

NCAA Convention

Friday, January 13, 2023

San Antonio, Texas

Saluting Excellence

Luncheon

Presentation



ANNOUNCER: And now please welcome NCAA Senior Vice President of Inclusion, Education, and Community Engagement, Felicia Martin.

FELICIA MARTIN: Greetings and welcome to the Saluting Excellence Ceremony. I am Felicia Martin, NCAA Senior Vice President for Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement. It is great to see you, like actually see you. My absolute pleasure to be here with you.

There is a Vietnamese proverb that says, "When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree." Today, we are enjoying fruit, and to that end, I'd like to express our gratitude to those who plant the seeds and nurture the trees. Thank you for your service to our student athletes and our athletic communities. I hope your time at the Convention has been fulfilling, enjoyable and educational.

This is a unique time for the membership and the association as we navigate the evolving landscape of higher education and college sports. There are many exciting things on the horizon.

During this time and in this space, we have gathered to recognize our outstanding recipient of the Award for Diversity and Inclusion and to recognize the exceptional recipients of the NCAA President's Pat Summitt Award and Gerald R. Ford Award.

At the start of a new year, we commemorate extraordinary and consistent efforts and accomplishments around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on college campuses and conference offices. We offer our sincere appreciation to our university presidents, conference commissioners, athletic administrators, student athletes, coaches, faculty, and chief diversity officers for your dedication to educate, engage and empower our athletic communities. Our strength as an association is because of your individual and collective efforts to press forward and serve each day. Thank you.

We appreciate our partnership with the Minority

Opportunities Athletic Association. For 11 years, the NCAA and MOAA have collaborated to recognize the diversity, equity and inclusion related programs, initiatives, and policies that athletic departments and conference offices have implemented to foster inclusive and equitable environments across the intercollegiate athletics community.

Today's event highlights why diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts are vital and remind us that the responsibility to move these efforts forward lies within each of us. The Award for Diversity and Inclusion allows us to highlight the strategic assessment, collaboration, education, and leadership efforts that are crucial to moving the inclusive excellence needle forward and contributing to the overall success of our colleges, universities and conference offices.

Before we recognize this year's award winner, let's acknowledge and applaud the Award For Diversity and Inclusion's 2023 honorable mentions. If there are representatives from the schools and conference offices, please stand if you are able.

The University of Colorado Boulder.

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

Goucher College.

Please join me in congratulating our 2023 honorable mentions.

(Applause.)

Thank you for your fortitude and diligent work that transforms the lives of our student athletes and advances equity, diversity, and inclusion goals for our athletic communities.

As we prepare to recognize the 11th annual award winner, I would like to welcome Dr. Ed Scott, diversity subject matter expert, but also the deputy athletics director at the University of Virginia and president of MOAA.



(Applause.)

ED SCOTT: Thank you, Felicia. And for the content expert endorsement, I appreciate that.

The Award For Diversity and Inclusion represents a significant and long standing partnership between MOAA and the NCAA to recognize the efforts of our respective memberships to make diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority and commitment.

When colleges, universities, and conference offices are intentional about incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion as an essential component of the experience for student athletes and administrators, our campuses and communities are stronger and much better because of it.

The award winner selected today is an outstanding example of how strategic action that consistently strives for inclusive excellence leads to remarkable change. Please turn your attention to the video screens to watch the video honoring our 11th annual award winner, Grand Valley State University.

(Video played.)

ED SCOTT: Yes, round of applause. Absolutely. Come on.

(Applause.)

Please help me in giving a warm welcome to the following representatives from Grand Valley State University. Taking the stage to accept their award are Athletic Director Keri Becker and President Philomena Mantella.

(Applause.)

KERI BECKER: Wow, thank you. Thank you, thank you. Thank you to the NCAA, MOAA, and the selection committee for this amazing award.

I'm honored to receive this award on behalf of our coaches, our staff, our campus and community partners, and especially our student athletes. And a special thank you to the leadership of President Mantella in this space.

Our purpose is to deliver the absolute best student athlete experience. To get the best from our student athletes, they need to be able to bring their whole selves to our locker rooms and to our teams with the highest and strongest sense of belonging. This award represents those initiatives that do just that. They're student athlete driven, coach supported, administratively led. It begins with the support of our president and comes to life for the drive of our

student athletes.

We listened. We planned. We talked. We executed. We kept listening. We evolved. We executed again. And this cycle will continue as we make sure to try to get this right, give our student athletes the best chance for success.

We cannot simply make a statement or throw up a social media post about where we stand. We must do the work to truly ensure our locker rooms, our teams, and our athletic department is inclusive for our staff and our student athletes to be their absolute best because only then and then can we realize championship excellence and deliver on that promise of the best student athlete experience.

Dr. Martin Luther King said in his I Have a Dream speech, "The time is always right to do what is right. This work will always be right, and the time will always be now."

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

FELICIA MARTIN: Congratulations again to Grand Valley State. Your accomplishments are impressive and inspiring.

Now, we'll take a break, have some lunch. After the meal, our program will resume with the presentation of the Summitt and Ford Awards. Enjoy your lunch!

(Video played.)

ANNOUNCER: And now please welcome NCAA President, Mark Emmert.

(Applause.)

MARK EMMERT: Well, thank you very much. Good afternoon to everyone, and welcome back to the second half of today's program.

This is an event that I enjoy a great deal every year because it's an opportunity for all of us to recognize and thank and congratulate individuals who have contributed throughout the course of their career to this wonderful thing called college sports.

And today's awardees are people that I personally admire enormously. They're individuals who have become renowned for their engagement in sports in general and college sports in particular, but most importantly, each of them in their own way personifies the two awards that we're going to give this afternoon.

The first award that we're going to do is the Summitt Award, and the Summitt Award, of course named for Pat Summitt, one of the most iconic individuals in the college sports landscape. It's an award that recognizes individuals who have spent their entire career, or the majority of it, toiling away inside of college sports, working with our student athletes directly in one way or another, promoting the values of college sports, promoting and supporting everything that we care about in this enterprise.

And today's winner, Muffet McGraw, may be the best example, alongside Pat, of somebody who has dedicated their life to making sure that their athletes aren't just great athletes, but that they're well educated, well developed, successful women that go out into the world and be successful, someone who is the living, breathing personification of what we care about.

Today we're going to get to honor Muffet. So first of all, let's watch a little video and learn more about our great honoree.

(Video played.)

MARK EMMERT: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming to the stage Muffet McGraw! Coach?

(Applause.)

You've got a fan club.

MUFFET MCGRAW: Thank you, Mark. Thank you to the NCAA.

It's truly an honor to receive an award with Pat Summitt's name on it. She was somebody who I always aspired to be. She was an icon in our game, an inspiration and a role model to all of us.

If she were here today, she would probably agree with me when I say everything I learned about life, I learned from playing sports. I learned the value of having a great work ethic, discipline, how to persevere through adversity, how to set goals, and how to be relentless in trying to achieve them. I learned that failure is what helps you grow. I learned self awareness, knowing your role, and sometimes finding out that your role wasn't quite as big as you expected it to be.

You learn that everybody doesn't get to be the hero at the end, but everyone's job is important because when you're part of a team, you have to learn to sacrifice for the good of the group, and sometimes being a small part of something big is just as rewarding as being the MVP. You learn about commitment, loyalty, and trust. You learn patience

because sometimes you have to wait for your opportunity. You learn that winning is hard and it takes a lot more than talent. Championships are built on trust, honesty, accountability, and leadership.

That's what we all learned from playing sports, and that's what we teach our players because we're more than coaches, we're educators. We teach these young men and women things that are a lot more important than winning a game.

We're supposed to be preparing them to go out into the world armed with life skills that they need to help them succeed, but somewhere along the way, I wonder if we're still doing our job because instead we're teaching them that loyalty, commitment aren't really important. We're allowing kids to enroll at our schools with one foot out the door because we gave them an out. They know that, if it doesn't work out here, they'll just go somewhere else. Not once, as the one time transfer rule would suggest, but as often as they want.

What are we teaching them about the value of making good choices and the consequences when we don't? What are we teaching them about what matters most in life? Recruiting used to be about finding the best fit, where a student athlete could grow, reach their potential, and get their degree. Now it's an arms race that comes down to the highest bidder. Whoever has the most money wins. It's not what any of us want, but how do we stop it?

First, I think we need to stop blaming the NCAA. It's easy to point fingers at them and say maybe they're the problem. But we are the NCAA. We make the rules. We vote on the rules. That's why we're here.

Jim Valvano taught us the most important lesson that we all learned from playing sports, and that is never give up. We can't stop trying. We can fix this. With the wealth of intelligence in this room alone, we can find common sense solutions by working together.

Playing sports taught me it takes courage to lead, and we all need to step up and take ownership for our part in this. College athletics has taught us so many great life lessons, and one of those is you don't accept excuses. Pat Summitt certainly never did. In fact, her favorite saying was toughen up, buttercup.

So don't tell me how rocky the sea is, just bring the darn ship in, and let's get to work.

(Applause.)

MARK EMMERT: Thank you, Muffet. For those of you



who had any doubt about Muffet McGraw's ability to impact college sports, you just got a demonstration of why you were wrong.

Muffet, we thank you for your always frank, forthcoming comments. They have meant a lot throughout your entire career, even when they were aimed at the NCAA. That's okay because you've always had the interests of our students at heart. You've always spoken the truth from your own heart, and we really, really appreciate that. So thank you again and congratulations.

(Applause.)

And now we're going to give the Ford Award. The Ford Award was created years ago in honor of our President Gerald Ford, who despite the imagery that the media would have you believe, wasn't a klutz, but in fact was an excellent athlete and was an avid skier and golfer and a football player in his collegiate days.

The Ford Award also has gone to some truly remarkable individuals over the decades of its existence. This year our recipient is someone who to say is a part of college sports is a gross understatement. Indeed, Jim Nantz has been an individual who has called some of the most important moments in sport history. He has been a part of college sports and especially March Madness for decades.

He is someone who began his sports career as a college golfer at Houston and someone who has great admiration and respect for all of the people in this room, all of the people in the NCAA that contribute so much to making the lives of our athletes successful.

So I personally am extremely pleased to have this year's recipient for the Ford Award to be Jim Nantz. Please let's learn more about Jim's amazing career.

(Video played.)

MARK EMMERT: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Jim Nantz!

(Applause.)

JIM NANTZ: Just want to make sure he's going to give me that back.

(Laughter.)

Mark, before you go too far, I want you to hear this. I just want to thank you for your friendship and your leadership. I know you made your final speech yesterday and you got a well deserved standing ovation, but I think there's one

more standing ovation that is necessary here on this final day of the convention. I just want to thank you on behalf of everybody who cares about college athletics, and what you've done during a very tumultuous time, a time when a lot of things have evolved in this country, we appreciate what you have done to lead.

MARK EMMERT: Thank you very much. That's very kind of you. Thank you, my friend. That's really nice. Thank you.

(Applause.)

JIM NANTZ: Hello friends. So it's in the video, so I was going to start out with that. I get asked about that from time to time, and it's a true story. It wasn't one of those cheesy ways to try to come up with a signature line. It was truly about trying to stay connected to my dad and for him to know that I was thinking about him.

I'd always been told, even back in my days at the University of Houston, when you look into that lens, make sure you're talking to one individual. Don't think about the millions that are out there when you're calling a Final Four or a Masters or a Super Bowl. Just think of one person. I never quite knew what that meant until when I turned to my dad one time at his bedside, deep in the throes of Alzheimer's, and I said, Hey, Dad, when I'm on the air this weekend, I want you to know I'll be looking at that lens and thinking of you. When I say, Hello Friends, that's my code phrase for you. I'm thinking of you for that flicker of a second. I'm talking to you.

So I said it that weekend. I was in Minneapolis. That's where we were. After the show, a friend of mine said I heard you say, Hello Friends when you came on camera. What was that about? And I told him. And he said, well, that sounds like something that you would do, and you might want to continue to do that. So I've done it every show since.

My dad's been gone since 2008. He died shortly after a Final Four we had here in San Antonio, in fact, that year. But every time I look into that lens, including this Sunday in Buffalo for the playoff game against Miami, for that little split second, I'll say, Hello Friends, and I'm thinking of my dad. Channeling him relaxes me, and on we go. So that's the story behind Hello Friends.

Looking at that video and seeing some of those pictures, when I taped that interview on Zoom with Chris, the gentleman that produced that piece, my mom was still alive. I just lost her in the last couple of months over in Houston. She would have been here today. So first time I've kind of stood up at an event like this and she's not

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

here. She didn't miss anything. She died suddenly, so still in that time where I'm trying to process all of that.

I said it in the video, all I ever wanted to do was to try to make my family proud. That's what's driven me. There are other things too on that list. I want to make my sister and her family proud. I want to make my children proud. I want to make my colleagues proud. I want to make my university proud. That's what every day I wake up asking the good Lord to give me the strength to try to do.

To receive an award named for President Ford is a little surreal. I actually met him and had dinner with him. Forgive me for name dropping.

(Laughter.)

I was playing in his golf event in Vail, Colorado, back some point in the mid 90s. I'll never forget him coming up. I was at the fairway of the 11th hole with my group, this charity event, and he said, I'd like to invite you and your group to sit at my table tonight for dinner. Okay. It would be a great honor, sir. Thank you.

We get to the dinner. It's a roundtable of eight, just like we are seated today. I had Betty Ford to my right, I had Bob Hope to my left, and President Ford was sitting directly across from me. My hearing's not great. His hearing wasn't great. So we didn't get to communicate a whole lot. The only thing I remember telling him is that in 2023 I'm going to receive an award named after you.

(Laughter.)

No, I didn't think about that at the time. I could never imagine that I would have something and a medal like that, Mark. It's a beautiful gold medallion with President Ford on that. I just got a glimpse of it.

But he was an athlete. He was the MVP of the Michigan football team back in the mid 30s, captain, MVP, two time national champion. I've read his story. I knew his story. He credited being a student athlete to his success in life, to teaching him all about leadership, teamwork and responsibility. That's what he said. Here we are almost 80 years since Gerald Ford was the captain of the Wolverine football team, and those truisms are still out there today.

There are stormy seas, as Muffet alluded to, and we need to get that ship to shore. I can't tell you how inspired I was, Muffet, by your talk here today. It was just outstanding to take on those issues that all of us are shaking our head and saying we've got to get our hands around this. You know what, we can. We can. So thank you for putting that front and center. What an honor to share the stage with

you today, Muffet. Congratulations on your honor.

I was a student athlete. I'm using that term liberally. I was a student for sure. Athlete, one year letterman, last guy on the decorated Houston golf team that won 16 National Championships in a 30 year span. I was way down on the end of the bench. I played in one college tournament.

I went to school with one obsession, and that was clearly to work for CBS, not just at the network level. I had that crazy childhood dream, and I wanted to work for that network. At that time, CBS did not broadcast the NCAA Tournament. It did broadcast the NFL, and I liked the way they did it. They also broadcast the Masters tournament, and I wanted to be a part of that.

Didn't want to be on TV. I wanted to be a voice. I wanted to tell people's stories. I wanted to be able to walk somebody up the 18th hole and try to tell people what was in that person's heart. For some reason, I knew the goal since I was 11 years old.

I had a coach and a school that empowered me, empowered me, enabled me to dream, to believe that that could come true. Yeah, I was a student athlete. I roomed with three guys. Four of us were together all through school. They all had the dream of playing on the PGA TOUR, and they all did. I was the guy in the room that said, I'm going to work for CBS, and they believed that I would. They lifted me on their shoulders, made it all sound very believable and plausible.

Freddie Couples said he was going to win the Masters. Kid comes down from Seattle, Washington, barely recruited, given a half scholarship to Houston. I'm going to win the Masters. I'm going to be there to give you the green jacket, I told him. We used to practice that scene in our dorm room.

(Laughter.)

That's the kind of hijinks we were up to in school. You coaches and athletic directors, you think of all the things you've got to deal with. Back at Houston, we had two kids that were daydreaming, play acting out a green jacket ceremony. We really did. It came true. April 12th, 1992. You've got to dream it before you can achieve it.

Being a student athlete, though, this is what I really wanted to say is my message today, and having this goal of being a storyteller we were talking backstage about this. I've never been one that wants to try to get a scoop on someone or say things on the air that are untoward someone. That's just not my style. I was just raised from a home of positivity. I like to build people up in a world today

that wants to tear people down. I wanted to tell the goodness that's out there in this world. I wanted to champion people.

It's the way I was raised. I've probably gone now, what, 38 years, I get some media people who attack me for being too saccharin, too positive. I get that a lot. I'll take those hits any day. I don't care. I'm doing what's in my heart. I want to tell people's stories. I want to find out what their story is, and I want to tell the people across the nation who they are and how they achieve something with a lot of effort and a lot of people believing in them.

I had a coach, Dave Williams, legend. He took the time to take the last guy on his golf team and spend a lot of time with him to find out what his story was. He knew how driven I was. He could have very easily paid me no attention at all.

And in a sense, Coach Williams represents what all of you are doing, and I encourage you to do it even more. Everyone that you work with at your school that's a part of the NCAA, we focus so much of our attention on men's and women's basketball and football. We're a whole, big, wide world out there of other student athletes, and every single one of them wants somebody to know what's driving them and what they want to be in life, what their life goal and dream is.

Thankfully, I had a guy who took that time to embolden me again and make me believe that one day I could be sitting at an NCAA Final Four or any of these other events that I've been blessed to be given and entrusted the opportunity to do it with CBS.

It's amazing. I know that I'm 63 now. I started at CBS when I was in my mid 20s. So I know I've got fewer years to go than I've already completed, but it's still special to me today as it was in 1985. The NCAA is an American treasure. We all hear all the negative feedback out there about how we because all of us are invested in this together how we can't get it right without taking the time to understand the complexities behind it. But it's going to be around for a long, long time, and like everything else in life, it's being shaped and reshaped, and it evolves. It's an important part of Americana.

This could be my last Final Four coming up. It's going to be in Houston. I wanted it to be there because that was my gateway city, and it's gone by like it was just a flicker of a second, like 5 years into 38 years, but it's been something that's been one of the great gifts of my life is to be able to stand up and try to represent everybody in this room and try to espouse the goodness of what you're doing, like President Ford said, with teamwork and

responsibility and leadership.

That's who he was. That's who I've tried to be. And that's who you are. So thank you for all that you've done to give back. I urge you to keep making it better and better and invest your time.

If we can get the kids to stay in school before transferring after one year, invest in them and find out what their story is and champion them to be able to live the life that they want.

Thank you for your kindness to me for all these years. It has been one of the thrills of my life to stand up and in one way be able to try to represent the NCAA to the best of my ability.

To my family, Nancy, Tom, Caroline, to my University of Houston family, Guy Lewis, who believed in me, and to all the folks at the NCAA, I'm blown away beyond words. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. Thank you. I love you. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MARK EMMERT: So we have a bit of a conundrum. As you heard, Jim's going to call the last Final Four this year. We don't know how to run a Final Four without Jim, so we're not sure it's going to happen. But then as I was thinking that, I thought that's Charlie Baker's problem. It's not mine.

(Laughter.)

So I'm good. Well, first of all, let's think about this for just a minute. Grand Valley State's commitment to inclusion that's so exemplary, Muffet McGraw's commitment and dedication to all the athletes she's come in touch with throughout her life and her dedication to supporting college sports, Jim Nantz, a guy who I contend, Jim, has done more to breathe life into our athletes and our coaches so that the world can see who they really are, not just some wonderful performance on a stage that's what we've been celebrating this lunch hour.

And we should all be really, really proud that that's what we are here to celebrate. Those are the values that we need to have constantly reinforced. Those are the things that this association has to stand for. So please join me, for all three, another round of applause for all of them. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

And with that, our luncheon is finished. We still have

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many of you still have more meetings today and tomorrow.
I may not be with you again in this big of a forum. Thank
you so much for being part of the convention this week.
We've got a lot of work to do, a lot of work to do going
forward. We really need to be serious about toughening
up, buttercup, because we've got work to do.

Thanks everyone. Good afternoon.

(Applause.)

