

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



UConn's Gabby Williams Wins 2017-18 Senior CLASS Award for Women's Basketball

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (March 29, 2018) – Two-time All-American Gabby Williams of UConn has been selected as the 2017-18 Senior CLASS Award® winner in NCAA® Division I women's basketball. The award, chosen by a nationwide vote of Division I women's basketball coaches, national basketball media and fans, is given annually to the most outstanding senior student-athlete in Division I women's basketball. Williams is the fifth women's basketball player from UConn to win the Senior CLASS Award joining Breanna Stewart (2016), Stefanie Dolson (2014), Maya Moore (2011) and Sue Bird (2002).

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. 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.

"It's an honor to receive the Senior CLASS Award," said Williams, whose Huskies will take on Notre Dame tomorrow in what will be Williams' fourth Final Four appearance in as many years. "When I first arrived at UConn, I knew I would be pushed athletically and academically, but I didn't realize how much I would grow as an individual. The university has opened so many doors for me in the community and has enlightened me on all the ways I can have an impact on this world. I have learned how to speak with confidence, interact with others who do and don't look like me, fight for what I believe in, and how to live outside my comfort zone. Because of my time at UConn, I feel prepared and excited for my future."

A finalist for the Wooden and Naismith Awards this season, Williams is averaging 10.8 points and 7.4 rebounds per game and leading UConn with 179 assists and 84 steals. In addition to her second-team AP All-America honors, the Sparks, Nev., native is also a Cheryl Miller Award finalist and was named first team all-conference for the second consecutive year. Considered to be one of the most complete players in women's college hoops, Williams was the WBCA National and ACC Conference Defensive Player of the Year in 2017, a season in which she also earned First Team All-America honors by the WBCA and USBWA and second-team honors by the AP.

"Gabby has done some great things for our program since coming here as a freshman," said Head Coach Geno Auriemma. "She's worked really hard over the last four years and has grown a lot as a player and

person. She's a pretty special player to watch on the court. This award is a great testament to her hard work and commitment at UConn."

Williams' commitment to excellence both on and off the court has been well-noted throughout her career. A member of UConn's director of athletics' honor roll after garnering a 3.306 GPA in urban and community studies, Williams remains dedicated to academics and community service. Throughout her time in Storrs, Conn., she has participated in a variety of outreach events and charitable causes including the Foundation for Life's Bikes for Kids event, Go 4 the Goal, the American Red Cross, Toys for Tots, the Mansfield 5K Kids Run, Athletes for Hope and more.

"Gabby Williams has had a phenomenal career with one of the most prestigious women's basketball programs in the world," said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. "But she's done so while also prioritizing her work in the classroom and community and maintaining a positive character on and off the court. We are thrilled that Gabby was voted the Senior CLASS Award winner and offer our congratulations to her and to the University of Connecticut."

For more information on all the finalists, visit seniorCLASSaward.com.

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Senior CLASS Award First-Team All-Americans

Lexie Brown, Duke

Tyra Buss, Indiana

Emily Clemens, Western Illinois

Victoria Vivians, Mississippi State

Gabby Williams, UConn

Senior CLASS Award Second-Team All-Americans

Ariel Atkins, Texas

Rebecca Greenwell, Duke

Delaney Hodgins, Eastern Washington

Kaylee Jensen, Oklahoma State

Jackie Kempf, Saint Louis

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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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