



The Nation's Premier Award for



NCAA® Senior Student-Athletes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2009

## LOWE'S SENIOR CLASS AWARD ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FOR NCAA® DIVISION I MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL DIVISIONS

(Kansas City, MO) – A high-achieving group of 20 NCAA Division I men's and women's basketball student-athletes were identified as finalists for the award that has become the premier honor for senior student-athletes, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award.

This announcement launches a nationwide balloting process to determine the 2009 award winner in both divisions. Lowe's, an official Corporate Partner of the NCAA will announce and present the men's basketball winner with the distinctive Lowe's Senior CLASS Award trophy in front of a national television audience during the CBS telecast of the NCAA Men's Final Four® in Detroit. During the same weekend, the women's basketball recipient will be presented with her award during the NCAA Women's Final Four® in St. Louis.

This marks the eighth consecutive year that the award has recognized outstanding senior basketball student-athletes. An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages those leaders to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact on their circle of influence.

The 2008-09 women's finalists are: **Jada Frazier** (University of New Orleans), **Rachel Galligan** (Eastern Illinois University), **Shalee Lehning** (Kansas State University), **Renee Montgomery** (University of Connecticut), **Courtney Paris** (University of Oklahoma), **Koren Schram** (Dartmouth College), **Takia Starks** (Texas A&M University), **Kristi Toliver** (University of Maryland, College Park), **Abby Waner** (Duke University) and **Christina Wirth** (Vanderbilt University).

The 2008-09 men's finalists are: **A.J. Abrams** (University of Texas, Austin), **Jimmy Baron** (University of Rhode Island), **Dionte Christmas** (Temple University), **Tyler Hansbrough** (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), **Lester Hudson** (University of Tennessee at Martin), **Curtis Jerrells** (Baylor University), **Jerel McNeal** (Marquette University), **Andy Wicke** (Belmont University), **Terrence Williams** (University of Louisville) and **Sam Young** (University of Pittsburgh).

These 20 names (10 from each division) will be placed on the official ballot for a nationwide vote beginning today and concluding March 22. Votes from coaches and media will be coupled with fan balloting to determine the recipient of the award. Fans can vote online during this time period at [www.seniorclassaward.com](http://www.seniorclassaward.com). **For the first time in the basketball division, text voting will also be available during the voting period.** To vote via text, fans can send the text code (see below for a complete list) corresponding with the student-athlete of your choice to 839863.

The prestigious awards program honoring collegiate seniors was launched during the 2001-02 basketball season with men's and women's basketball. Sponsored by Lowe's, an Official Corporate Partner of the NCAA, the program added six additional sports in 2007 and expanded this past year to include NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision seniors.

"Basketball was the original inspiration behind this award and it has been embraced throughout the nation for saluting senior student-athletes who elect to stay in school, earn their degree and get involved in their community," said **Bob Gfeller**, Lowe's senior vice president of marketing. "Each of these young men and women selected as finalists for the 2009 basketball award has displayed tremendous character while making an impact both on and off the court."

Finalists were selected from a list of 30 candidates in each division, based on personal qualities that define a complete student-athlete. Each finalist displays numerous accomplishments across all four award pillars: classroom, community, character, and competition.

"The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award puts a positive spotlight on our NCAA student-athletes who are on a track to earn a college degree," stated Greg Shaheen, NCAA Senior VP for Basketball and Business Strategies. "The NCAA is proud to honor student-athlete leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to excel in competition and in the classroom."

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#### **ABOUT THE AWARD**

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award honors the attributes of senior student-athletes in four areas: classroom, community, character and competition. The award program is designed exclusively for college seniors who are utilizing their complete athletic eligibility, remaining committed to their university and pursuing the many rewards that a senior season can bring. For more information, visit [www.seniorclassaward.com](http://www.seniorclassaward.com).

#### **ABOUT LOWE'S**

With fiscal year 2007 sales of \$48.3 billion, Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE® 50 company that serves approximately 14 million customers a week at more than 1,625 home improvement stores in the United States and Canada. Founded in 1946 and based in Mooresville, N.C., Lowe's is the second-largest home improvement retailer in the world. For more information, visit [www.lowes.com](http://www.lowes.com)

#### **ABOUT THE NCAA**

The NCAA is a membership-led nonprofit association of colleges and universities committed to supporting academic and athletics opportunities for more than 400,000 student-athletes at more than 1,000 member colleges and universities. Each year, more than 54,000 student-athletes compete in NCAA championships in Divisions I, II and III sports. Visit [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) and [www.ncaa.com](http://www.ncaa.com) for more details about the Association.

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### **2008-09 Women's Basketball Finalists**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Text Code*</b>
Jada Frazier	Guard	University of New Orleans	Sun Belt	WB1
Rachel Galligan	Forward	Eastern Illinois University	Ohio Valley	WB2
Shalee Lehning	Guard	Kansas State University	Big 12	WB3
Renee Montgomery	Guard	University of Connecticut	Big East	WB4
Courtney Paris	Center	University of Oklahoma	Big 12	WB5
Koren Schram	Guard	Dartmouth College	Ivy	WB6
Takia Starks	Guard	Texas A&M University	Big 12	WB7
Kristi Toliver	Guard	University of Maryland, College Park	Atlantic Coast	WB8
Abby Waner	Guard	Duke University	Atlantic Coast	WB9
Christina Wirth	Forward	Vanderbilt University	Southeastern	WB10

### **2008-09 Men's Basketball Finalists**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Text Code*</b>
A.J. Abrams	Guard	University of Texas, Austin	Big 12	MB1
Jimmy Baron	Guard	University of Rhode Island	Atlantic 10	MB2
Dionte Christmas	Guard	Temple University	Atlantic 10	MB3
Tyler Hansbrough	Forward	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	Atlantic Coast	MB4
Lester Hudson	Guard	University of Tennessee at Martin	Ohio Valley	MB5
Curtis Jerrells	Guard	Baylor University	Big 12	MB6
Jerel McNeal	Guard	Marquette University	Big East	MB7
Andy Wicke	Guard	Belmont University	Atlantic Sun	MB8
Terrence Williams	Forward	University of Louisville	Big East	MB9
Sam Young	Forward	University of Pittsburgh	Big East	MB10

\* To vote via text: "Text Code" to 839863