



RESPECT ★ RESPONSIBILITY ★ INTEGRITY ★ SERVANT LEADERSHIP ★ SPORTSMANSHIP

MAY 2007

## RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENT ON AND OFF THE FIELD AT EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY (FLA.)

*information provided by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Fla.*

A \$250,000 gift from Ms. Linda Downs will benefit student-athletes who are selected as *Champions of Character* on the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) Daytona Beach Campus. Her gift, which established the Linda S. Downs *Champions of Character* Scholarship, recognizes those who demonstrate the core values of the NAIA's *Champions of Character* program - **Respect, Responsibility, Integrity, Servant Leadership and Sportsmanship.**



"Linda Downs' financial gift is a major impact to our Athletics program," stated John Mark Adkison, ERAU Director of Athletic Development. "She embodies every character quality of the *Champions of Character* program. With the endowment she has established, we are assured we can offer *Champions of Character* Scholarships to deserving recipients well into the future."

As a prominent business leader and one-time recipient of the Female Intramural Athlete of the Year at Birmingham-Southern College, Ms. Downs is an ideal role model for the student-athletes as they strive for the highest levels of success both on and off the field. She is currently the Executive Vice President for Leadership Development of Brown & Brown, Inc.

ERAU Director of Athletics, Steve Ridder, emphasizes the importance of the scholarship program. "By focusing on the five core character values in the development of our student-athletes, we strive to graduate young adults who care about making a difference in our world and positively affecting the lives of people around them. Linda Downs lives this out every day at Brown & Brown and in her personal life, and we are thrilled as an Athletics program to be associated with her."

"From the first day I met Coach Ridder and the team in the Embry-Riddle Athletics program, I knew it was a group I wanted to help and be associated with," commented Linda Downs. "I am extremely impressed the Athletics program is dedicated to fostering the complete person, not just the athlete. I am very proud to be associated with this endeavor."

## IT'S A VANGUARD UNIVERSITY (CALIF.) SWEEP

In April, the NAIA named Vanguard University women's basketball head coach Russ Davis the recipient of the Coach of Character Award and Vanguard University women's basketball player Kelly Schmidt the recipient of the Dr. LeRoy Walker *Champions of Character* Award. Both honorees embrace the *Champions of Character* initiative and demonstrate the five core values in and out of athletics. Davis and Schmidt will be celebrated guests at the Ninth Annual National Sportsmanship Awards Dinner in St. Louis, Mo. on June 21, 2007. The event is considered one of the nation's most inspiring nights in sports and recognizes the country's most respected athletes, coaches and sports personalities.



**Founding Partner**

**Good sportsmanship means good conduct:**

- ◆ Know and follow the rules of the sport or activity
- ◆ Respect officials and accept their decisions
- ◆ Maintain self control at all times
- ◆ Respect opponents
- ◆ Cheer and communicate positively
- ◆ React appropriately even when others do not

***The rules of good sportsmanship apply not only in sports, but in all sorts of situations. Is there a time when it isn't appropriate to treat other people with respect? No! Living according to high standards always makes a positive impact!***



## NAIA CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER PRESENTATIONS & EVENTS

This past winter, the *Champions of Character* program was in full effect. Events took place at all NAIA winter national championship tournaments and special presenters Rob Miller and Bruce Brown we scattered coast to coast meeting with parents, youth, coaches and student-athletes. This spring the program is in full bloom with presentations scheduled at a leadership summit in Washington and a program center event at Iowa Wesleyan University. The upcoming schedule is listed below.

### April 2007

Date	Presentation/Event	State
April 10	Hood River Oregon High School	Oregon
April 11	Tacoma Parks & Recreation Coaches	Washington
April 11	Tacoma Boys & Girls Club Coaches	Washington
April 16	Northwest University	Washington
April 18	Olathe South High School	Kansas
April 19-22	Metro Sports Youth Basketball Challenge	Kan. & Mo.
April 20	Indiana University - Northwest	Indiana
April 22-23	Mid-Continent College Program Center	Kentucky
April 24-25	Iowa Wesleyan University Program Center	Iowa
April 25	Blue Valley Parks and Recreation	Kansas

### May 2007

Date	Presentation/Event	State
May 1-2	Alberta High Schools	Canada
May 3-4	Alberta Health & Physical Ed. Convention	Canada
May 5	Edmonton High Schools	Canada
May 9	CDA Interiors	Washington
May 17-19	NAIA Softball National Championship	Alabama
May 22-23	NAIA Track & Field National Championship	California
May 31	Olathe School District	Kansas

For a complete *Champions of Character* schedule, visit [www.championsofcharacter.org](http://www.championsofcharacter.org).

## NAIA NEWSWORTHY

The NAIA was recently featured or recognized in The Chronicle of Higher Education and The Christian Science Monitor in March. Both pieces talked about the NAIA's commitment to character driven intercollegiate athletics and the *Champions of Character* program developed to assist in overall approach to college sports. To read the complete articles visit [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) and click on NAIA in the News.

**"You know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play."**

- Mike Singletary, NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame member

**"Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there."**

- John Wooden, Legendary UCLA and NAIA teacher and coach

## CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER PARTNERS WITH METRO SPORTS YOUTH..... IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUTH

*Champions of Character* is a proud partner of Metro Sports Youth, a division of Metro Sports - Kansas City's 24-hour all sports network, to provide exciting opportunities for youth who participate in sports to promote and reward sportsmanship and character. Metro Sports Youth hosts sport tournaments, clinics, leagues and events throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. Metro Sports Youth is committed to advancing the positive aspects of youth sports and helping young athletes reach their potential on and off the field.



*Champions of Character* is an integral part of each Metro Sports Youth event. Parents, athletes and coaches hear the *Champions of Character* message at each tournament and clinic and one participant from each team receives a *Champions of Character* award. In addition, each player receives an Athlete of Character card and participating coaches are provided with materials to assist them in teaching character.

Natalie Moultrie, Youth Sport Coordinator for Metro Sports Youth stressed the importance of involving *Champions of Character* in the youth tournaments.

"We feel it's important for *Champions of Character* to be involved in our youth events to help remind student-athletes of the responsibilities they have as a participant on and off the court. The *Champions of Character* program teaches them that their character, attitude and behavior are just as important off the court as they are on, that being a true *Champion of Character* is the type of person you are, and that determines what type of athlete you become," said Moultrie. "In this day and age it's important to stress character and behavior and how it relates to everything we do. Too often we use the sports world to excuse behaviors that we would not accept anywhere else and our kids see that too. We can teach our children a lot of valuable life lessons through sports, if we take the time to encourage them, remind them and show them how character matters. The *Champions of Character* program provides the tools to do just that."

Since January 2007, over 300 teams have participated in Metro Sports Youth tournaments and the program is growing rapidly. By partnering with Metro Sports Youth, thousands of young athletes, parents and coaches have benefited from *Champions of Character*.

## RESPONSIBILITY IS KEY TO SUCCESS IN BAND

Being part of a musical group takes practice and responsibility. Just ask Jeremy Foust, band director at Northgate Middle School in the North Kansas City School District.

"Compared to other classes, band has some unique features that require students to work together as a team," Foust said. "Students in music learn teamwork skills, leadership skills, and many other abilities that prepare them for college and successful futures.

It sounds like much more than just playing a few on an instrument - and it is.

## CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER AT THE BUFFALO FUNDS-NAIA DIVISION I MEN'S BASKETBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Over 3,300 individuals participated in a variety of *Champions of Character* activities during the 2007 Buffalo Funds-NAIA Division I Men's Basketball National Championship. Students, teachers, coaches and parents enjoyed hearing *Champions of Character* messages from national and local presenters and NAIA championship teams. Activities included team visits to 18 Kansas City area YMCA after school care sites, *Champions of Character* school field trips to the championships, *Champions of Character* high school awards and *Champions of Character* presentations to high school and youth teams. This year, 67 Kansas City area high school student-athletes were recognized with *Champions of Character* awards for consistently demonstrating the *Champions of Character* core values both on and off the court.

## PATTISON'S AWARD CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER SCHOLARSHIPS

In March, Dr. Phil and Mary Pattison, longtime NAIA supporters who have 27 years experience as an honorary coach for the Buffalo Funds-NAIA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament, presented five NAIA student-athletes with *Champions of Character* scholarships. The recipients were Ben Wallis (Park University, Mo.); Matt Autenrieth (Houston Baptist University, Texas); Justin Barnes (Faulkner, Ala.); Aaron Owens (Mountain State University, W. Va.); and Joel Houghton (Lee University, Tenn.).

"We support the *Champions of Character* scholarship program and feel privileged to get to know these fine young men," said Dr. Pattison when presenting the scholarships. "These five individuals are leaders in their communities and have an outstanding list of accomplishments outside of basketball."

## BRINGING HOME THE BUFFALO FUNDS FIVE STAR AWARD

The NAIA and *Champions of Character* founding partner Buffalo Funds present Buffalo Funds Five Star Awards for each of the NAIA's 23 championship sports. This winter the NAIA and Buffalo Funds recognized with the award the following programs:



Division I Men's Basketball | **Berry College (Ga.)**  
Division I Women's Basketball | **Oklahoma Christian University**  
Division II Men's Basketball | **Mount Vernon Nazarene University (Ohio)**  
Division II Women's Basketball | **Menlo College (Calif.)**  
Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving | **Biola University (Calif.)**  
Men's Indoor Track and Field | **Vanguard University (Calif.)**  
Women's Indoor Track and Field | **Milligan College (Tenn.)**  
Wrestling | **Jamestown College (N.D.)**

"We are extremely proud and honored to receive this award for the second year," commented Menlo College basketball head coach Caitlin Collier. "This shows that winning championships and carrying ourselves with class and dignity can go hand in hand."

For a complete list of award winners visit [www.championsofcharacter.org](http://www.championsofcharacter.org).

## TEN WAYS TO SHOW RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUR COMMUNITY

- 1. SPEAK UP** - If you see something wrong, say so.
- 2. VOLUNTEER** - Whether its working in an organized group or by yourself, make a difference.
- 3. TAKE CARE OF YOUR PROPERTY** - Ownership means responsibility.
- 4. TEACH OTHERS** - Share your knowledge and skills.
- 5. LEARN FROM OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS** - Know that there is something to learn from everyone around you.
- 6. TAKE THE INITIATIVE** - Don't wait for someone else to take charge. If you see something that needs to be done, do it.
- 7. LOOK OUT FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS** - Taking care of each other is key to being a responsible community member.
- 8. SEE THE BIG PICTURE** - Understand your place in your community, and your community's place in the world.
- 9. BE A ROLE MODEL** - Whether you realize it or not, someone looks up to you.
- 10. SAY THANK YOU** - Be grateful for your gifts and opportunities.



## THE FINISH LINE<sup>SM</sup> BUILDING AMERICA'S KIDS OF CHARACTER

The NCAA now grabs America's sports' headlines with March Madness. We're down to the Final Four and a week away from the national championship game. While the NCAA captures the attention of avid and casual basketball fans alike, another national collegiate organization is focusing significant energy on building America's *Champions of Character*. That organization is the NAIA, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Launched in 2000, the NAIA's *Champions of Character* program addresses character issues more comprehensively than any other national program for youth. Currently, the program reaches hundreds of thousands of students on nearly 300 college and university campuses in North America and extends into their surrounding communities. The *Champions of Character* program is an educational outreach initiative that emphasizes the tenets of character not only for college students, but for younger students, coaches and parents in our communities.

If championship teams are defined by the four cornerstones of: individual talent, outstanding team play, stellar defense, and never-say-die-persistence, the NAIA teaches that *Champions of Character* are defined by five core values: respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship.

For me, the NAIA's definition of integrity is the heart and provides the capstone on the FINISH LINE'S month-long focus on honesty. Integrity is expressed as: Keep commitments and conduct honest behavior.

The character mentor who wears the name of dad, mom, coach, teacher, or community leader takes intensely passionate interest in putting a youngster onto life's daily court using skills to play the game of life with one conspicuous and consistent game face: Honesty's the best policy.

It's all too easy to gloss over these words rather than digging deeply for their meaning. Is it possible that 'ol Ben, the Philadelphia Sage, understood that honesty requires confronting personal doubts, demanding one's personal game of life be played with one's limitations while giving each day's court play credible, consistent and conscientious attention to honesty's details?

The virtue-seeking Franklin never experienced throwing a round ball through a suspended basket, but he sure worked at honesty's four skills: straight-shooting words; decisive actions; truthful adjustments to mistakes; and vigilant mental preparation in readiness to shoot an honesty game winner regardless of the consequences.

I anticipate the excitement of next Monday's NCAA national basketball championship game. But I am really thrilled by the NAIA commitment to teach America's kids how to become tomorrow's *Champions of Character*.

***Russell Williams is President of Passkeys Foundation Jefferson Center for Character Education. For more information contact centerjcce@aol.com or www.passkeys.org.***