



PRESS RELEASE

Former Southern Miss coach Kay James receives WBCA's Jostens–Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award

ATLANTA (March 8, 2012) – Kay James, formerly the head coach at University of Southern Mississippi, will receive the 2012 Jostens–Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her lifelong commitment of service to women's basketball, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) announced today.

"This award represents someone who has dedicated their life to elevating the game of women's basketball, and Kay James is a prime example of someone who has changed the game for the better," said WBCA CEO Beth Bass. "It is my pleasure to present the Jostens–Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award to Kay James."

James led the Southern Mississippi women's basketball program for 22 years. During that time, James posted 403 wins, making her the winningest coach in the program's history. With a career coaching mark of 488–244, James joined an elite club of 46 coaches with more than 400 victories and is among the top 25 in Division I in all-time wins, seasons coached and games coached. Adding to her impressive resume is four-time conference coach of the year award, 10 postseason appearances and a position as an assistant with USA Basketball for several years.

In 1998, James was honored by the WBCA with the Carol Eckman award. As one of only five to receive both awards, James joins the late Kay Yow, Jill Hutchinson, Marsha Sharp and Sue Gunter as an influential group of women's basketball advocates.

"Jostens is honored to recognize Kay James with the Jostens–Berenson Lifetime Achievement Award for her commitment to Southern Mississippi, her players and women's basketball," said Chris Poitras, director, Sports Sales and Marketing, Jostens. "We are excited to help celebrate Coach James' outstanding coaching career and the positive impact she has had on women's basketball and sports."

James will be formally recognized during the WBCA Awards Show, which will be held at 5 p.m. MT Monday, April 2, in the Plaza Ballroom Sheraton Downtown Denver. This event is part of the WBCA National Convention and is held in conjunction with the NCAA® Women's Final Four®.

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.

James joins a distinguished group of recipients which includes: Donna Wise, Campbellsville University (2011); Marsha Sharp (2010); the late Kay Yow (2009); Cherri Mankenberg (2008); Brenda Byrd (2007); the late Sue Gunter, Louisiana State University (2006); Charles Heatly, Lindsay High School (2005); Louise O'Neal, Wellesley College (2004); Dr. Charlotte West, Southern Illinois University (2003); Dr. Jill Hutchison, Illinois State University (2002); Bob Spencer, Fresno State (2001); the late Dr. Brenda Reilly, 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); Harley 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).

About Jostens:

Minneapolis-based Jostens is a provider of products, programs and services that help people tell their stories, celebrate important traditions and recognize achievements. The company's products include school yearbooks and other memory book products, scholastic products such as class rings and graduation products, and products for athletic champions and their fans. Jostens is a subsidiary of Visant Corporation, a marketing and publishing services enterprise servicing the school affinity, direct marketing, fragrance and cosmetics sampling and educational and trade publishing segments.

About the WBCA:

Founded in 1981, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association 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 as a sport for women and girls. The WBCA is pleased to join the women's sports community in commemorating the 40th anniversary of Title IX, which was passed by Congress on June 23, 1972, and provides females with equal opportunities in athletics in the U.S. For more information on the WBCA, please visit wbca.org.