents one of many examples of her unwavering courage and relentless approach to tackling life's difficulties," said LaChina Robinson, an ESPN on-air colleague. "Throughout her illustrious career, Holly has acted as a role model and inspiration to so many.

"She always asks the hard-hitting questions that we the fans need to know, and her firm commitment to treating every person with the same respect and pro-



Angel Elderkin



Holly Rowe

fessionalism is something I try and emulate. Her career and life accomplishments are a constant source of encouragement for our youth."

Elderkin's Appalachian State family offered an impressive nomination package from women's basketball sports information director Chase Colliton.

In one opening passage, the letter noted, "... Since the season started, she hasn't missed one game. Coach Elderkin

coaches every day as she is at her strongest, even if she is feeling her weakest. Often, the players or staff have to corral her back so she doesn't overdo it. This game and her players have been her greatest medicine.

"Coach Elderkin's will to fight, her courage and her bravery resonate with everyone from the staff to the rest of the athletic department and to other coaches across the country."

Said North Carolina women's coach Sylvia Hatchell, who has had her own battles with cancer: "She's a fighter and an example to everyone on how to fight and journey through this hard time. If she wins I know she will use her experience to help others go through difficult times."

Several players also commented in support of Elderkin.

"If coach Angel wins this award, I would be so proud to be able to be part of this moment," said senior forward Ashley Bassett-Smith. "I'm so blessed to have her as my head coach and inspiring me every day to push harder and get better no matter what I'm dealing with in my life off the court."

Both Elderkin and Rowe will receive their awards at the USBWA Awards news conference in the tournament interview room at the NCAA Women's Final Four in Dallas.