



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Approximately 300 sports professionals gathered Tuesday, April 8 to welcome special guest speaker NFL HOFamer Gale Sayers and honor several deserving professionals along with emcee Wayne Box Miller for the 2nd annual Cincinnati Sports Professionals Network (CSPN) awards dinner at the Hilton Netherland Plaza Hall of Mirrors.

CSPN Annual Award Winners were selected by individuals and business throughout the region. CSPN selection committee was comprised of a cross-section of our CSPN Founding membership and criteria were based on the following: 1) success, 2) measurable impact to the community 3) local connection. Hamilton County Commission President Todd Portune delivered to Gale Sayers the proclamation of April 8 as 'Gale Sayers Day' in Hamilton County. Vice Mayor David Crowley

delivered the key to Cincinnati to Gale and Ardie Sayers during the VIP Reception.



Sports Executive Life Time

Achievement: Jane Meier, Athletic Director, Northern Kentucky University with more than 30 years serving all levels in coaching and administration where she oversees 13 sports programs, 250 student athletes that combined have over a 3.1 accumulative GPA. (that is 38% higher than the student body). Athletics

Success includes 7 Final Four appearances; 4 championship game appearances and 2 national championships in women's basketball. Jane is also largely responsible for the building of the new 9,200 seat arena opening this September, the Bank of KY arena.

Sports Executive of the Year: Enrico Blasi, Miami Redhawks Hockey Coach; Ending this season with more wins than any team in school history also a former student athlete whom was the youngest ever D1 coach in the history of the sport; the 2006 Coach of the Year award and was Coach of the top-ranked team in the country at one point this season.

Corporate Citizen of the Year: Michael and Mark LaRosa attending on behalf of their honoree father, Buddy LaRosa. LaRosa's Pizza is committed to Cincinnati's youth and supports many

schools and charities; highlights student athletes in his High School Sports Hall of Fame and showcases two athletes weekly in our local newspapers. Buddy was the force behind the creation of the Cincinnati Golden Gloves for Youth program and the National Police Athletic League program that has generated national and world champions as well as Olympic hopefuls.

Co- Sports Event of the Year: Bengals vs. Ravens Monday Night Football Game always brings a special buzz to a city. The wall to wall coverage begins mid-week portraying the home city as a national hot spot. Such was the case when the Baltimore Ravens visited Paul Brown Stadium on Sept. 10 of last year, but a number of factors caused the intensity meter to rise even higher than usual: It was the season opener, and the first Bengals season opener on national TV in the club's 40-year history. It was the 29th consecutive sellout at Paul Brown Stadium, the opener of a sold-in-advance home schedule that would run the sellout streak to 36 by season's end. Katie Blackburn and Bob Bedinghaus accepted the award on behalf of the Bengals organization. There is nothing like Monday Night Football when it comes to an opportunity to show Cincinnati to the world.

Co- Sports Event of the Year: UFC Championships

Kristin Ropp and Kevin Olthaus accepted this honor on behalf of US Bank Arena. On October 20, 2007, U.S. Bank Arena proudly hosted UFC 77: Hostile Territory, the largest grossing event in the history of the Arena. 16,054 fans from 40 states and eight countries attended the event which grossed \$2,419,850. Approximately 325,000 fans from around the world purchased the event and watched it live on television via pay-per-view. UFC fans took over downtown Cincinnati that weekend, filling up area hotels and partaking in the city's fine array of drinking, dining and entertainment establishments. (Pictured below Gale Sayers with Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune)



Sports Media Personality of the Year: Bill "Seg" Dennison, Sports Broadcaster, WLW

The Seg Man was hired at 700WLW in 1978 producing helicopter traffic reports. Working his way up he moved to the newsroom. Seg got into sports with the help of legends Andy Mac Williams and Bob Trumpy with Sportstalk and has been doing sports ever since. Trumpy actually gave me my famous nickname "SEG." Going to Northern Kentucky University started my career on the radio. Great

people at NKU especially Dick Murgatroyd, the former executive producer of the Bob Braun Show among others.

Seg has been fortunate to have covered the Reds, Bengals, Bearcats, Muskateers, RedHawks and amateur sports since the 1980's. He has worked with legends Trump, Cris Collinsworth, Boomer Esiason and Andy Furman on Sportstalk over the years.

Cincinnati Sports Story of the Year:

A new award created this year Cincinnati Sports Story of the Year goes to University of Cincinnati Head Football Coach Brian Kelly & the Bearcat team. 2007 saw the rebirth of the University of Cincinnati football program under the direction of new head football coach Brian Kelly. After leading UC to a win in the 2007 International Bowl in his first game as a Bearcat, Kelly set to work on building a new football tradition at Cincinnati ... one of a championship program. In his first full season as head coach, Kelly guided the Bearcats to six-game winning streak to start the year, a 10-3 record, and the 2007 Papajohns.com Bowl Championship. The 10 wins tied the school record for the most in a single season and pushed UC for a first time to a No. 17 ranking in the final Associated Press Poll. Kelly's high-powered offense and stingy defense sent a spark throughout a Cincinnati community which rallied behind the team and filled Nippert Stadium with a school-record three sellouts.

CSPN Scholarship Recipient: NKY University Senior Michael Mertle received a \$1500 scholarship as a worthy student studying in the sports business industry. Michael scholastic accomplishments include carrying a 3.5 cumulative GPA, youth sports coach; member of the Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society; member of the Golden Key International Honor Society; and a volunteer for student mentor program at the Center for Peace Education. On the scholarship application, Michael answered the following question of why he felt deserving of the CPSN scholarship. Michael's reply, "I am extremely motivated, hard working and intelligent. Additionally, I am very skilled in all types of analytical problem solving and easy to work with. Therefore, I will be a great addition to this area's working sports professionals." (Pictured with Gale Sayers and Sgt. William Bell)

Gale Sayers Legacy:

Pride, poise, leadership, dedication and loyalty are all traits exhibited by NFL Hall of Famer Gale Sayers. Following an incredible football career with the Chicago Bears, Sayers began another successful career in business following the same principals he used on the field. After completing his professional football career, Sayers launched a Sports



Marketing and Public Relations firm, Sayers and Sayers Enterprises. Following a successful career in athletic administration and sports marketing, Gale launched a computer supplies business in 1984. Today, Gale has built that business into a world-class provider of technology products and services, and a premier minority-owned business enterprise (MBE). Gale's autobiography, "I Am Third", was produced into an award-winning television movie, "Brian's Song." The movie featured the special personal and professional relationship between Sayers and his cancer-stricken teammate, Brian Piccolo.

Gale hosted book signings at the Reds Monday game and the CSPN Awards Ceremony. **For those interested in getting their own newly released personalized autographed book 'Sayers, My Life and Times' please send a tax-deductible donation in the form of a check or money order for \$40 to Gale Sayers, 1150 Feehanville Drive Mount Prospect, IL 60056. All**



proceed to benefits the Gale Sayers Center, an after school program for disadvantaged youth. (Pictured to the left City Council Member David Crowley giving Gale and Ardie Sayers Key to the City)

CSPN serves as a networking organization for area sports professionals offering regularly scheduled programs and an annual awards ceremony for the sports business community. CSPN is a program fostered by the Greater

Cincinnati Sports Corporation, the region's non-profit sports commission representing the Cincinnati USA, Northern Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureaus. For more information visit www.CincySports.org.