

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



UCF's Shaquem Griffin Selected as the 2017 Senior CLASS Award® Winner for FBS Football

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (December 27, 2017) – UCF linebacker Shaquem Griffin has been selected as the 2017 Senior CLASS Award® winner for the NCAA® Division I Football Bowl Subdivision. The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I FBS football coaches, national football media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I football. To be eligible for the award, a student-athlete must be classified as an NCAA Division I senior and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character and competition.

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*®, the Senior CLASS Award focuses on the total student-athlete and encourages students to use their platform in athletics to make a positive impact as leaders in their communities. With the honor, Griffin became the second student-athlete to win the Senior CLASS Award behind women's soccer player Tishia Jewell in 2012.

"It's truly an honor to receive this award," said Griffin, who has made headlines for excelling on the field despite having his left hand amputated at the age of 4. "A lot of people in our generation like to make excuses about little things. It always comes down to the work ethic for me. God put everyone on the earth for a purpose, and I feel like my purpose is to get away from people making excuses."

A two-time first-team all-conference performer in 2016 and 2017, Griffin earned preseason second-team All America honors before turning in another stunning on-field performance this season. Starting all 12 games at linebacker for the perfect 12-0 Knights, Griffin recorded 62 tackles, which included 10 tackles for loss and 5.5 sacks, one interception, three pass breakup and nine QB hurries. He also both recovered and forced two fumbles. The AAC Defensive Player of the Year as a junior, Griffin stunned the football community when, after breaking his right hand, still racked up 14 tackles, one interception and one fumble recovery in a 31-24 loss to Houston on October 29, 2016.

As impressive as he is on the field, Griffin's commitment to excellence also has led to success in the classroom. Already holding a degree in human communication, Griffin is currently working toward a second major in interdisciplinary studies with a minor in sociology.

"Nobody I've coached plays or practices harder than Shaquem Griffin," said UCF Head Coach Scott Frost. "He is a great football player and an even greater young man. I can't think of someone more deserving for an award like this. He's an inspiration to so many people, and he should serve as a lesson for many others. Perseverance, hard work and belief in yourself can take you a long way, and those characteristics are going to allow Shaquem to continue being successful in life."

Beyond the field and the classroom, Griffin has built a reputation for leadership and using his own challenges to help others. Involved in a variety of nonprofit organizations including the Boys and Girls Club of America and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.), Griffin and his twin brother, Shaquill, started a track club for kids in their hometown of St. Petersburg, Fla., that is still operational. Griffin frequently does community service and speaking engagements through the club, and his goal is to open a track and football training center to help youth in his home community.

"You're not disabled unless you say 'I'm disabled,'" said Griffin. "I'd really like to be able to keep sharing my story with people. If I keep doing what I'm doing, it's going to create a better future for someone else. Maybe I can help this one kid, who can help another kid and so on. Eventually, we may be able to reach thousands of kids."

Also a 2017 nominee for the Allstate AFCA Good Works Team, Griffin frequently accepts speaking engagements at high schools and community recreation centers in an effort to share encouragement and inspiration with youth.

"Shaquem Griffin is an incredibly inspiring student-athlete," said Erik Miner, executive director for the Senior CLASS Award. "Not only has he excelled in each of the four Senior CLASS Award categories, he's done so bearing a challenge that none of his peers have had to face. He's an exceptional young man who truly deserves the Senior CLASS Award. Our congratulations to Shaquem, his family and to UCF."

For more information, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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First-Team All-Americans

Daniel Carlson, Auburn
Shaquem Griffin, UCF
Josey Jewell, Iowa
Micah Kiser, Virginia
JK Scott, Alabama

Second-Team All-Americans

J.T. Barrett, Ohio State
Billy Price, Ohio State
Frank Ragnow, Arkansas
Johnny Townsend, Florida
Logan Woodside, Toledo

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ABOUT THE AWARD

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Senior CLASS Award honors the attributes of senior student-athletes in four areas: community, classroom, 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 a senior season can bring. Premier Sports Management manages the award.

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