

# Katha Quinn Award honors ACC's Morrison

By **LENOX RAWLINGS**

In the weeks preceding the ACC tournament, Brian Morrison can get the strangest calls.

He's the gatekeeper, the associate commissioner for basketball media relations who approves or denies credentials requests.

Several years ago, Morrison listened to a reporter from the student newspaper at Montreal's McGill University explain how he would be traveling nearby and wanted to cover the tournament. Morrison deduced that the young journalist planned to drop in during a spring break trip to Florida and turned him down.

The writer pleaded passionately, citing the appeal of American sports to his audience. That didn't work, so he resorted to the final argument: "Mr. Morrison, in the name



*Brian Morrison*

of furthering Canadian-American relations, would you please reconsider?"

Morrison said no, diplomatically.

Today, he laughs. Typical of his nature, Morrison suspects that, given another shot, he just might admit the reporter for the potential serendipity.

His willingness to consider – or reconsider – every facet of an issue and his easily accessible friendliness are merely two reasons why the USBWA named Morrison the 2013-14 recipient of the Katha Quinn Award for service to members, named for the St. John's sports information director who died from liver cancer at 35, in 1989.

The selection surprised Morrison. "I'm not into public stuff," he said. "I'd rather be behind the scenes. But it is an honor. It really is an honor."

Morrison served as an ACC intern for the legendary

Marvin "Skeeter" Francis in 1980-81, returned as Francis' first full-time assistant in 1985 and became the director when Francis retired in 1990. The ACC has gone through four expansions during his tenure, growing from eight schools in four contiguous states to 15 schools spread from the Great Lakes to Miami Beach.

Dick Weiss, who belongs to the USBWA and football writers' halls of fame, said that Morrison's excitement about sharing information makes him special.

"He has an extraordinary knowledge of the league's history and tradition and an extensive knowledge of the current coaches and players," Weiss said. "Brian always thinks one step ahead and has the type of perspective that is desperately needed but rarely found in the college game today. He is old school and has forged a strong personal relationship with the younger writers in the new media. He has a great relationship with every coach and has been fair and objective when dealing with the national media

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# Jou, Peters, Moore deemed year's Most Courageous

By **ED GRANEY**

The process was difficult this year, filled with capable candidates whose acts of courage help define all that is right with college basketball.

Never have those voting remembered so many deserving folks.

Which makes the stories of those who have been named winners of the USBWA Most Courageous Awards for 2013 all the more impressive and inspiring.

Here are those special people, to be honored at their respective Final Fours or during a home game at their university.

Men's winners ...

Co-Most Courageous: Dau Jok, Pennsylvania.

He is an ideologist, a human-rights activist, the son of a Sudanese army general who was murdered when Dau was just 6.

Dau is a senior guard now, having established three years ago a foundation aimed at educating the children of Sudan through sports.

In winning a Kathryn Wasserman Davis 100 Projects for Peace award and the \$10,000 grant that came with it, Dau was able to begin helping those back home fight poverty and violence in post-conflict Southern Sudan. His ultimate goal: Do the same for those across the world, despite any potential risk that might come with such an endeavor.

"I am optimistic because I think I am blessed with some of the resources at my disposal, whether it be human connection, people willing to help or having the solid foundation of people supporting me," Dau told the *Penn Courier* in 2011. "I think motivation, passion, (is) contagious.



*Dak Jou*

... I have 1,000 reasons to smile rather than 100 reasons to be angry, so I have to keep that in perspective."

Co-Most Courageous: Dan Peters, Akron.

Five percent to live. Those are the odds that have been handed Peters, the Director of Operations for the Zips and a 30-year veteran of the coaching profession.

Peters underwent surgery in December for a cancerous tumor found in his pancreas, but doctors were unable to remove it. Now, it seems as though the entire college landscape has rallied around him in hoping and praying for his survival.

Schools from Arizona to Bowling Green, from Ball State to Northern Illinois, from Ohio State to Toledo, from Delta State to Eastern Michigan, and several in between have shown their support for Peters by wearing pins or patches.

"Whatever happens is OK," the 59-year old Peters told the *Akron Beacon Journal*. "I believe God has always



*Dan Peters*



*Kirsten Moore*

taken care of me. I'm in his hands. As much as I would like to live, that may not be the option. I have no regrets. I'm going to try as hard as I can to fight this."

Women's winner ...

Kirsten Moore, Westmont College.

The journey was seemingly perfect for Moore.

Happily married. Coaching another successful team. Eight months pregnant.

But life took one of its tragic and heartbreaking turns for Moore in May 2012, when her husband died of a pulmonary embolism following colon surgery. Alex Moore was 31. Seven weeks later, a baby girl was born.

Her name: Alexis.

Kirsten feared what might happen if she didn't go on. For herself. Her child. Her team. So she continued to coach and the Warriors rallied around her, winning an NAIA women's national championship for the 2012-13 season.

Tucked away in the picturesque hills of Santa Barbara and 90 minutes from Los Angeles, Westmont College has a head coach in Moore who has won nearly 70 percent of her games over nine seasons, including a 30-4 record during that memorable and yet devastating championship season.

"It's not just what I do, but who I am and how I can do some good in the world," Moore told a local television reporter. "I didn't care what the scoreboard said at the end of the (national championship). We were already champions. We had overcome. What I felt when we won was ... just a lot of love.

"Extraordinary love can accomplish extraordinary things."

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# USBWA will be at center again of Oklahoma City gala

One of the highlights each year for the USBWA is to honor the players and coaches who make college basketball the great game that it is.

For the second year in a row, the USBWA will be part of a college basketball awards dinner in Oklahoma City where the association’s player, coach and freshman of the year will be presented with their awards.

Referred to as the Devon Energy College Basketball Awards Gala, the dinner will take place a week after the Final Four on Monday, April 14, at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

A crowd in excess of 800 people is expected to attend the gala.

USBWA President Kirk Wessler will be on hand to present the Oscar Robertson Trophy to the national player of the year and the Henry Iba Award to the national coach of the year.

The Wayman Tisdale Freshman of the Year will also be presented at the gala, along with a Humanitarian Award to Kansas coach Bill Self.

Previous winners of the award include Michigan State coach Tom Izzo, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski and broadcaster Dick Vitale.

Fran Fraschilla, who does a terrific job as color analyst on ESPN telecasts, will serve as emcee for the dinner.

Proceeds from the gala benefit the USBWA’s scholarship fund and the Wayman Tisdale Foundation to provide opportunities in sports for youth in the Oklahoma City area.

The USBWA’s Oscar Robertson Trophy is one of several player-of-the-year awards in college basketball, the other prominent ones being the Wooden, the Naismith, the Rupp and the Associated Press.

But the Oscar Robertson Trophy is the only award named after a player and whose namesake is living. The USBWA began selecting a player of the year in 1958-59, with Oscar being the first recipient. Today, it is the nation’s oldest player of the year award.

The USBWA renamed its award in 1998 after Oscar, considered by many to be the greatest player ever in college basketball.

To help publicize the award, the USBWA will hold a news conference the day before the national semifinals in Dallas to announce this year’s player of the year, with Oscar himself participating in the announcement.

The Iba Award is named for legendary coach Henry Iba, who led Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State) to national championships in 1945 and 1946 and an Olympic gold medal in 1964.

The Wayman Tisdale freshman of the year award honors the late Oklahoma and NBA great who was a three-time USBWA all-American. Tisdale died in 2009 following a courageous battle with cancer.

**USBWA SCHOLARSHIP.** Applications are now being accepted for the USBWA college scholarship that

Joe Mitch  
USBWA  
Executive Director



is awarded to a son or daughter of a USBWA member.

The scholarship is a \$1,000 annual grant for four years and is awarded to a USBWA member’s son or daughter entering college as a freshman this fall or is currently enrolled in a four-year institution.

The recipient of the scholarship will continue to receive \$1,000 each year he or she remains in college as an undergraduate student (maximum of four years) and takes a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester.

Recipients must demonstrate academic excellence and show achievement in citizenship and community service.

When applying, applicants must have a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.00 in high school or college.

Students wishing to apply for the scholarship can go to the USBWA website at [www.usbwa.com](http://www.usbwa.com) for an application.

**RECORD NUMBERS.** The USBWA reached its highest membership totals ever this year with 979 members.

**SPORTSWRITING SEMINAR.** Past president Malcolm Moran is working with SMU’s Student Media Company to help spread the word to college and high school students in the Dallas area about the USBWA’s annual sportswriting seminar at this year’s Final Four.

The seminar, featuring members of the USBWA talking about issues and careers in the sportswriting profession, will be held on Friday, April 4, in the interview room at AT&T Stadium, starting at 9 a.m. Moran, director of the National Sports Journalism Center at Indiana University and a former sportswriter for the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *USA Today*, will serve as moderator for the seminar.

The NCAA provides credentials to the students for practices and press conferences on Friday.

**NCAA FINAL FOUR SCHEDULES.** The USBWA will present the Katha Quinn, Rising Star and men’s Most Courageous Awards and induct three new members into the association’s Hall of Fame at the USBWA’s annual honors breakfast at this year’s men’s Final Four in Dallas. The breakfast and presentation of the awards will be held at the Omni Hotel in downtown Dallas on Monday, April 7, beginning at 9 a.m., and will be followed by a business meeting.

The USBWA’s women’s player and coach of the year and the Pat Summitt Most Courageous Award winner, named in honor of the former Tennessee coach, will be honored at the women’s Final Four in Nashville, Tenn., on Sunday, April 6, at the Bridgestone Arena.



## We can't cover games that we can't even see

The photo was appalling. Shot from the front row of the press section in one college arena, the view of the action on the basketball court was obliterated by students doing what they're supposed to do, jumping up and down as they cheered the home team. Sadly, as a result, the reporters in the front row were unable to do their jobs the way their bosses and readers expect them to.

The photo (above) arrived with a plea for help from the reporter who sent it. I'll not call out the host university here because, frankly, it's not the only offender. And the SID at the school thanked me for the letter of protest from USBWA, acknowledging that his office is "embarrassed" by the situation.

Well, that's a start. But we need follow-through and a strong finish. We need embarrassment to fuel conviction and action.

So this is a challenge to our members who are SIDs. The basketball writers of the USBWA need you to stand up and fight for us. The primary goal of the USBWA has been simply stated since its founding in 1956: "To serve the interests of journalists who cover college basketball." The flat truth is these ridiculous seating arrangements don't do that.

Look, we get it. Your first obligation is to the university that pays your salary. We understand (even if we lament) the pressures to create more "premium" seating for fans who can maximize revenues. And the best atmosphere is one with a large and lively student section.

But SIDs also are liaisons between the media and the teams. That means advocating for reasonable working conditions, which include unobstructed views of the live action on the court.

All of you know this. Some of you might feel powerless to stand up to your bosses, but you're not. You don't have to wage that battle alone. As a member of this organization, you have our support. Ask for it. Please.

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Our Online Credentialing Task Force is submitting a proposal to the USBWA Board of Directors that is de-

signed to help school and conference media directors sort out the riff from the raff, so to speak.

If approved, the guidelines would be used to determine whether an online entity meets accepted standards of professionalism and ethics in journalism, among other factors. USBWA would grant approval – or not – to online organizations that cover college basketball and make its "approved" list available to school and conference SIDs.

The schools and leagues would retain their right to grant or refuse credentials to any organization. Our list

**Kirk Wessler**  
**Peoria Journal Star**  
**President**



would simply be an additional tool to help them determine an applicant's legitimacy.

More details to come.

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This is my last column as USBWA president. Even with the stress of some weighty issues – most notably the battle with the NCAA over tournament seating – it was my pleasure to serve you as an officer these past four seasons.

Special thanks to Board member Chris DiSano for heading up the Online Credentialing Task Force and bringing what seemed a pipe dream to reality. Thank you to past presidents Bryan Burwell, Lenox Rawlings and especially John Akers for all you did to prepare me for this year. Thanks to fellow officers Frank Burlison, Ed Graney (who stepped in when Frank felt compelled to resign) and Pat Forde. To Dana O'Neil, thank you for your level head, sound advice and humor – and good luck.

Finally, thank you to our executive director, Joe Mitch. You've been a true friend for 35 years. I don't know how you do it.

What next? Oh, yeah. Peace. Out.

## Brian Morrison

*CONTINUED from Page 1*

throughout a messy realignment."

Morrison, 60, was born at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, but lived there only six weeks. His father, Marvis, was a fighter pilot who flew missions over Europe and North Africa during World War II and rose to the rank of colonel. The family moved frequently – bare-footed school years in Hawaii top the list – and wound up in Alexandria, Va., after Morrison's father took a Pentagon position.

Morrison graduated from Mount Vernon High and Catawba College in Salisbury, N.C., where he met his wife, Sue Stebbins, the daughter of a Navy veteran who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. As an undergraduate, Morrison coached the seven-member women's basketball team to the 1974 state AIAW championship over Duke and N.C. State, winning four games in 48 hours, and served as assistant to men's coach Sam Moir during two straight trips to the NAIA national tournament in Kansas City. He worked briefly in the music business, earned a master's degree in sports administration from Western Illinois and returned to Catawba as associate athletics director and sports information director. Morrison was soon promoted to interim athletics director, a three-year run that ended when he became SID at the University of California, San Diego.

A year later, ACC Commissioner Bob James called. "Come home, son," James said.

Morrison eventually inherited many of Francis' duties. The most unconventional: directing the league's August bus tour of every campus, which sometimes involved getting unruly football reporters to follow a precise itinerary.

Caulton Tudor is a longtime newspaper columnist from Raleigh, a USBWA Hall-of-Famer who now writes for WRAL.com. He was a perennial passenger.

"I remember the first time BriMo was fully in charge of the famous ACC football tour bus," Tudor said. "My good friend, the late Bill Brill, predicted an 'early round elimination' that would send BriMo limping home to Greensboro and put Skeeter back in the captain's chair. BriMo breezed through with nary a hitch."

Tudor insists that Morrison performed the impossible by successfully following Francis.

"Brian has that rare knack for maintaining relationships and friendships with the broadest range of media types in written, spoken and televised history," Tudor said. "He's never failed to be totally professional and fair with some of the league's toughest critics. That takes commitment to task – and particularly so when some larger egos on both sides of the divide are apt to get bruised."

This time of year, Morrison can't avoid bruising the egos of a few unsuccessful credentials applicants. Have you heard the one about the Georgia radio station that requested six photo passes?

## BC's Kelley dies

Dick Kelley, a longtime assistant athletic director for media relations at Boston College, passed away on Feb. 13 from a three-year battle with ALS. He was 48.

Kelley, called the "heart of Boston College athletics," by *Sports Illustrated's* Pete Thamel, was honored with the USBWA's Most Courageous Award before last season's Virginia game on March 3. According to Thamel, who presented the award, Kelley's 90-second standing ovation ranks among the longest in BC's Conte Forum history.

Kelley was a Boston College graduate in 1987 and joined the sports information department in 1991.

# ESPN.com's Brennan wins Rising Star award

Before Eamonn Brennan entered into the blogosphere for the ride of his life, there was a USBWA-related event in 2006 that convinced him that becoming a sportswriter was in fact a journey that he wanted to take.

Back then, Brennan was an Indiana University student who was attending the USBWA's "Fullcourt Press," an event held for college students in Bloomington, Ind., just prior to that Final Four. Brennan won a writing contest that allowed him to attend the Florida-UCLA championship game held at the Final Four in Indianapolis.

Brennan was also at something of a personal crossroads. Other students at the *Indiana Daily Student* were having difficulty finding jobs. Entering law school was looking like a legitimate alternative option.

"Winning that award was a huge affirmation," Brennan recalled. "But it was also that weekend that Mike DeCourcy and Bob Ryan and a handful of other legendary USBWA writers were in Indy for a panel discussion. I hung out afterward. I remember Bob Ryan talking about how important it is to love the game and how quickly people get cynical and it can become just a job. And that if you don't love it, you shouldn't do it.

"And I loved it. I really did. I loved writing about sports and everything around it, and I thought hearing that, as much as winning any award, was my affirmation



Eamonn Brennan

to follow through and really try to make it work."

Now the 28-year-old Brennan has another USBWA honor coming his way – the Rising Star award, voted on by the four previous winners – given annually to a member who is under 30 and has exhibited excellence in covering college basketball.

Brennan forged a non-traditional path to a career at ESPN.com that began in 2009.

After taking a class on Internet awareness, Brennan and a classmate created a blogsite that turned into jobs at AOL, Yahoo! and – totally out of the blue

as a 24-year-old – ESPN.com.

Brennan, who admits that he wasn't much of a networker, acknowledges that this was much different from the usual – landing an internship at a newspaper, hoping to get a prep beat that leads to something bigger.

"I kind of got to short-circuit that process," Brennan said. "I don't think that would have been possible even 10 years ago. I don't think I was so brilliant that, a hundred years ago, I would have been given a column. I don't think that's true at all.

"Being out front (of college basketball blogs) was more about luck than any ingenuity on my part. It certainly helped."

Brennan said he could have been happy to be strictly a fulltime blogger at ESPN.com.

But his sports editor, Brett Edgerton, immediately began assigning him to features, columns and game stories as well.

"It drove home the point early that (those skills) were going to be required," Brennan said.

Brennan also credits managing editor David Albright, colleges editor David Duffey and current and former colleagues Dana O'Neil, Andy Katz and Pat Forde for being mentors.

"I owe an immense debt of gratitude to them," he said.

Four years ago, Brennan said he would have called himself a blogger. Today, he calls himself a basketball writer, one who wants to become better at writing features and columns, developing sources and breaking news and reporting on longer stories.

"It's hard to pinpoint one thing," he said. "I want to be better at all of it."

One year ago, Brennan took first place in the USBWA's best writing contest for his game story/spot news on a buzzer-beating shot by Duke's Austin Rivers in a game against North Carolina.

Bob Ryan might be happy to hear that Brennan still finds it a thrill to cover a Final Four, among other things college-basketball related.

"It sounds kind of cheesy, but I'm still, even now, feeling like, 'Man, this is really cool,'" Brennan said. "I'm in this thing with people who, not too long ago, I was reading. And I thought those were the coolest people and, man, wouldn't it be awesome to have that job?"

Yes, he discovered, it is.

## OSCAR ROBERTSON TROPHY MIDSEASON WATCH LIST

G Keith Appling, Michigan State (6-1, Sr., Detroit)  
F Cameron Bairstow, New Mexico (6-9, Sr., Brisbane, Aus.)  
F Cleanthony Early, Wichita St. (6-8, Sr., Middletown, N.Y.)  
C Joel Embiid, Kansas (7-0, Fr., Yaounde, Cameroon)  
G Tyler Ennis, Syracuse (6-2, Fr., Brampton, Ont.)  
F C.J. Fair, Syracuse (6-8, Sr., Baltimore)  
F Aaron Gordon, Arizona (6-9, Fr., San Jose, Calif.)  
G Gary Harris, Michigan State (6-4, So., Fishers, Ind.)  
F Rodney Hood, Duke (6-8, So., Meridian, Miss.)  
G Nick Johnson, Arizona (6-3, Jr., Gilbert, Ariz.)  
G DeAndre Kane, Iowa State (6-4, Sr., Pittsburgh)  
F Doug McDermott, Creighton (6-8, Sr., Ames, Iowa)  
G Shabazz Napier, UConn (6-1, Sr., Roxbury, Mass.)  
F Jabari Parker, Duke (6-8, Fr., Chicago)  
G/F Lamar Patterson, Pitt (6-5, Sr., Lancaster, Pa.)  
F Casey Prather, Florida (6-6, Sr., Jackson, Tenn.)  
F Julius Randle, Kentucky (6-9, Fr., Dallas)  
G Marcus Smart, Okla. St. (6-4, So., Flower Mound, Texas)  
G Russ Smith, Louisville (6-0, Sr., Brooklyn)  
G Xavier Thames, San Diego St. (6-3, Sr., Sacramento)  
G Fred Van Vleet, Wichita State (5-11, So., Rockford, Ill.)  
G Andrew Wiggins, Kansas (6-8, Fr., Vaughan, Ont.)  
G Chaz Williams, Massachusetts (5-9, Sr., Brooklyn)

## WAYMAN TISDALE AWARD MIDSEASON WATCH LIST

C Joel Embiid, Kansas (7-0, Yaounde, Cameroon)  
G Tyler Ennis, Syracuse (6-2, Brampton, Ont.)  
F Aaron Gordon, Arizona (6-9, San Jose, Calif.)  
F Jordan Mickey, LSU (6-8, Dallas, Texas)  
F Jabari Parker, Duke (6-8, Chicago, Ill.)  
F Julius Randle, Kentucky (6-9, Dallas, Texas)  
F Noah Vonleh, Indiana (6-10, Haverhill, Mass.)  
G Andrew Wiggins, Kansas (6-8, Vaughan, Ont.)  
G James Young, Kentucky (6-6, Rochester Hills, Mich.)

## USBWA partners with APSE, NCAA

In an effort to better serve writers covering NCAA tournament games, the USBWA is partnering with the NCAA and the Associated Press Sports Editors to provide liaisons assigned by APSE to assist media coordinators with media-related issues at NCAA men's tournament sites.

The liaisons are all sports editors of dailies in cities where NCAA tournament games are played. They will serve in an advisory capacity at each tournament site, working with the media coordinators in the following areas:

Assisting with seat assignments that are within NCAA guidelines to ensure that a deserving entity doesn't get overlooked. The USBWA recommends that full consideration is given to a publication/website that is committed to covering the sport or a team throughout the season. The liaisons are serving as consultants only. The NCAA makes the final call on all seat assignments.

Monitoring the postgame cooling-off periods after games to assure that time limits are adhered to.

Providing pool reporters when needed. The USBWA will continue to appoint pool reporters at each site, drawing primarily from officers, board members and past presidents. In the event a suitable USBWA member is not available, the APSE liaison would be asked to assign the pool reporter.

Here are the sports editors who are serving as liaisons for the NCAA tournament:

### FIRST ROUND (March 18-19)

Dayton: John Boyle, *Dayton Daily News*

### SECOND-THIRD ROUNDS (March 20-23)

Buffalo: Lisa Wilson, *Buffalo News*; Milwaukee:

Mike Davis, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*; Orlando: Roger Simmons, *Orlando Sentinel*; Raleigh: Steve Ruinsky, *Raleigh News and Observer*; San Antonio: Gary Newsom, *San Antonio Express News*; San Diego: Todd Adams, *UT-San Diego*; Spokane: Joe Palmquist, *Spokane Spokesman-Review*; St. Louis: Roger Hensley, *Cameron Hollway, St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

### REGIONALS (March 27-30)

Memphis: David Williams, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*; Anaheim: Todd Harmonson, *Orange County Register*; New York: Jason Stallman, *New York Times*; Indianapolis: Ronnie Ramos, *Indianapolis Star*

## Henderson retires to life in Rome

Recent USBWA board member John Henderson has retired and moved to Rome, after 24 years at the *Denver Post* and 39 years after he sold his first story to the old *Oregon Journal*. ... *Sports Illustrated* hired Brian Hamilton from the *Chicago Tribune* and Greg Bishop from the *New York Times*. Hamilton, who covered Notre Dame for the *Tribune*, will

be a college basketball blogger. Bishop, who covered college sports among other things at the *Times*, will do "a little bit over everything" at *SI*. ... Dick Weiss is among four who will be inducted into Philadelphia's Big 5 Hall of Fame. Weiss, who covered the Big 5 during his 21 years at the *Philadelphia Daily News*, will be recognized at a banquet at the Palestra on April 14.

### Lodge Notes