

## Retiring NABC exec wins Katha Quinn Award

By **John Akers**

Jim Haney laughed at the thought that he was a media-friendly executive director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

For 28 years, he contends, he was just doing his job.

That meant always being available to the media, even for the most controversial issues.

That also meant doing his best to bridge the gap that sometimes exists between the media and the coaches he represented.

While it was assumed that he had his coaches' back, it always felt like he was watching out for reporters' best interests, as well.

For those reasons and more, Haney was named the 2020 winner of the Katha Quinn Award, given annually in recognition of the recipient's work in serving the media. Quinn was honored at the USBWA meeting at the 1988 Final Four for her work at the 1987 Pan American Games while she underwent treatment for liver cancer. She passed



*Jim Haney*

away in March 1989, at the age of 35.

The honor comes as Haney, 70, nears his retirement as the NABC's executive director in September.

"I never saw myself as necessarily quotable," Haney said. "But I recognized that the position had value and always felt that I could provide some background on issues that were confronting men's basketball.

"To me, it's sort of a given that (coaches) have a responsibility to respond to questions. Sometimes, the questions aren't easy. It's all part of one's responsibility to the university you work for and the team you coach."

Haney, a former head coach at Oregon, took the NABC job in June of 1992 after it was offered to and turned down in April by George Raveling, who remained the head coach at USC. A few months later, the NABC offered the job to Haney, then the commissioner of the Big West Conference. Haney immediately recognized that the offer was the realization of a vision he'd had in the mid-1980s, that he would take a job in which he

would be involved in basketball on a full-time basis.

Haney was one of only four executive directors in the NABC's 75-year history, replacing Joseph Vancisin.

Among many accomplishments under Haney, the NABC opened the College Basketball Experience in Kansas City, adopted the national awareness and education program "Guardians of the Game" and partnered with the American Cancer Society to launch Coaches vs. Cancer.

"It's hard to grasp that you've been doing something for 28 years," he said. "It doesn't feel that long. It's been fulfilling, fun, enjoyable. It's one we cherish.

"The 28 years have been a continuation of an amazing journey, not only to represent the men's basketball coaches that I hold in high regard, but it was a 28-year sojourn with the Lord opening doors for me," Haney said. "It was amazing."

Haney said he is excited about the next stage of his life.

"My wife and I see this as a page that's turning," Haney said. "We won't be directly involved with the NABC, but our journey with the Lord is a lifetime journey. We're looking forward to what's next."

## Toney's journey leads to Most Courageous Award

By **Matt Karner**

New Jersey City University's senior forward Sam Toney, this year's recipient of the USBWA Most Courageous Award, spent much of his life in and out of foster homes before finding stability and becoming a Division III All-American.

"I just want to be successful at whatever I do and basketball was a big part of that," Toney said. "Basketball was kind of my way to escape some things that I'm struggling with or going through. Playing basketball was my way to relieve stress and clear my head."

Toney estimated that he has lived in 50 foster homes.

The 6-foot-4 power forward has averaged 15.8 points throughout his career. Toney earned the New Jersey Athletic Conference Rookie of the Year award as a freshman.

As a sophomore, he was named the NJAC Player of the Year, averaging 20.5 points and 9.7 rebounds. Toney's drive and passion have made him the player he is today, but more importantly, have helped shape him into the man he has become.

Toney failed to make his high school team as a freshman and, after earning a spot his senior year,



*Sam Toney*

quit midway through the season. He never gave up. His positivity and determination always found a way to break through. Through a co-worker, Toney was taken in by Marvin and Toni Woodson.

Toney was then observed by Butch Ingram, who organizes a private league. Ingram's special interest in Toney led him to NJCU and its coach.

"The level of coaching he has received while he's here (NJCU) from Marc Brown has been extremely beneficial for him. It's brought him stability," said Shawn Tucker, the university's associate vice president and director of athletics. "When you're going from a life where you don't

really have stability but now you are able to go to an institution for multiple years ... You have a coach (who) stays with you for multiple years and you build a bond, you build a relationship."

Toney entered college as a 23 year old.

"He's a pretty driven guy," Brown said. "He's been beaten down a little bit in his life, especially early on, and he's always stood tall and he's been doing that with me for the last four years."

Toney's passion, determination and drive come from within. Through his struggles, he has found the

will to win.

"Understanding that life sometimes throws you curveballs, but those that are able to withstand those curves and are able to stay within the box," Tucker said. "Eventually you get some hits, you get some doubles, you hit a home run. He's hit a home run here at NJCU."

After graduation Toney hopes to play professionally, but his connection to NJCU and Brown will last forever.

"He came in with respect for me as a man because I'm that one guy that gave him an opportunity," Brown said. "That's where our bond lies. I told him our bond will never be broken, I'm gonna be there for the rest of his life and the rest of my life."

Toney plans to help others overcome circumstances similar to what he had to face throughout his adolescence.

"One of my goals is to also help other people to understand, to be able to get through the situation that I've been through," Toney said. "Because there are a lot of people that are similar to me – maybe not as bad, maybe not worse, maybe some of the same – but there are people like me everywhere.

"I've experienced a lot, and to me, that's what makes me the person I am. That's why I'm able to not dwell on the past, not think about the past."

*Matt Karner is a graduate assistant in the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI.*

The United States Basketball Writers Association  
PO Box 257; Zionsville IN 46077-9998.  
Visit us at: [www.usbwa.com](http://www.usbwa.com)  
814-574-1485.

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Post-Standard; C: 315-416-6031;  
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Raleigh News & Observer; C: 919-812-7195;  
[ldcock@newsobserver.com](mailto:ldcock@newsobserver.com)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** – Malcolm Moran,  
H: 814-574-1485; C: 317-278-5329;  
[malcolm@usbwa.com](mailto:malcolm@usbwa.com)

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205-458-3000; [cpinkerton@sec.org](mailto:cpinkerton@sec.org)

**NEW MEDIA LIAISON** – Mike Rutherford, SB  
Nation; C: 502-644-9976; [mikeruth5@aol.com](mailto:mikeruth5@aol.com)

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

**WEBMASTER** – Ted Gangi, C: 214-909-9314;  
[ted@collegepressbox.com](mailto:ted@collegepressbox.com)

# Worthy discussion: analytics' place in sports writing, USBWA

Who are we?

I usually try to avoid existential questions, particularly after an unfortunate experience at Fordham University when a strong performance in intro philosophy led me to decide I should take on a 300-level course as a freshman.

For an entire nightmarish semester, I felt as if I was riding the Moscow subway. People were talking all around, but I had no idea what anyone was saying. But I digress.

An existential question for our organization has become an important conversation. Because more and more of our industry, fueled by emerging technologies, has started to appear unrecognizable when compared with the model many of us once knew.

That evolution has already inspired a discussion that could expand our membership, tap into new forms of communication, and determine how we identify and honor outstanding work.

Brendan Quinn of The Athletic, the District V representative, crystallized the discussion in a recent email exchange of board members.

"Analytics driven-writing is a massive, growing, unavoidable field," Quinn wrote. "It is not a matter of nerds and geeks. The general public is increasingly wanting tangible evidence of player and coach performances, over narrative-driven opinion. It's worthwhile for this organization to advance and embrace it and encourage these media members to be active members. IMO, analytics are analytics, and journalism is journalism, but basketball writing is basketball writing."

The immediate question is how we should determine the most effective way to encourage new forms of communication to come under our tent. The question can become complicated when carefully produced, high-quality work creates a growing audience while exhibiting little connection to our traditional core responsibilities of reporting and writing.

About a quarter century ago, the discussion was about how to handle bloggers, remember? What if they don't belong to mainstream organizations? How do we evaluate their level of professionalism? How do

## Malcolm Moran Executive Director



we decide if they should become members?

While newspaper industry economics have led to a radical and too-often-painful contraction, technology has created possibilities.

So, who are we?

The question is not so simple.

What if that communicator's work does not require any interviews?

What if it does not require obtaining a credential and appearing in a gym, arena or stadium?

Is the work close enough to what we have traditionally done to expand our scope?

Can we provide the level of service and support that would make membership worthwhile?

Should we consider creating an award for communication driven by analytics?

"The primary goal of the USBWA has remained constant since its inception: to serve the interests of journalists who cover college basketball," our mission statement reads.

As the definition of journalism continues to change, our responsibility as an organization is to make sure we are responsive. So let's have that conversation. Please reach out to your district representative, or one of the officers, or to me. Please share your ideas. A collective vision can give us the best possible chance of producing the smartest way to proceed.

I can remember when established freelance journalists that were assigned by a news organization were denied Final Four credentials because they were freelance journalists. That discussion seems silly now. Ten years from now, or 20 or more, how will we look back on this discussion?

*Malcolm Moran is Executive Director of the USBWA and Director of the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI.*

## Teel, Markus, Miller leave jobs after 30 years

Three USBWA members with a combined century of experience at Virginia and Maryland newspapers resigned newspapers within days of each other.

David Teel, a recent USBWA president and Hall of Fame inductee, announced on Feb. 7 his departure after 36 years at the Newport News Daily Press, though he plans to continue in the business.

"There are more stories to tell, more issues to examine, and I hope to remain in the fray," he wrote. "Whether and when that happens is uncertain and, full disclosure, a little scary."

Teel, a 13-time Virginia sports writer of the year, also was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2014.

### Lodge Notes

Don Markus also announced on Feb. 7 that he was taking a buyout after 35 years at the Baltimore Sun. Markus, a longtime Maryland beat writer, wrote that also plans to "continue my three careers of writing, teaching and playing basketball." Markus has taught sports journalism at American University since 2005.

Ed Miller also announced on Feb. 6 his resignation from the Virginia-Pilot, where he had worked for nearly 30 years, most recently covering Old Dominion.

Jerry Tipton of the Lexington Herald-Leader, a 2005 inductee into the USBWA Hall of Fame who has covered Kentucky basketball for nearly 40 years, was named to the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame.

# World-Herald beat writer is USBWA's Rising Star

By Josh Ayen

Omaha World-Herald sportswriter Chris Heady has had a meteoric rise in his journalism career.

His accomplishments are exactly why he was recognized with the 2020 Rising Star Award, given annually by the U.S. Basketball Writers Association to a member under the age of 30 who shows great promise as a college basketball writer.

Heady joins an elite group recognized for this honor, including Sam Vecenie and Eamonn Brennan of The Athletic, Myron Medcalf of ESPN and Laura Keeley of the Raleigh News & Observer.

Heady said that when USBWA president Mike Waters delivered the good news, it was hard to believe.

"Mike left a message on my phone while I was recording a podcast, and when I saw I had a missed call from a New York number and a 28 second voice mail, I was curious," Heady said. "He told me in that voice mail he had some 'good news,' and that's when I put two and two together. I was floored and so grateful, especially when you look back at past winners and the work that they have done over the years. I'm still pretty baffled on how I was about stack up to those names, but I'm so honored and so thankful to the USBWA for the recognition."

Heady's first got into journalism in high school. Wanting to be just like his older brother, Heady joined his local high school newspaper in his hometown of



Chris Heady

Kansas City. Heady grew particularly fond of reading and writing human-interest stories during his high school years.

Later into his high school career, Heady had the opportunity to attend the Spring National High School Journalism Convention in Anaheim, Calif. The people he connected with and the speakers from that conference still leave a lasting impact on Heady.

The keynote speaker at that year's convention was renowned Los Angeles Times journalist Steve Lopez.

During his address, Lopez told the audience to disregard all statistics about limited job opportunities for students pursuing a career in journalism.

"If this is what you love to do," Heady heard Lopez tell the audience, "don't worry about the statistics." Those words have not been lost on Heady.

Inspired by Lopez's remarks, Heady continued toward his dream of becoming a journalist. Heady enrolled at Nebraska in 2012 to pursue a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Heady never considers himself a sports reporter, rather a reporter who covers sports. In his years at Nebraska, Heady interned for several publications like the Lincoln Journal Star, the Daily Nebraskan and Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Heady also wrote for the Life section in USA Today for a few months after graduating from Nebraska.

Heady found his way back to Lincoln, Neb., when

the Big Ten website Landof10 called with an opportunity to cover Nebraska football and recruiting.

He jumped at the opportunity and moved back to cover his alma mater.

One year after taking the job at Landof10, the door would later open at the World-Herald to cover Nebraska football and basketball.

Since starting at the World-Herald in 2017, Heady has covered many significant events in Nebraska athletics.

Some of Heady's favorite work during his time at the World-Herald includes covering the events leading up to former Nebraska head men's basketball coach Tim Miles' dismissal and a look into the life of current head coach Fred Hoiberg.

Both present and former writers at the World-Herald have glowing remarks for Heady's work. Lee Barfknecht, a former writer who spent 40 years at the World-Herald, called Heady a very diligent, detailed reporter that has a bright future.

"He really cares about the business and cares about journalism," Barfknecht said.

Tom Shatel, another colleague of Heady, said the Rising Star winner is as good a young writer as any he's been around. Shatel went on to say that Heady is a great example for a modern-day beat reporter, citing Heady's ability to not only write but report through other forms like video and podcasting.

"The award was made for a guy like Chris. He really embraces the sport and everything that comes with it," Shatel said.

*Josh Ayen is a graduate assistant with the Sports Capital Journalism Program at IUPUI in Indianapolis.*

## Final words from a transitional presidency

Being the president of the USBWA is a lot like being a parent. The days go by slow, but the year goes by fast.

There were times when it seemed like the conference calls would never end, but in the blink of an eye I've gone from accepting the gavel from David Teel in Minneapolis to turning it over to Seth Davis in Atlanta.

I remember taking over the post with much trepidation. First, there was the matter of the USBWA's longtime executive director Joe Mitch retiring. It's kind of like becoming the coach of an NBA franchise only to find out that the star player has abruptly retired. When Teel broke the news to me, I think my first words were "Are you kidding me?" And I'm leaving out one key word.

However, I was extremely fortunate; we all are actually, that past president and current professor Malcolm Moran agreed to take over the job. It's an old coaching axiom that you don't want to be the guy that follows the guy, but while that might be true of Wooden, Rupp or Smith, Malcolm has been up to the task. I've leaned on him like a baby holding onto the coffee table for much of the year.

I've also got to give a nod to John Akers, Hall of Famer and publisher of Basketball Times. There were so many times this year that Akers reminded me of an upcoming deadline for Tipoff or that a conference call was needed for an award or Final Four plans had to be firmed up. If not for John, the annual awards luncheon in Atlanta would have been held at the Varsity with few

Mike Waters  
Syracuse Post-Standard  
President



to the game. He was an administrator at the University of Tennessee who was very close to UT assistant coach Stu Aberdeen. After some games, Dad would walk me into the locker room to meet the players, but first we would pass the sports writers and I'd hear the clickety-clack of their typewriters.

The next day I would read Marvin West, the former sports columnist for the Knoxville News-Sentinel and a USBWA Hall of Famer, or Ben Byrd, the columnist with the Knoxville Journal.

Years later, in my first job out of college, I covered a young coach at Belmont University named Rick Byrd. He was Ben Byrd's son.

I covered my first Final Four thanks to the USBWA. Denied a credential because my newspaper hadn't gone to the Final Four in a few words, USBWA president John Feinstein went to bat for me. The next thing I knew, I was in Denver, covering former Syracuse recruiting target Kenny Anderson, who had taken Georgia Tech to the Final Four.

It's been an honor to serve this organization and its over 800 members. While I can guarantee a peaceful transfer of power, I'm not going away. I'll be around on press row (even if it's nowhere near the court) and in post-game work rooms (even if there really isn't one).

I'll continue to have some role in the USBWA and I'm always available to helping out a colleague, so never hesitate to reach out to me.

So this is it.  
Dash-30-Dash

plaques handed out.

We've done some good work in the USBWA this year. Our outreach to other organizations like NABJ and AWSM is something that can help sports writers across the board. I hope it opens up our organization to people in the business that perhaps had not thought of us before. It's something I plan on continuing to push even after my term as president is up.

There has been just the start of improvements to the USBWA website. I hope to see the site's relevance grow under Malcolm's direction.

We also took a page from the heart-warming videos of walk-ons receiving scholarships and had the first video reveal of one of our awards when New Jersey City University senior Sam Toney learned that he was this year's recipient of the Most Courageous Award. I hope to see more of that in the future. It's a great way to spread the word about our organization and what it does.

It's hard to express how much the USBWA and college basketball mean to me. My dad introduced me

## USBWA Final Four Schedule of Events

Full Court Press Sportswriting Seminar and Scholarship Competition College and high school students will receive credentials to cover Friday's events and can compete for \$2,000 in scholarships.	Friday, April 3, 8:15 a.m.	NCAA meeting room on main level of Mercedes-Benz Stadium
Oscar Robertson Player of Year Announcement	Friday, April 3, 9:35 a.m.	TBA
USBWA Board of Directors Executive Session Afterward, the board will meet with members of the Division I men's basketball committee.	Monday, April 6, TBA	TBA
USBWA Awards Luncheon The luncheon will feature the presentation of the following awards: • Katha Quinn Award to Jim Haney, retiring Executive Director of the National Association of Basketball Coaches. • The Rising Star Award to Chris Heady of the Omaha World-Herald for excellence in sportswriting for journalists under 30. • Most Courageous Award to Sam Toney of New Jersey City University, who overcame years of homelessness to become a Division III All-American. • Induction into the USBWA Hall of Fame of Joe Mitch, longtime USBWA Executive Director; Wendy Parker of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Basketball Times; Bill Reynolds of the Providence Journal; Mark Whicker of the Southern California Media Group; and Jack Wilkinson of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. • The Jim O'Connell Award for Excellence in Beat Writing Award to the late Terry Hutchens, CNHI Sports Indiana.	Monday, April 6, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	Hyatt Regency Atlanta (Grand Hall East B, C, D)

# Most Courageous Cox sisters battle Type 1 diabetes

By Mel Greenberg

During a discussion a year ago with Baylor coach Kim Mulkey, whose Bears would go on to win the NCAA title, future candidates were mentioned to consider for the annual Pat Summitt Most Courageous Award that is presented each year at the USBWA women's awards press conference at the Women's Final Four.

The honor is named for the legendary Hall of Fame Tennessee women's coach, who was diagnosed with early onset dementia, Alzheimer's Type in the summer of 2011, strode the sidelines one more season before stepping down and ultimately succumbed to the effects in June 2016.

Mulkey was on board with the choices, but soon after it was learned one of her own stars – 6-foot-4 post player Lauren Cox – was dealing with Type 1 Diabetes since the age of 7.

"Lauren is absolutely the ideal person to win that award," Mulkey said.

In fact, Baylor has played a preseason Type 1 diabetes game since Cox's freshman season in support of her.

The native of Flower Mound, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, wears a pump during games to manage her blood sugar.

In the rare instances it was necessary, Mulkey has rested Lauren to protect her health.

Her family consists of three other sisters – Whitney, Maddie and Kaylee – and her dad, Dennis, and mom, Brenda, both of whom were former basketball players.

Type 1 Diabetes, previously known as juvenile diabetes, is an autoimmune disease in which the pancreas is unable to provide enough insulin. A lifelong illness, blood sugar must be monitored throughout the day.

Cox, a senior likely to be a lottery pick in the WNBA draft April 17, became our choice.

But her story did not stop there.

It became more widely learned last fall that Cox's younger sister Whitney also was diagnosed with the disease near the end of the 2018 season, while she was still in high school.

While Lauren has taken her own situation in stride – "I control it – it doesn't control me," she said in a USA Today interview – she was there to surprise Whitney the day of the diagnosis, knowing the trauma her sister was about to undergo.

"We just sat there and cried together. Just kind



Whitney Cox



Lauren Cox

of got it all out," Lauren told USBWA member and ESPNW reporter Mechelle Voeple in an interview. "I was really emotional because I knew what I had been dealing with for many years, and I knew that she was going to have to deal with it now.

"And it's for the rest of our lives unless they can find a cure. The good thing is it is manageable if you're responsible with it."

Whitney, who was 17 when diagnosed, is now a

freshman reserve playing at Lubbock Christian, which won Division II titles in 2016 and last season.

Lauren and Whitney were on opposite sides last fall in Baylor's annual Type 1 Diabetes game played in Waco, Texas.

Thus, why not honor both sisters? This is the second time on the women's side that dual awards have been handed out.

Previously, in 2017, hardware went to Appalachian State coach Angel Elderkin and ESPN broadcaster Holly Rowe, who battled cancer while continuing their careers.

In fact, Lauren has appeared at various events attended by diabetes patients to offer support and telling her story.

She has had to deal with other impediments as well.

Just as Baylor was about to clinch the title against defending champion Notre Dame last April, Lauren went down, seemingly with a major knee injury. But a few days later it was diagnosed as a bone bruise and she became good to go when the season began last fall.

Lauren did miss a few games on the front end because of another unrelated issue.

A third-team USBWA All-American last season, Lauren plays with a Baylor squad capable of repeating its 2019 championship.

## Kansas duo highlights Player of the Year watch list

A pair of Kansas players – Devon Dotson and Udoka Azubuike – were among 12 selected for the USBWA's midseason Oscar Robertson Trophy watch list.

The Oscar Robertson Trophy will be presented to the nation's player of the year at the Final Four in April and the winner will be honored at the USBWA Awards Dinner on April 13 at the Missouri Athletic Club in St. Louis.

The list also includes a pair of high-scoring guards from the Big East Conference – Marquette's Markus Howard and Seton Hall's Myles Powell. Howard leads the nation in scoring, at 27.3 points per game, and set the Big East career scoring record. Powell is the program's all-time leader in 3-point field goals.

Azubuike leads the nation in field-goal percentage. If he maintains his current pace of .734, he will break the NCAA career record for field-goal percentage.

San Diego State guard Malachi Flynn averages 16.5 points and five assists with a 3:1 assist-to-turnover ratio for the only undefeated team in the nation.

Iowa center Luka Garza is one of only two players to average better than 23 points and 9.9 rebounds.

Michigan State senior guard Cassius Winston is the Big Ten's career leader in assists (849).

Jordan Nwora leads the ACC in scoring (18.8) and his 469 points this year is the second-most by a Louisville player through 25 games over the last 20 seasons.

Oregon guard Payton Pritchard is only player in the nation leading his conference in both scoring (19.5) and assists (6.0).

Vernon Carey Jr. of Duke was the only freshman named to the list. Dotson, Obi Toppin of Dayton and Filip Petrushev of Gonzaga are the list's only sophomores.