

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Orange Bowl Committee  
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## ***NIU'S WILLIAM LEE NOMINATED FOR CAPITAL ONE ORANGE BOWL-FWAA COURAGE AWARD***

DALLAS (FWAA) – Northern Illinois' William Lee is this week's nominee for the **2017 Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award**.

Harris, a redshirt senior defensive tackle, blocked a kick before halftime of the Huskies' 21-17 upset win Saturday at Nebraska. Harris has persevered through homelessness and the murder of his sister to become a big contributor to NIU's defense.



Photo credit: Scott Walstrom, NIU Photography.

"We were in and out of shelters until I was in seventh grade," Lee told the Chicago Tribune in 2016, "We'd go back and forth or stay with family members until they kicked us out. Throughout that time in my life, I never had a stable home."

Stability arrived in high school, when Lee moved in with his stepfather in Indianapolis and started playing football. In June of 2016, Lee's 20-year-old sister, Netria Lyons, was murdered in her Indianapolis apartment.

Lee has been named to the Mid-American Conference's all-academic team three times. He has played in all 33 games since his redshirt freshman year, tallying 68 tackles, 4.5 sacks, three quarterback hurries, two blocked kicks and one forced fumble.

The Courage Award was first presented by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA) in 2002. A select group of writers from the FWAA vote on the winner each year. The requirements for nomination include displaying courage on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through hardship. The winner of the award will be included in festivities during Capital One Orange Bowl week and receive his trophy at an on-field presentation.

Previous winners of the Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award are Pittsburgh running back James Conner (2016), Miami offensive lineman Hunter Knighton (2015), Duke offensive lineman Laken Tomlinson (2014), San Jose State defensive lineman Anthony Larceval (2013), Clemson wide receiver

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Daniel Rodriguez (2012), Michigan State offensive lineman Arthur Ray Jr. (2011), Rutgers defensive tackle Eric LeGrand (2010), the University of Connecticut football team (2009), Tulsa's Wilson Holloway (2008), Navy's Zerbini Singleton (2007), Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey (2006), the Tulane football team (2005), Memphis' Haracio Colen (2004), San Jose State's Neil Parry (2003) and Toledo's William Bratton (2002).

### **About the Orange Bowl**

The Orange Bowl is a 360-member, primarily-volunteer non-profit sports organization that promotes and serves the South Florida community. With its primary mission since being created in 1935 to bring tourism to South Florida through an annual football game and events, it has also maintained a legacy of charitable contributions and community outreach. Orange Bowl community outreach efforts are comprised of four pillars: youth sports, fundraising and community events, academic programs and scholarships, and legacy gifts. The Orange Bowl features a year-round schedule of events culminating with the Capital One Orange Bowl on December 30, 2017. For more information on the 2017-18 Orange Bowl events, including promotional and volunteer opportunities through the Ambassador Program presented by Panera Bread, log on to [orangebowl.org](http://orangebowl.org). Follow Orange Bowl: @OrangeBowl, Facebook and Instagram.

### **About the FWAA**

Founded in 1941, the Football Writers Association of America consists of 1,400 men and women who cover college football. The membership includes journalists, broadcasters and publicists, as well as key executives in all the areas that involve the game. The FWAA works to govern areas that include game-day operations, major awards and its annual All-America team. For more information about the FWAA and its award programs, contact Steve Richardson at [tiger@fwaa.com](mailto:tiger@fwaa.com).

### **2017 Capital One Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees**

- Sept. 13: J-Shun Harris II, Indiana | [High-resolution headshot](#)

**Social Media Link:** <http://bit.ly/2fBHufW>

**\*Editor's Note: High resolution images available upon request**

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