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Richmond's Jacob Gilyard Wins 2021-22 Senior CLASS Award for Men's Basketball

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (April 1, 2022) - Jacob Gilyard of the University of Richmond has been selected as the 2021-22 Senior CLASS Award® winner in NCAA® 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 student-athlete in Division I men's basketball. Gilyard is the first student-athlete from Richmond to win the Senior CLASS Award.

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 or graduate student and have notable achievements in four areas of excellence: classroom, community, character, and competition.

"The last five years have allowed me to have relationships and understand things that I feel like I didn't understand going into college," said Gilyard, a five-year starter for Richmond. "I think it's allowed me to be more than just a basketball player. In general, I feel that I'm much better prepared for the real world. My time at Richmond was great. The fans and the student body were so supportive. It's 15 hours away from Kansas City, but Richmond is a second home for me."

Gilyard immediately garnered the trust of his coaches in his first year with the Spiders. He logged a team-high 36.5 minutes per game, and his 1,167 minutes on the season were the most ever by a freshman at Richmond. Gilyard put up 11.4 points, 4.1 assists, and an incredible 2.78 steals a night, which was sixth-most in the country. He etched his name in the program record book quickly, setting the single-season steals record (89) and freshman assist record (130) in his debut season.

Gilyard was able to use the success he had in his first year to come back even better in 2018-19. He increased his per game averages to 16.2 points, 5.2 assists, and 2.84 steals in 37.3 minutes, the most by a Spider since 2002. Gilyard set the new program record for three-pointers made (132), steals (177), and assists (290) by a player in their first two seasons. He earned a nod to both the A-10 All-Defensive Team and A-10 second team, becoming the second player in program history to receive the honor as a sophomore (Kevin Anderson - 2009).

Richmond had their best season since 2010-11 in Gilyard's third year, finishing 24-7. He started every game for the Spiders and added 12.7 points, 5.7 assists, and a Division I-leading 3.2 steals per game on a team-high 36.6 minutes. Gilyard had 99 thefts on the season and became Richmond's all-time steal leader on 1/11/20. Leading the Spiders to an incredible turnaround, he was named to the A-10 first team, A-10 All-Defensive Team, and was even tabbed the A-10 Defensive Player of the Year.

In his fourth year at Richmond, Gilyard once again led the country in steals, averaging 3.57 per game. He also added 12.3 points and 5.0 assists per game while playing 37.5 minutes a night. Gilyard had an incredible 3.14 assist-to-turnover ratio that led the conference. He garnered A-10 second team and A-10 All-Defensive Team honors once more but also earned Lefty Driesell Defensive All-America recognition for the first time in his career.

Gilyard elected to return to the Spiders for one final season in 2021-22 hoping to reach new heights. He made good on that promise, setting single-season program records for most three-pointers made (94) and steals (108), and his 198 assists are the second most. He was named to the A-10 third team and received Lefty Driesell Defensive All-America and A-10 All-Defensive Team honors once more. Perhaps his most important accolade, however, was the 2022 A-10 Tournament's Most Outstanding Player. Gilyard led the Spiders to four straight wins in the conference tournament and clinched an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, marking their first appearance since 2010-11.

"I think it's going to be hard to top the last few weeks," said Gilyard, who led the Spiders to an upset win over fifth-seeded Iowa. "It doesn't get much better than winning a conference championship and an NCAA Tournament game. I think when I look back, those will be the first two weeks I remember."

In his storied five-year career at Richmond, Gilyard saw his name move up the record books each day. He is now the program record holder in three-pointers made (332), assists (782), and steals (466), which is also a Division I record. He sits fifth all-time in points (2,039) and all five of his season's steal totals sit inside the top six. Gilyard proved his ironman status for the Spiders each night, finishing his career having played 5,746 minutes, 705 minutes more than anyone else.

"Jacob contributed as much as any student-athlete could during the course of his career," said Chris Mooney, head coach of Richmond. "He was a great player from the day he walked on campus with a great foundation, a great work ethic, and a great personality. I can't imagine anyone contributing more. I think Jacob will rise very quickly because of how intelligent he is. He's just gifted in many ways, including his work ethic, and I think he'll do exceedingly well in any field he chooses."

Even as he placed so much of his focus on basketball, Gilyard remained a complete-student athlete by fulfilling his duties in the classroom. He previously earned his undergraduate degree in rhetoric and

communication studies and is currently pursuing his master's degree in human resources management during his final year at Richmond.

Gilyard is extremely involved in the fight against autism as his brother Roman suffers from the disorder. The Gilyard family have informally coined their efforts as 'Roman's Army,' a phrase that Jacob would write on his shoes before each game. Richmond even designated one home game each season as an 'Autism Awareness' night.

"Jacob Gilyard's career at the University of Richmond has been nothing short of spectacular," said Erik Miner, Executive Director of the Senior CLASS Award. "It's been incredibly special seeing the impact that he has had on the program and community, the mark of a true student-athlete. We are proud to offer our congratulations to Jacob and Richmond for winning this award!"

For more information on all of the finalists, visit SeniorCLASSAward.com.

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2021-22 Senior CLASS Award Men's Basketball First-Team All-Americans

Evan Battey, Colorado

Brad Davison, Wisconsin

Jacob Gilyard, Richmond

Sasha Stefanovic, Purdue

Lucas Williamson, Loyola Chicago

2021-22 Senior CLASS Award Men's Basketball Second-Team All-Americans

Trent Frazier, Illinois

Tanner Groves, Oklahoma

Gavin Kensmil, Stephen F. Austin

Kameron McGusty, Miami

Alex Morales, Wagner

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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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