



The Nation's Premier Award for



NCAA® Senior Student-Athletes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2009

ATHLETIC, ACADEMIC AND COMMUNITY SUCCESS EARN FLORIDA PITCHER STACEY NELSON THE 2009 LOWE'S SENIOR CLASS AWARD FOR SOFTBALL

Nation's Premier Award for Seniors Presented at NCAA® Women's College World Series®

(Oklahoma City, OK) – University of Florida pitcher **Stacey Nelson**, who has earned the rare distinction as both a softball All-American and Academic All-American, has been selected as the winner of the 2009 Lowe's Senior CLASS Award in the softball division.

The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of coaches, media and fans, is presented annually to college softball's outstanding NCAA Division I senior student-athlete. The announcement and trophy presentation were made today by Lowe's, an Official Corporate Partner of the NCAA, during the NCAA Women's College World Series Opening Ceremonies in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

An acronym for *Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School*, the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award has grown into the nation's premier tribute to college seniors. The award identifies personal qualities that define a complete student-athlete, with criteria including excellence in the **classroom**, **character** and **community**, as well as **competition** on the field.

"I am extremely honored to be the 2009 Lowe's Senior CLASS Award recipient," Nelson said. "Just to be considered was an honor and to come out on top is something I never dreamed of. I want to thank all the people who have been here for me in my collegiate career. I want to thank the University of Florida for the opportunity and tools to allow me to excel in the classroom and reach out in the community. I want to thank the UF softball program for giving me the opportunity to play softball and to the Lowe's Senior Class Award committee for giving me the chance to be a part of this great award."

As a senior, Nelson has led the Gators to the No. 1 ranking in the nation and the top seed in the NCAA Tournament. The two-time All-American recently was named the 2009 Southeastern Conference Pitcher of the Year with a 39-3 record, including two no-hitters. The right-hander has the lowest ERA (0.41) in the country and is second in wins. She was also named to the All-SEC first team and the SEC All-Defensive team for the second straight year. It was her second Pitcher of the Year Award. With 134 career wins, Nelson ranks seventh all-time on the NCAA victories list and second in SEC history. Her 1,046 strikeouts are first in the UF record books and seventh in the SEC's.

In the classroom, the Academic All-American is a philosophy major who has been a member of the SEC Academic Honor Roll. Her ambition is to attend law school where she would like to study humanitarian law and work for the International Criminal Court.

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The number of Nelson's extra-curricular activities rivals her athletic awards. A representative for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), she was a co-chairman of Climb for Cancer, which gives children with cancer a chance to play sports with UF student-athletes. She also has spent time at various elementary schools in the Gainesville area, reading to children and being a mentor. As a member of the softball team, Nelson helped build a home for a local family through Habitat for Humanity and has spent the last four holiday seasons delivering sneakers to children through the UAA's Gator Tracks program.

"This is a tremendous honor for Stacey, for our softball program and for the University of Florida," said Gators head softball coach, Tim Walton. "Stacey truly exemplifies what it means to be a class act on and off the field. On behalf of the entire softball program, I want to thank Lowe's for recognizing a great person."

The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award also names an All-Senior All-America Team each year based on voting results of the finalists. Joining Nelson on the 2009 first team is: **Whitney Haller**, Georgia Tech; **Amber Patton**, DePaul University; **Brittany Rogers**, University of Alabama and **Tammy Williams**, Northwestern University. The second team includes **Lillian Hammond**, University of Tennessee; **Jenae Leles**, University of Arizona; **Jessica Mapes**, Arizona State University; **Missy Penna**, Stanford University and **Samantha Ricketts**, University of Oklahoma.

"The Lowe's Senior CLASS Award has developed into a wonderful tribute for college student-athletes," said **Bob Gfeller**, senior vice president of marketing at Lowe's. "On behalf of more than 228,000 associates at Lowe's, we salute Stacey for a tremendous collegiate career at the University of Florida. She has been a role model for many youngsters and has clearly taken her status as a college student-athlete and used it to benefit others."

This marks the third year for the softball division of the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award. Arizona's **Caitlin Lowe** was the inaugural winner in 2007 and Virginia Tech's **Angela Tincher** was the recipient in 2008.

Lowe's expanded the Senior CLASS Award program in 2007 to include NCAA Division I softball, baseball, men's and women's soccer, men's ice hockey and men's lacrosse to go along with the original sports of men's and women's basketball. With the addition of football (Bowl Subdivision) in 2008, the award is now presented in nine NCAA sports.

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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.

ABOUT LOWE'S

With fiscal year 2008 sales of \$48.2 billion, Lowe's Companies, Inc. is a FORTUNE® 50 company that serves approximately 14 million customers a week at more than 1,650 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 Lowe.com.

ABOUT THE NCAA

The NCAA is a membership-led nonprofit association of colleges and universities committed to supporting academic and athletic 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 and www.NCAA.com for more details about the Association.

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The Nation's Premier Award for

NCAA® Senior Student-Athletes

All-Senior All-America Teams

As selected in balloting for the Lowe's Senior CLASS Award by cumulative results of NCAA® Division I Coaches, National Media and Fan Balloting

First Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>
Whitney Haller	First Base	Georgia Tech
Stacey Nelson	Pitcher	University of Florida
Amber Patton	Third Base	DePaul University
Brittany Rogers	Outfield	University of Alabama
Tammy Williams	Shortstop	Northwestern University

Second Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>
Lillian Hammond	Outfield	University of Tennessee
Jenae Leles	Third Base	University of Arizona
Jessica Mapes	Outfield	Arizona State University
Missy Penna	Pitcher	Stanford University
Samantha Ricketts	First Base	University of Oklahoma