

Hall of Fame announcements met by shock, joy

By **MARK ALEWINE**

The United States Basketball Writers Association Hall of Fame just added four titans in college basketball.

The 2018 Hall of Fame class includes Lew Freedman, David Jones, Charles Pierce and Kirk Wessler.

Wessler was in stunned shock when he learned he'd been voted to the prestigious hall.

"Getting that news was the absolute last thing that would've crossed my mind," Wessler said. "It's cliché to say I was speechless, but all I could say was 'Wow.'"

Wessler, who has covered college basketball for the vast majority of his career that began in 1977, got his start by a stroke of luck with his first job out of college at the Columbia Daily Tribune in Columbia, Mo.

"Within the first month I was there, the veteran guy left and they shuffled things around," Wessler said. "I was handed the Mizzou basketball beat."

Wessler has since enjoyed a long career that in-



Lew Freedman



David Jones



Charles Pierce



Kirk Wessler

"I was stunned and I was smiling the rest of the night."

Jones began his career with the Columbus Post-Dispatch during a whirlwind season in 1985 that included covering basketball at the universities of Ohio, Cincinnati and Miami (Ohio).

For Jones, college basketball was his first love.

"Ohio State basketball was always my favorite thing to watch as

a little kid," Jones said. "It was always my favorite thing even though I grew up in a football town."

Jones gives credit for his success to his contemporaries. Mike DeCourcy, John Feinstein, Bob Ryan, Mark Brennan, Gordy Jones and Dick Jerardi were among the colleagues Jones named as major influences on his work covering college basketball.

"It makes a difference when you go to 25 Final Fours and you sit around talking to people, you hear stories, you get experience, and you get a breadth of knowledge just listening to people who have cov-

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cludes a stop with the Dallas Times Herald and is now the sports editor with the Peoria Journal Star.

Wessler credits his success to the opportunities offered to him, even as a college student.

"I was incredibly blessed to have been hired here at the Peoria Star Journal by the late Dick Lien," Wessler said. "He was a great role model for how to cover the sport."

Fellow inductee David Jones was shocked as well to hear he was a part of this Hall of Fame class.

"If I'd been standing up, I would've maybe fallen over," Jones said. "It was absolutely stunning."

Katha Quinn winner Castiglione pulled to do right thing

By **MALCOLM MORAN**

Joe Castiglione, vice president for intercollegiate athletic programs at Oklahoma, was named the 2018 winner of the Katha Quinn Award for exceptional service to the media.

When Castiglione accepts the award at the Final Four in San Antonio, he will be the latest in a distinguished line that began 30 years ago next March when Quinn received a then-unnamed award at the 50th Final Four in Kansas City.

Quinn, then sports information director at St. John's, was recognized for supervising the basketball venue during the 1987 Pan American Games at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis. Earlier that year, she was diagnosed with liver cancer, but she refused to allow her condition to affect her commitment. Quinn continued her work at St. John's until less than a month before her passing in March 1989, one day before her birthday, at the age of 35.

"It shows how people can take their passion and absolutely just get more from it than anybody could ever imagine," Castiglione said. "That was her tonic. She was doing something she loved doing. That was



Joe Castiglione

probably when she was the most pain-free."

Castiglione served as chair of the NCAA Division I men's basketball committee during the 2015-16 season and was involved in discussions about the possibility of having a USBWA representative observe the committee's deliberations.

He becomes the third winner who was affiliated with the Georgetown basketball program, the biggest rival on the St. John's schedule when the Big East schools rose to the top of the national polls in the 1980s. Mark Asher of the Washington Post won the award in 2002 and former Georgetown sports information director Jim Marchiony was recognized in 2004.

From the fall of 1980 until September, 1981, Castiglione worked in the athletic department at Georgetown to develop a fund-raising project. It was a decisive time in the history of the program. Georgetown, which had lost the East regional championship game in 1980, signed Patrick Ewing, who would lead the Hoyas to three Final Four appearances, including the 1984 national championship.

The 2017-18 season is Castiglione's 25th as an athletic director. He was hired at Oklahoma in April 1998 after more than four years as athletic director at Missouri.

"I've known Joe since he was an assistant AD at Missouri, and he remains just as friendly, accessible and helpful now as he ever was," said USBWA President Vahe Gregorian of the Kansas City Star. "He epitomizes the spirit of the Katha Quinn Award, and, accordingly, he appreciates the honor deeply."

Castiglione's previous honors include being named National Athletic Director of the Year in 2009 by Sports Business Journal and receiving the 2013 John L. Toner Award from the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame.

"I had a 'Wayne's World' moment," Castiglione said. "'I am not worthy. I am not worthy.' ... I know how hard everybody works to do their job. If I can help them become successful, why wouldn't I? I've always believed in being accessible and approachable so people can be at their best at what they want to do. I never thought there'd be an award for that. It's the right thing to do."

Malcolm Moran, a past president of the USBWA, is director of the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI.

The United States Basketball Writers Association
803 Wildview Lane; Manchester, Mo.
63021. Visit us at: www.usbwa.com
314-795-6821; Fax: 314-444-4333

PRESIDENT – Vahe Gregorian, Kansas City Star,
C: 816-799-6041; vgregorian@kcstar.com

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT – Dave Teel, Newport
News Daily Press; O: 757-247-4636;
C: 757-897-2049; dteel@dailynews.com

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT – Mike Waters,
Syracuse Post-Standard; C: 315-416-6031;
mwaters@syracuse.com

THIRD VICE PRESIDENT – Seth Davis, The
Fieldhouse/CBS; C: 917-225-5788;
sethdavishoops@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Joe Mitch,
H: 636-227-9113; C: 314-795-6821;
mitch@usbwa.org

BOARD MEMBERS

DISTRICT I – Matt Norlander, CBSSports.com,
C: 203-313-7486; matt.norlander@gmail.com.

DISTRICT II – Joe Juliano, Philadelphia Inquirer;
C: 215-932-7413; jjuliano@phillynews.com

DISTRICT III – C.L. Brown, The Fieldhouse;
C: 502-645-6142; cbrown@theathletic.com

DISTRICT IV – Jeff Greer, Louisville
Courier-Journal; C: 502-593-9435;
j.allen.greer@gmail.com

DISTRICT V – Shannon Ryan, Chicago Tribune;
312-451-7692; maryshan00@yahoo.com,
sryan@chicagotribune.com

DISTRICT VI – Lee Barfknecht,
Omaha World-Herald; C: 402-871-5739;
leebee@cox.net

DISTRICT VII – Carlos Mendez, Fort Worth Star-
Telegram; C: 817-917-2282;
cmendez@star-telegram.com.

DISTRICT VIII – Geoff Grammer, Albuquerque
Journal; C: 505-206-0138;
ggrammer@abqjournal.com

DISTRICT IX – Mark Zeigler, San Diego
Union-Tribune; C: 619-246-3881;
markzeigler@msn.com

WOMEN – Mel Greenberg; C: 215-815-5943;
poll@att.net

AT-LARGE – George Schroeder, USA Today;
C: 541-953-4080; gshroeder@usatoday.com

AT-LARGE – Jeff Goodman, ESPN;
C: 508-397-8936; goodmanesp@gmail.com.

SID – Brian Morrison, Atlantic Coast Conference;
C: 336-337-4896; O: 336-369-1002;
bmorrison@theacc.org

NEW MEDIA LIAISON – Randy McClure, Rush
the Court; C: 415-608-1837;
rushthecourt@yahoo.com

TIPOFF EDITOR – John Akers, Basketball
Times; H: 704-849-8627; C: 980-422-1294;
johna19081@gmail.com

WEBMASTER – Ted Gangi, C: 214-909-9314;
ted.gangi@sportswriters.net



Former Dayton coach Don Donoher accepts the Dean Smith Award from Seth Davis.

Dinner to honor Dayton's Donoher a rousing success

At a time when misconduct by a few coaches has left a giant stain on college basketball, it's refreshing to see a coach honored for his integrity, class and honesty.

Such was the case in December when the U. S. Basketball Writers Association presented former Dayton coach Don Donoher with the Dean Smith Award, given annually by the USBWA to coaches who embody the spirit and principles of the late North Carolina coach.

Over 400 people attended a dinner in Dayton, Ohio, to honor Donoher, who is recognized nationally as one of college basketball's classiest coaches.

"There is no one more deserving of this award than Coach Donoher," said USBWA third vice president and CBS Sports analyst Seth Davis, who served as emcee for the dinner. "Humble, gracious, intelligent, class. He served the game of basketball and that's what we are honoring."

The USBWA wanted the award it created three years ago to be unique. The writers wanted to recognize coaches for more than just their success. They wanted to honor coaches who show character, treat people with respect and made an impact on their community and players.

"Coach Smith would be very proud to have Coach Donoher's name on this award," said USBWA past president John Feinstein, who suggested creating the award honoring Smith. "'Mick' was a great basketball coach, but he's always been a better person."

Feinstein was unable to attend the dinner because of an illness, but Donoher spoke in glowing terms about John and their relationship through the years. "He saw us play in Madison Square Garden when he was 12," Donoher said. "Sonia (Donoher's wife) sat next to him and said she thinks she has him rooting for Dayton when we're not playing a New York team."

Donoher is a humble man who deflects praise and puts others ahead of himself. About receiving the Dean Smith Award, Donoher told the Dayton Daily News: "Really, it's an award for the university, not me." Not once in his 25 years as Dayton's head coach did Donoher's picture or image appear on the

Joe Mitch
USBWA
Executive Director



cover of the Flyers' basketball media guide.

The love Donoher's players have for him was never more evident than at the dinner when a player from each of the three decades that Donoher coached came back to speak. More than 30 of Donoher's former players were among the crowd, including current head coach and former player, Anthony Grant.

"I think all of us that had a chance to play for coach know where his heart is," Grant told WHIO-TV in Dayton. "We know who he is as a man, who he was as a coach and what he stands for. All that stays with you for the rest of your life. He made a difference in my life and the lives of everyone around him."

Donoher retired in 1989 as Dayton's winningest coach, with 437 career victories. He led the Flyers to nine NCAA Tournament appearances, an NIT championship in 1968 and a runner-up finish in the 1967 NCAA Final Four. Ironically, the coach whose North Carolina team Dayton defeated in the national semifinal game was Dean Smith.

Today, Donoher, who turns 86 in January, remains active in the Dayton community. He has served as a volunteer for the American Red Cross and was chairperson for its 100th anniversary fundraising drive. In 2016, he was inducted into the Dayton Region Wall of Fame for having a positive impact in the community.

Previous winners of the Dean Smith Award were former Georgetown coach John Thompson Sr. in 2015 and Michigan State coach Tom Izzo last year.

Net proceeds from the dinner benefit Dayton's Champions and Scholars Fund and the Dean E. Smith Opening Doors Fund, which provides scholarships for undergraduates from lower-income families to attend college and for professionals in education and social work to pursue advanced degrees.

Selection-committee discussion will be ongoing

When USBWA Hall of Famer Malcolm Moran and I went to San Antonio in November to meet with the Division I men's basketball committee about the prospect of having the USBWA in the room to document the selection, bracketing and seeding process, we were cautiously optimistic.

We also went into it knowing that this unprecedented meeting was just the start of a process.

By the time we left, we understood just how far we have to go in our effort to be there to demystify and bring further transparency to public perception of the secret sauce.

At least we can say this: In terms of this being a fact-finding mission, it was remarkably informative about how committee members see this situation – and we were truly grateful for their time and candor.

We told them that ideally we wanted to produce a narrative about the five days and all the painstaking time and thought and nuance that goes into it and a bullet-point pool report that may seem like minutia to them but would be able to best serve the members we represent and could, in fact, offer angles on stories for people around the nation.

They absolutely listened to us, and we came out of there with the understanding that a segmented snapshot of documenting the process is in play: The idea still under their consideration for this season would be to have our representative there for one day at the start (initial entries into the field) and/or the end (bracketing).

As for our broader mission and all the optimism conjured by months of discussions among board mem-

Vahe Gregorian
Kansas City Star
President



bers and our ad hoc committee and the mere fact that we had been invited there, let's just say we had no real way of understanding where we stood until we heard their thoughts on it.

To put it bluntly, six of the 10 committee members expressed reservations ranging from dug-in to skeptical. No one advocated for it.

The good news is that there was no question they would trust us to maintain their anonymity, would have no concern about us leaking, etc.

The tough news is that we had no idea of the depths to which they believe their process would be compromised by us being there.

As one member put it, he is 100 percent certain that our presence in the room would "modify behavior" and change their dynamics, much the way that having a visitor in a classroom does.

Another said if they wanted full transparency, they'd have TV cameras in there.

He was semi-joking but kind of meant it, and I countered by saying that surely they must think there's room in between that and what we would do

... and I asked them if we were wrong to think that more transparency would be win-win.

There were some nods about that, and he did then allow as how he thinks we should be thinking of baby steps, perhaps being there for a segment the first time around and seeing how it goes.

Per the NCAA's David Worlock afterward, the committee also seemed to take some interest in having us attend the February meeting when it seeds the 16 teams and see how it feels about us in the room.

But the prevailing hurdle is the feeling that being there would alter the ability to be candid and, thus, be focused solely on getting it right.

One member compared what they do to being a jury, needing to be sequestered for high-profile cases, and reiterated that this group has its own personality that would be thrown off if it felt like it wasn't unfiltered.

Meanwhile, he continued, anonymity wouldn't solve that because it's not all that anonymous, what with it being only 10 people in the room.

In all these senses, it was quite a revelation.

We left with the message that it was an enormous help to us to understand where they're coming from and that now we could begin the next step of trying to address their concerns. We will soon present our response and look forward to what the committee says next.

The first meeting wasn't what we wanted to hear, but it was what we needed to hear. And it was a stepping-stone toward the long haul ... not a one-and-done conversation.

Hall of Fame

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ered it for a long time," Jones said.

Today, Jones covers Penn State basketball for the Harrisburg Patriot News.

Freedman started his career by covering Florida State basketball and later college basketball in Philadelphia for the Philadelphia Inquirer. His legendary status, however, came while covering Alaska-Anchorage basketball.

"I started in February of 1984, and the very first event I covered for the Anchorage Daily News was

a college basketball game," Freedman said. "I began covering Alaska-Anchorage right then and covered them for the next 17 years."

Freedman also covered the short-lived Alaska Pacific program, during which he produced a famous story in which he covered six of the team's games over a 10-day road trip on a bus through the Pacific Northwest.

"I think it was captivating for people," Freedman said of the story. "It was a small place. They didn't have four assistant coaches doing the laundry for them."

Freedman's unusual career path has led him from the cold of Alaska to the high desert of Wyoming, where he currently covers rodeos and the outdoors for the Cody Enterprise, a twice-weekly paper originally funded by Buffalo Bill Cody in 1890.

Still, Freedman finds compelling, award-winning stories within the vast world of college basketball, including his most recent piece on a 19-year-old assistant coach at Northwest Junior College in Powell, Wyo.

Pierce, who writes for Esquire and is a longtime Sports Illustrated and Slate contributor, has become an iconic figure in both sports and political writing, but his journalistic roots take him back to the college hardwood.

"The traveling carnivals of ne'er-do-wells who cover college hoops always have been some of my favorite running buddies in the business," Pierce said. "And I was especially happy about it because, frankly, I've been off the beat for a while."

Looking back, Pierce has seen the game evolve into the spectacle it is today. But those following the game, Pierce believes, are still a one-of-a-kind group.

"I just always loved the people in and around the game," Pierce said. "When I started, it wasn't the huge spectacle that it's become. ESPN was just starting out. You could still get tickets to every round of the tournament and conferences made geographical sense. I've watched it grow, with all the pluses and minuses that entails, but it still seems to attract a unique passel of characters."

Hall of Famer Tudor passes away

The USBWA lost too many members during the past two months.

Caulton Tudor, a 1999 inductee to the Hall of Fame, passed away on Nov. 1. He was 70. Tudor was a sports columnist for the Raleigh Times and News & Observer for 44 years.

Jeff Washburn, who spent about 20 of his nearly 40 years at the Lafayette, Ind., Courier & Journal as a Purdue beat writer, died of cancer on Nov. 29. He was 63.

Rodney McKissic died unexpectedly on Nov. 28. He was 50. McKissic covered college basketball for the Tacoma News Tribune, Cincinnati Post and Buffalo News from 1992-2011.

Paul Morrison, who recently turned 100, died on Nov. 30. Known as Mr. Drake, he was the school's

sports information director from 1939-86 and was its official historian for the past 30 years.

In other news, Dick Jerardi and Mike Kern left the Philadelphia Daily News. Jerardi, a former USBWA president, was named to the USBWA Hall of Fame in 2014 and covered colleges for the Daily News for more than 33 years. Kern began covering college sports for the Daily News in 1980.

Andy Katz, who has covered college basketball for nearly three decades, was hired by NCAA.com to provide written, digital and social-media coverage.

Dave Dorr, a veteran sports writer of 35 years and former Sporting News college basketball writer, was inducted into the St. Louis Media Hall of Fame.

Lodge Notes

Most Courageous Marz recovers from stroke

By MEL GREENBERG

In the late summer of 2014 – while the story out of the Midwest was becoming nationally covered of Lauren Hill’s desire to make it to the basketball court for her first collegiate game with the knowledge that her time was growing short because of diagnosed pediatric brain cancer – another love-of-the-game saga involving a freshman had just begun at Saint Joseph’s.

While moving into her dorm, 17-year-old Avery Marz felt dizzy and was soon diagnosed with a stroke.

Though her life was not in immediate danger, Marz was still informed by several medical people that she should forget any desire to continue her collegiate career.

But that was not an option for the native of Sink-ing Spring (Pa.), which is located within two hours of the City of Brotherly Love near Reading.

After two years of rehabilitation, Marz returned in November for the Hawks’ season opener, scored soon after coming off the bench, and by December, began making several starts.

“They told me I’d never walk again, they told me all these things,” Marz told Doug Feinberg, an United States Basketball Writers Association member and the Associated Press’ national women’s hoops writer, last month. “Here I am walking out on a court, playing



Avery Marz

in a Division I game. That was pretty amazing.”

Marz, a communication major, also hoped to return to the court with her original class in their senior season.

She didn’t think the recovery would take as long as it would, but in achieving her goal, she told the Associated Press, “But for all the work, for it to be my senior year with my senior teammates that I came in, that was huge. I really wanted to do it when they were still here.”

That love of the game resolve has earned Marz acclaim as the recipient of the 2018 USBWA Pat Summitt Most Courageous honoree, joining an im-

pressive group that included Hill in 2015.

Marz will received the award on March 30 at the USBWA news conference in Columbus, Ohio, in Nationwide Arena several hours ahead of the national semifinals.

The name of Pat Summitt, the legendary Tennessee women’s coach, was placed on the USBWA women’s most courageous award in 2012 when she received the award in the wake of her battle against Early-onset Alzheimer’s being revealed the previous summer. Summitt, the first women’s coach to surpass 1,000 victories, ultimately succumbed to the disease in June of 2016.

Saint Joseph’s coach Cindy Griffin, who has been

alongside watching Marz’s efforts to return, praised her work ethic, saying, “What an honor it is to know and coach a player who has shown great courage and resilience.

“This award is named after one of the best coaches in the world, Pat Summitt, who was the ultimate competitor, who fought a challenging illness and inspired many of us along the way,” Griffin continued. “Avery Marz exemplifies Pat Summitt’s courage and competitive spirit as she overcame what many said she could not, which is to return and compete at the Division I women’s basketball level after suffering a stroke. Avery is an inspiration to us and is well-deserving of this prestigious honor.”

Soon after Feinberg’s story on Marz went national, many USBWA members quickly began suggesting her as a viable candidate for the Summitt award.

“Avery playing again is remarkable,” said Dr. Tom Trojian, head of Drexel sports medicine, during a recent game between the Dragons and the Hawks. “You normally don’t see many people come back from a stroke like she suffered to play again.”

Trojian was previously the longtime team physician of the powerful Connecticut program.

Marz has a tattoo on her left shoulder with the date of the stroke inscribed. She had it placed near her back “because it’s behind me. It’s something I really wanted to get to remember every day. What happened to me is a big part of me. It’s going to be part of me for the rest of my life.”

Durando, Golden win USBWA scholarships

The U. S. Basketball Writers Association awarded two scholarships to students this year, with both recipients pursuing goals of becoming a sportswriter.

Receiving the scholarships were Bennett Durando of Webster Groves, Mo., and Kylee Golden of Phoenix, Ariz.

Durando, a freshman in the School of Journalism Honors College at the University of Missouri, was selected to receive a \$4,000 scholarship, with \$1,000 given annually for four years to the son or daughter of a USBWA member. Durando is the son of St. Louis Post-Dispatch sportswriter Stu Durando and former sportswriter Elizabeth Holland.

Durando credits his experience as sports editor and reporter of his high school student newspaper, the ECHO, as key to developing skills as a sports journalist.

“I became a vocal leader,” Durando said. “I frequently advised staffers how to get informative quotes out of interviews, to write with journalistic style and creativity and to report accurately and meaningfully.”

He received numerous awards for his writing from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. He also won a scholarship from the Al Neuharth Free Spirit and Journalism Conference and was selected to participate in a national conference in Washington, D.C.

“Bennett has great potential to be an effective and enthusiastic leader in the journalistic field,” wrote his English teacher at Webster Groves, Kristin Moore. “He is a young man with exceptional integrity and he is committed to reporting fairly and reasonably.”



Bennett Durando



Kylee Golden

Durando said his love for journalism and community stretched beyond school hours. He helped out as a counselor for a youth journalism camp, hoping their experience at the camp sparked an appreciation for journalism.

He also served as a volunteer in several community fundraising and service projects while in school.

“I hope to become a better leader and citizen at Mizzou and as a professional journalist,” he said. “I believe we need strong journalism now more than ever and that supporting it is something good citizens should do.”

Golden, a senior at Horizon Honors Secondary School in Phoenix, won a \$1,000 scholarship for her feature on Gonzaga point guard Nigel Williams-Goss and two childhood friends who traveled to Phoenix for this past year’s NCAA Final Four. Golden’s story

was judged the best entry in the USBWA’s Full Court Press sports journalism seminar and scholarship competition during the Final Four.

“It was during one of the press conferences, and Williams-Goss was talking about his two childhood best friends who came all the way to watch him play,” Golden wrote. “I just got the idea that would be a good angle to get his friends that have been there with him through this entire process and now see their best friend in the Final Four.”

Golden called the friends of Williams-Goss and wrote a story that incorporated a connection to his youth and offered personal insight into one of the biggest players on college basketball’s biggest stage.

Christi Britt, Golden’s journalism teacher at Horizon Honors Secondary School in Phoenix, had high praise for her student.

“Kylee has what it takes to be successful in anything,” Britt said. “Her initiative, drive and love of learning will make her a key player in any field. She knows how to write a good article. She asks the right questions, sees through a fresh, original lens and has a way of capturing the essence of a moment.”

Golden said she doesn’t have a favorite writer but reads the work of several writers to gain a better perspective.

Golden has verbally committed to playing lacrosse at Chatham, where she plans to continue working toward her goal of becoming a sportswriter.

“I don’t know if I want to stay in one specific sport,” Golden said. “I love sports in general. It’s been a part of my life for my entire life. I want to be a sports journalist. It’s something that I’m interested in. I love writing it.”