

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



# Penn State's Haleigh Washington wins the 2017 Senior CLASS Award<sup>®</sup> for Women's Volleyball

**OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (December 13, 2017)** – Penn State middle blocker Haleigh Washington has been selected as the 2017 Senior CLASS Award<sup>®</sup> winner in NCAA<sup>®</sup> Division I women's volleyball. The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I volleyball coaches, national volleyball media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I volleyball. 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<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. Washington is the fifth Senior CLASS Award winner from Penn State, making Penn State the school with the second-most winners in award history behind Duke, which has six.

"First of all, it is an honor to be recognized in this way, and I'm so glad that I can represent Penn State in such a positive light," said Washington, whose Nittany Lions will take on Nebraska tomorrow in the NCAA Women's Volleyball Final Four. "I think Penn State has made me a complete person. It has cultivated more than just the academic side and the athletic side; it's helped me grow as a human being. Just knowing how to engage with people one-on-one and how to make someone feel special and important and heard. That's not a skill that a lot of people get to develop, and the fact I got to share in this community, and learn how to do that in this community is incredible. So I am just honored and so incredibly humbled that I get to represent Penn State in this way, but I would not have been able to do it without this community. It has made me who I am today."

Already a two-time All-American for her outstanding play at middle blocker, Washington earned Big Ten Defensive Player of the Year honors this season after averaging 1.52 blocks per set. She also led the nation with a .503 hitting percentage, while putting down 3.06 kills per set on the season. A four-time All-Big Ten honoree, Washington helped Penn State to a 33-1 record, a No. 1 overall ranking in the final polls of the season and the top seed in the NCAA Tournament.

Also a standout in the classroom, Washington is a three-time CoSIDA Academic All-American, earning second-team honors in 2017 and 2015 and third-team honors in 2016. She also earned Academic All-Big Ten honors in her sophomore and junior seasons and has been named to the Penn State Dean's List in multiple semesters.

"Haleigh came in to college with a great thirst for knowledge in both academics and expanding her athletic component," said Head Coach Russ Rose, who also earned Big Ten Coach of the Year honors. "She never missed a beat and has continued to strive to be the best in both areas. I

know it's a challenge to balance all those things, and her recognition is well-deserved. Her family and her Penn State family take great pride in her being recognized."

A team captain for the Nittany Lions, Washington is a well-respected leader whose commitment to high character and community service also has received recognition. Beyond the court and classroom, she has participated in Athletes Take Action Hall of Fame Sport's Walk and volunteered for the Special Olympics. She also has spent time reading to children at the local elementary schools, helped with the Paterno Family Fun Run, participated in Multiple Penn State Sports Camps and helped with Paterno Library Reading Marathon.

"On behalf of everyone associated with the Senior CLASS Award, we are honored to announce Haleigh Washington as this year's winner for women's volleyball," said Erik Miner, executive director for the Senior CLASS Award. "To achieve such a high level of success on the court and in the classroom is one thing, but to do it while maintaining excellent character and making an impact on the community is what sets her apart. We offer our sincere congratulations to Haleigh, her team and Penn State University."

For more information, visit [seniorCLASSaward.com](http://seniorCLASSaward.com).

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

Kelsey Bittinger, Kent State  
Lily Johnson, Missouri State  
Simone Lee, Penn State  
Jessica Lucas, Western Kentucky  
Haleigh Washington, Penn State

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

Ashley Dusek, Kentucky  
Jaelyn Keene, Illinois State  
Abbie Lehman, Wichita State  
Mary-Kate Marshall, Oregon State  
Katie Staiger, Baylor

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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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