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Joe Lapchick Character Award: Because the game is about more than winning.

Hall of Famers Kay Yow and John Thompson, High School Legend Jack Curran Honored with Second Annual Lapchick Character Award

NEW YORK – Hall of Famers John Thompson, who led Georgetown to a national championship, and Kay Yow, whose courageous fight against cancer overshadowed her coaching career, and national high school coaching legend Jack Curran of Archbishop Molloy, have been selected as the recipients of the second annual Lapchick Character Awards.

The three will be honored at a luncheon at Madison Square Garden on Nov. 19, 2009, and again during the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic games that night.

The award was started last season by a group inspired by Lapchick biographer and former player Gus Alfieri to recognize basketball coaches who have shown the character traits and coaching skills of Hall of Famer Joe Lapchick, who coached with St. John's and the New York Knicks.

The inaugural class was Hall of Famers Pat Summitt, Lou Carnesecca and Dean Smith. This year's honorees are as accomplished as basketball coaches but excelled as individuals of high character, who focused on developing young people into significant adults.

John Thompson took over a Georgetown program that won three games the previous season and turned it into one that made that three Final Four appearances, including the 1984 national title, the first ever won by a black head coach. His Hoya teams won 596 games and he led the United States to the bronze medal in 1988 Olympics. He was an outspoken voice concerning the treatment of minority players, especially his fight against NCAA Proposition 42 that brought national attention to economic and educational discrimination. All but two of the 78 players who stayed four years with Thompson received a diploma (97 percent). Thompson was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame in 1999. His son, John Thompson III, led Georgetown to the Final Four in 2007.

Kay Yow had one of the more successful coaching careers in women's college basketball, winning 737 games in 38 seasons _ 34 at North Carolina State _ the Olympic gold medal for the United States in 1988, four Atlantic Coast Conference tournaments and 20 NCAA tournaments bids, including the Final Four in 1998. Where she made _ and will continue to make _ her impact was with her 22-year fight with breast cancer that ended on Jan. 24, 2009, at age 66. Her courage lifted the spirits of so many and her fight against breast cancer will go on through funds raised by The V Foundation for Cancer Research. Yow was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame in 2002. Her sister Debbie is the athletic director at the University of Maryland and her sister Susan is the women's basketball coach at Belmont Abbey.

Jack Curran will begin his 52nd season at New York City's Archbishop Molloy High School, having succeeded Lou Carnesecca as head coach. He has won more than 900 games, the New York State record, won five city championships and helped almost 500 players receive athletic scholarships including his top players like Kevin Joyce, Kenny Smith and Kenny Anderson. He has also won better than 1,600 games and 17 city titles as Molloy's baseball coach. A graduate of St. John's who played for Frank McGuire, Curran went on to play professional baseball before starting his coaching career, one that has been entirely at Molloy. Through changing generations of basketball Curran has managed to remain one of New York City's coaching faces of the high school game.

This year, The Lapchick Foundation Committee decided to present for the first time, the Lapchick Leadership Appreciation Award to St. John's Athletic Director Emeritus Jack Kaiser. This award is in recognition of individuals who help drive the foundation's purpose forward. Jack Kaiser was an early supporter of the foundation's efforts to focus on character recognition.

Jack Kaiser is the only man to play for and coach under Joe Lapchick. After a career in professional baseball as a player and coach, Kaiser returned to alma mater as an assistant basketball and baseball coach, becoming

head baseball coach in 1956 and leading the Redmen to the College World Series three times in his 18 seasons. He became athletic director at St. John's and led it through a period of growth that included Kaiser being among the founders of the Big East Conference. Kaiser has been inducted into the College Baseball Coaches and College Athletic Directors halls of fame.

The Joe Lapchick Character Award is supported by the NCAA and the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

The award is sponsored by Nike, D'Agostino Supermarkets and HEI Hotels

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