



PRESS RELEASE

Louise O'Neal Earns WBCA's Jostens–Berenson Service Award

ATLANTA, Ga. (March 10, 2004) --The Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) has named Louise O'Neal as the winner of its 2004 Jostens–Berenson Service Award, recognizing O'Neal's lifelong commitment of service to the game of women's basketball.

"Louise is a great pioneer of the game and we are happy to present her with such a prestigious honor," said WBCA CEO, Beth Bass. "She certainly deserves to have her name mentioned in the same breath as past recipients of this award."

O'Neal is the Athletic Director of Wellesley College and has been a longstanding mentor and influential leader in women's athletics. O'Neal has served on the NCAA Management Council, as well as the U.S. Olympic Games Selection Committee from 1976–1980. For her many years of service, in 1988, she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

"Jostens would like to congratulate Louise O'Neal on being selected as the 2004 Jostens–Berenson Service Award winner", said Lavisie Smith, Jostens' Sports Sales Manager. "Through O'Neal's ongoing service to women's athletics, she has created opportunities for athletes, coaches and administrators dedicated to the improvement of women's athletics."

For 14 years, O'Neal served as head women's basketball coach at Southern Connecticut University, while also spending three years at the helm of Yale University where her team won the Ivy League Championship in her last season at the school. Not only a leader in the basketball community, O'Neal was also a coach of volleyball and badminton for eight years.

O'Neal will be formally recognized during the WBCA's National Convention at the State Farm Wade Trophy and State Farm/WBCA Players of the Year Luncheon, presented by Jostens on Sunday, April 4, 2004 at 12:30 p.m. at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The luncheon is a program of the 2004 WBCA National Convention, held in conjunction with the NCAA Division I Women's Final Four in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The award, sponsored by Jostens, is named in honor of the late Senda Berenson, who in her role as a physical education instructor at Smith College in Northampton, Mass., introduced "basketball" to her female gym students in 1892. This introduction marked the birth of the women's game, which occurred the year following basketball's invention by Dr. James Naismith in Springfield, Mass.

O'Neal joins a distinguished group of recipients which includes: Dr. Charlotte West, Southern Illinois University (2003); Dr. Jill Hutchison, Illinois State University (2002); Bob Spencer, Fresno State (2001); the late Dr. Brenda Reillye, Central Connecticut State University (2000); Betty Wiseman, Belmont University (1999); Dr. Rose Marie Battaglia (1998); Lea Plarski, Saint Louis Community College (1997); Carole Baumgarten (1996); Billie Moore, California State – Fullerton (1995); Marcy Weston, Central Michigan University (1994); Patsy Neal (1993); Harvey Redin, Wayland Baptist University (1992); Alberta Lee Cox (1991); Bertha Frank Teague (1990); Pat Summitt, University of Tennessee (1989); Hunter Low, Eastman Kodak Company (1988); Cathy Rush, Immaculata College (1987); Mildred Barnes, Central Missouri State University (1986); the late Carol Eckman, Lock Haven University (1985); and the late Margaret Wade, Delta State University (1984).

Founded in 1981, the WBCA promotes women's basketball by unifying coaches at all levels to develop a reputable identity for the sport and to foster and promote the development of the game in all of its aspects as an amateur sport for women and girls. For more information about the WBCA, please visit WBCA.org.