

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Orange Bowl Committee
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UAB'S FOOTBALL PROGRAM NOMINATED FOR CAPITAL ONE ORANGE BOWL-FWAA COURAGE AWARD

DALLAS (FWAA) –The University of Alabama at Birmingham football program is this week's nominee for the 2017 Capital One Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award.



Discontinued after the 2014 season because of an announced financial deficit the sport was running in the athletic program, the UAB football team did not play during the 2015 and 2016 seasons. But after further, more encouraging feasibility studies and a re-commitment to football, it was announced in July 2015 that the UAB football program would resume in 2017 with the same head coach, Bill Clark.

After the two-year hiatus, the Blazers returned to the field this season and through nine games are bowl-eligible with a 6-3 record following a victory over Rice last Saturday. Clark never lost the courage, grit and determination to rebuild the program and recruit players all over the country, including some who had formerly played there.

"I could not be more proud for these guys, for our fans, for our community, for our city," UAB head coach Bill Clark told reporters after the victory over Rice. "We had another really good crowd today and it doesn't get much better than this right now. We are by no means satisfied. We have three more to go with a tough road test next weekend against UTSA. But, we are going to try and enjoy this one for 24 hours."

"I told them we're going to have a chance to experience some things that you'll never forget," Clark added Monday. "I had a guy tell me that that was one of the top-five experiences in his life, and this was one of our foundation members. To get to see how much work has gone into this opportunity and to see them get to fulfill that, I don't know if it gets much better than that. To know that if you work hard, you do these things we ask you to do and here's what happens and it's truly a team thing. This is what this is all about."

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 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 Zerbin 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. Follow Orange Bowl: @OrangeBowl, Facebook and Instagram.

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.

2017 Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees

- Sept. 13: J-Shun Harris II, Indiana
- Sept. 20: William Lee, Northern Illinois
- Sept. 27: Cristian Garcia, Florida
- Oct. 4: D'Cota Dixon, Wisconsin
- Oct. 11: Jake Olson, USC
- Oct. 18: Darian Roseboro, NC State
- Oct. 25: Sean Savoy, Virginia Tech
- Nov. 1: Courtney Love, Kentucky

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