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Five Washington Sports Legends Named Honorees for the 86th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards

SEATTLE – Celebrating the inspirational and influential members of our community, the Seattle Sports Commission (SSC) announces the honorees for the 86th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards:

Paul G. Allen Humanitarian Award – *Jamal Crawford*, 20-year NBA veteran from Rainier Beach is among the best-ever Seattle-born NBA stars though his greatest impact might be off the court. A civic pillar, his philanthropic gifts to the local community have been immeasurable.

Wayne Gittinger Inspirational Youth Award – *Matthew Esselstrom* used sports and a passion for helping others to fuel his journey of self-discovery as he transitioned from female to male and overcame a significant knee injury playing lacrosse.

Royal Brougham Sports Legend Award – *Lou Piniella*, iconic Mariners manager whose 1995 team saved baseball in Seattle. He led the team to the franchise's only four postseason appearances, including a major league record 116-win regular season in 2001.

Keith Jackson Media Excellence Award – *Dean Rutz*, for nearly thirty years, the Seattle Times photographer has had his finger on the pulse of Washington athletics, vividly capturing many of our seminal sports moments.

Equity and Inclusion in Sports Award – *All Girl Everything Ultimate Program – AGE UP*, uses ultimate frisbee to invest in black, indigenous and people of color youth in South Seattle.

"The Seattle Sports Commission has the great honor of recognizing our sports community's deserving members for their unique impacts," said Beth Knox, SSC President. "This year, in partnership with King County Play Equity Coalition, we are expanding our awards to highlight those working to address equity and inclusion gaps in youth sports with the new Sports Equity and Inclusion award."

Honorees are selected by the Sports Star Committee, comprised of local sports historians, media and members of the sports industry. The honorees will join the SSC and other notable sports figures during the 86th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards, broadcast on KING 5 and simulcast on Sports Radio 950 KJR-AM, KJR-FM HD2 and the iHeart Radio App, February 27 at 7:00pm PT.

Event details are available at www.sportsstaroftheyear.org.



86th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards | About the Honorees

Paul G. Allen Humanitarian Award - *Given to an individual who has made a significant or compelling contribution to positively impact the sports community.*

Past Recipients: John and Traci Schneider, Sandy Gregory, Slade Gorton, Jacob Green, Ginger Ackerley, Steve Gleason, Ron Crockett, Lenny Wilkens, Detlef Schrempf, Paul G. Allen, Jamie Moyer

Royal Brougham Sports Legend Award - *Given to an individual for a lifetime of achievement in sports and who exemplifies the spirit of sports in Washington state.*

Past Recipients: Johnny O'Brien, Sue Bird, Doris Brown Heritage, Gary Payton, Warren Moon, Elgin Baylor, Bobo Brayton, Edgar Martinez, Bob Houbregs, Don James, Marv Harshman

Wayne Gittinger Inspirational Youth Award - *Given to an inspirational young athlete who has overcome adversity and obstacles.*

Past Recipients: Claudia Longo, Elijah Hagstrom, Bretton Chittwood, Colton Schmidt, Riley Sorenson, Katie Collier, Milton Wright III, Zack Lystedt, Josh Dickerson, Jake Finkbonner, Ike Ditzenberger, Shawn Berg

Keith Jackson Media Excellence Award - *Given to a member of the media for excellence in communicating the sports stories of the state of Washington.*

Past Recipients: Angie Mentink, Art Thiel, John Clayton, Rick Rizzs, Kevin Calabro, Steve Raible, Warren Miller, Bob Rondeau, Bob Robertson, Keith Jackson, Dave Niehaus

Sports Equity and Inclusion Award – *Presented in partnership with King County Play Equity Coalition, the recipient is an individual or organization that has served the region by designing and implementing system level change to engage youth and families historically marginalized from sports.*
New in 2021!

To stay up to date with information as the event approaches, follow the Seattle Sports Commission on social media and the event hashtag, #86SSY

The Seattle Sports Commission (SSC) is committed to making Seattle a world-class sports community by creating opportunities that bring the world to the Pacific Northwest. By fostering a strong sports culture, the SSC seeks to strengthen businesses, foster generational engagement in athletics and bolster pride in our communities. Go to seattlesports.org to learn more about the SSC.

SSC Partners: AT&T | BECU | MTR Western | Virginia Mason Franciscan Health | Waste Management

#86SSY Media Partners: Bonneville Seattle | iHeartMedia | KING 5 | Q13 | ROOT Sports

[LINK TO PRESS KIT HERE](#)

The King County Play Equity Coalition is a network of over 100 member organizations who work collectively to increase rates of youth physical activity in King County by decreasing inequities in access to youth sports, play, and outdoor recreation.