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GWSHOF TO INDUCT FIVE GREATS IN CLASS OF '27

WILMINGTON, North Carolina – The Greater Wilmington Sports Hall of Fame will recognize five individuals during the organization's induction weekend on May 14-16, 2027.

The honorees feature standouts from the sports of basketball, boxing, men's golf, women's golf and officiating. Brett Blizzard (basketball), Bruce Cavenaugh (baseball), Johnnie Forte (officiating), Donnell Holmes (boxing) and Michelle Jarman (women's golf) will join the pantheon of Wilmington sports greats.

"We're very excited to honor these five individuals for their contributions to the Wilmington sports community," said Louise McColl, chairperson of the GWSHOF. "It's extremely difficult to select the finalists from so many deserving nominees, and this class is truly exceptional. We hope everyone in the community will help us honor these deserving individuals and their families during this special weekend in May."

The GWSHOF was founded in 2005 under the direction of Hall of Fame Coach and Administrator Bill Dooley. This year marks the group's 20th induction and a total of 84 individuals from various sports or fields have been recognized through the years.

Plans for the 2027 induction weekend are set. An introductory luncheon will be conducted on Friday, May 14, 2027, at the Wilmington Convention Center followed by the Joe Miller Memorial Golf Tournament at the Wilmington Municipal Course on Saturday, May 15, 2027. The weekend reaches a crescendo with the banquet and formal induction ceremony on Sunday, May 16, 2027, at the convention center.

Brett Blizzard

Brett Blizzard's unique name grabbed the attention of the college basketball world when the sharpshooting guard was carving out a successful college career at UNCW in the early

2000's. And what he accomplished during his four-year run with the Seahawks lived up to that billing.

The Tallahassee, Fla., native starred for the Seahawks from 1999-2003 , starting all 125 games and leaving with a basket full of school records unmatched by any player in the school's history. He remains the Seahawks' all-time scoring leader with more than 2,000 points and ranks among the top performers in several other statistical categories, including first in steals and minutes played.

A durable, all-around performer with tremendous basketball instincts, he closed out his career with 2,144 points, 493 rebounds and 360 assists, averaging double figures in each of his four seasons for Head Coach Jerry Wainwright.

Blizzard, now 46, brought out the best in his teammates. With the Floridian leading the way, the Seahawks captured their first CAA championship in his freshman season in 2000 and landed two more NCAA berths in 2002 and 2003. Coupled with an NIT bid in 2001, the Seahawks reached the postseason in each of his four years in the program.

Blizzard is considered one of the top performers in CAA history. He is the only player in the league to earn First-Team All-CAA and All-CAA Tournament honors four straight years. Moreover, he was named CAA Player of the Year in 2002 and 2003 and earned CAA Tournament MVP honors in 2000, 2002 and 2003.

Competing in Italy with dual citizenship, he went on to enjoy a successful 16-year professional career, playing for eight teams. he sparked Jesi to the Italian League Championship in 2004 and Virtus Bologna to the Euro Challenge Cup crown in 2008. He was named the best guard in Casale Menferrato team history.

Before arriving in Wilmington, Blizzard was a standout for his father, Al, at Florida High School from 1995-99. He became the all-time leading scorer for the Seminoles, had his jersey retired and was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame.

Blizzard earned his Bachelor's Degree in Communications in 1999. His jersey was retired at UNCW on Feb. 2, 2005, and he was inducted into the UNCW Athletic Hall of Fame in 2020.

Bruce Cavenaugh

A hard-hitting catcher who could also blaze on the basepaths, Bruce Cavenaugh was a unique blend of speed and power during his record-setting high school and collegiate baseball careers at New Hanover High School and UNCW.

A native of Wilmington, Cavenaugh captured All-State honors at New Hanover High School, where he graduated in 1969. He also earned All-State accolades for American Legion Post 10 in 1969 and 1970, batting cleanup and leading the team in batting average and home runs.

Cavenaugh slugged a grand slam in the bottom of the 13th inning to help send Post 10 to the 1970 World Series, and helped the Wilmington team finish fifth in the nation from his catcher position.

At UNCW, Cavenaugh was a four-year starter from 1970-73 and belted 18 home runs with 74 RBIs during his four-year career. He also had 37 stolen bases and scored 125 runs in his four seasons for the Seahawks.

Cavenaugh was a three-time NAIA District 28 selection and enjoyed his finest season in 1971 when he batted .314 with six doubles, four triples and six home runs. Cavenaugh completed his career with the team as the program's all-time home run and stolen base leader.

Following his graduation from UNCW in 1973, Cavenaugh became a successful area businessman and supported the school's athletic department with several facility improvements. He was inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2010.

Cavenaugh served as president of the Cape Fear Sales & Marketing Executives and as a member and officer in the Cape Fear Rotary, he helped raise more than $1.5 million for local charities by donating new cars for raffles.

Johnnie Forte

A talented football player in college, Johnnie Forte has made his mark on the sport in another way since his college days – as a highly-respected college and professional official with an acute knowledge of the game and superior judgement.

Forte, a native of Goldsboro, N.C., played football and ran track at Eastern Wayne High School before graduating in 1980. He went on to star as a defensive end at N.C. Central and lettered in football for the Eagles, graduating in 1984.

Forte has officiated on the high school, college and professional levels over the last 35 years. He began officiating Coastal Pop Warner football in 1993 and his career has skyrocketed, calling numerous conference and championship games. He begins his 27th year of officiating NCAA Division I football this fall.

Forte has worked football games in the Atlantic Coast Conference, Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and Conference USA. He has been selected to officiate the Music City Bowl

Emerald Bowl, MPC Bowl, Outback Bowl, Cactus Bowl, Alamo Bowl, Rose Bowl, Cotton Bowl and Liberty Bowl.

On Jan. 10, 2022, he was named to the crew for the College Football Playoff National Championship Game between Alabama and Georgia at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

More recently, on Dec. 30, 2025, he worked the NCAA semifinal game between TCU and Southern Cal at the Valero Alamo Bowl in San Antonio, Texas.

On the professional level, Forte called games in the United Football League for four years and has worked NFL Europe games.

Locally, he continues to work middle school and high school football and basketball games. He is a member of the Eastern Basketball Officials Association.

Donnell Holmes

Donnell Holmes grew up in rural Pender County, honed his craft under the wings of legendary trainer Sherriedale Morgan and rose to the highest level of boxing during an impressive amateur and professional career in the ring.

Holmes fashioned an amateur record of 73-13 with 61 knockouts before celebrating his birthday by turning professional on Jan. 3, 2003. He knocked out Dwayne Harrington in the first round in his professional debut at the Hilton Hotel in Wilmington.

A 1991 graduate of Pender High School, Holmes learned the intricacies of the sport under Morgan, a 2010 inductee into the GWSHOF, and racked up numerous honors during his amateur career.

In 1993, Holmes was the North Carolina Golden Gloves Champion, ABF Champion and Azaela Festival champion. He added the N.C. State ABF Championship in 1995 and was the Eastern Olympic Trials Silver Medalist in 1996. In addition, Holmes was a seven-time Azalea Festival champion (1993-99)

Holmes was a member of the U.S. World Class Elite Boxing Team in 1997 and was the No. 1 ranked light heavyweight in the nation. He was the Golden Gloves Regional Champion and was Bronze Medalist at the U.S. National Championship. He also won gold in a USA Vs. Russian dual match.

In 1998, Holmes repeated as North Carolina Golden Gloves Champion and Regional ABF Champion. He was also the U.S. Regional Golden Gloves Champion.

Holmes boxed under the nickname “The Real Touch of Sleep” during his professional career as a heavyweight from 2003-2012. The Ivanhoe, N.C., product’s quick hands and relentless style served as a stark wake-up call for his opponents.

After making his pro debut in 2003, Holmes continued to improve, going a perfect 7-0 in 2004 and following that with a 21-0 record – all by knockout. In 2005, Holmes went 21-0 and signed on with boxing promoting icon Don King. Holmes was the WBF American Champion and added a 28-0 record in 2008 with 27 KO’s en route to another title.

He fought Brian Minto for the interim WBO NABO Heavyweight title and Minto's WBA Fedecentro Heavyweight Title on Aug. 14, 2009.

Holmes amassed a 34-2 record with 29 KO’s as a professional. In his last fight, he battled Maurice Winslow on Aug. 4, 2012, in Washington, DC.

Holmes was inducted into the Carolina Boxing Hall of Fame in 2018 and Pender High School Hall of Fame in 2023.

Michelle Jarman

In line with her lifelong passion for finance, women’s golf standout Michelle Jarman put up some impressive numbers during her career on the links.

The Wilmington native and John T. Hoggard High School graduate was a four-time All-Conference performer for UNCW from 2002-06, leading the team to a pair of conference titles and three NCAA East Regional appearances. She also registered a top-20 finish as an individual at the 2006 NCAA Regionals.

Jarman racked up numerous statistical achievements for the Seahawks. She finished with a 76.46 career scoring average over 119 rounds, with five individual tournament victories. She powered the Seahawks to seven tournament crowns.

Jarman was tabbed the 2005 and 2006 CAA Women's Golf Scholar Athlete of the Year and was named the 2005 Coastal Athletic Association Female Scholar Athlete of the Year. She was the recipient of the Thomas V. Moseley Award for the 2005-06 season as the school's season-ending athletic awards banquet.

Jarman is the only player in the program's history to qualify for eight USGA Championships, the U.S. Girls Junior, the U.S. Women's Open (2006), the U.S. Women's Amateur (2005 and 2006) and the U.S. Women's Mid-Am. She went on to play four years on the LPGA's Duramed Futures Tour from 2008-11.

In the classroom, Jarman's scorecard was nearly perfect. A four-time Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA) Scholar and NGCA All-American Scholar, she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 3.993 GPA and passed the CPA exam on her initial try.

In high school, Jarman was named JTHS Team MVP four times and Conference Player of the Year.

Jarman captured the 2001North Carolina Junior Championship and won the inaugural Carolinas Women's Mid-Amateur championship in 2023 at The Patriot Golf Course at Grand Harbor in Greenwood County, S.C. She also made the cut at the USGA Women's Mid-Amateur in 2018, 2019, 2023 and 2024.

Jarman earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration/Finance in 2006 and completed her Master of Science in Accounting at UNCW in 2007.

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