

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



# Villanova's Josh Hart Wins 2016-17 Senior CLASS Award for Men's Basketball

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (March 31, 2017) – All-American guard Josh Hart of Villanova has been selected as the 2016-17 Senior CLASS Award<sup>®</sup> winner in NCAA<sup>®</sup> Division I men's basketball. The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I men's basketball coaches, national basketball media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I men's basketball. Hart is the second student-athlete from Villanova to win the Senior CLASS Award after Brian Karalunas won for men's lacrosse in 2011.

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*<sup>®</sup>, 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. 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.

"I'm honored to receive the Senior CLASS Award," said Hart, who earned first-team All-America honors from the Associated Press, Wooden Award, United States Basketball Writers Association, *Basketball Times*, *USA Today* and *The Sporting News*. "My experience at Villanova has helped me grow as a leader on the court and as a man off of it. As a player, I got the chance this season to help mentor some of the younger guys, which was new to me. Coach Wright stresses that there is more to our lives the 94-by-50 feet of the basketball court. He and the staff here helped me mature and appreciate some of the opportunities I can have in life beyond basketball."

The Big East Player of the Year and co-Big East Defensive Player of the Year, Hart finished his career as one of only two players in Villanova history—Kerry Kittles being the other—with career totals of 1,800 points, 700 rebounds, 250 assists and 150 steals. Also a two-time unanimous first-team All-Big East selection, Hart led the Big East in scoring with an average of 18.6 points per game, guiding Villanova to a 31-3 regular season record and the No.1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament. Just one year prior, Hart helped the Wildcats to the 2016 NCAA National Championship, leading the team in scoring with 17.5 ppg throughout the tournament and earning a spot on the All-Final Four Team.

“The Senior CLASS Award befits Josh's career at Villanova,” said Head Coach Jay Wright. “He is one of the most complete players in Villanova history—among our leaders in scoring, rebounding, steals and assists. Off the court he is an Eagle Scout, a respected, active member of our community and of the student body and is set to graduate on time in May. He is a proud example of a student-athlete at Villanova.”

As committed to success off the court as he was on, Hart chose to return to Villanova for his senior season and will graduate with his degree this spring. Also elected one of the team captains for his senior season, Hart earned a reputation as one of the most beloved Wildcats through his dedication and effort on the court and his commitment to service in the community. During his tenure, Hart and the Wildcats participated in a series of community initiatives, the most prominent of those being the university's annual Day of Service and the team's efforts to pack meals for the hungry through a local Philadelphia organization.

“As phenomenal as Josh Hart is on the court, it's clear that he is an excellent representative of what the Senior CLASS Award stands for,” said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. “You could see it in his display of sportsmanship toward Seton Hall's Angel Delgado after the Big East Tournament Semifinal and in the way he has carried himself in the national spotlight. We are thrilled that he was voted this year's winner, and we offer our sincere congratulations to Josh and to Villanova University.”

For more information on all the finalists, visit [seniorCLASSaward.com](http://seniorCLASSaward.com).

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#### **Senior CLASS Award First-Team All-Americans**

Josh Hart, Villanova

Josh Hawkinson, Washington State

Amile Jefferson, Duke

Przemek Karnowski, Gonzaga

Frank Mason III, Kansas

#### **Senior CLASS Award Second-Team All-Americans**

Jaron Blossomgame, Clemson

Evan Bradds, Belmont

Nigel Hayes, Wisconsin

Peter Jok, Iowa

Tim Kempton, Lehigh

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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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