

**Annual Salute to**

**WOMEN  
IN  
SPORTS®**

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A FUNDRAISING BENEFIT



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**Wednesday, October 16, 2024**



*Billie Jean King playing tennis in middle school*



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# 1974

## WELCOME

Welcome to our Annual Salute to Women in Sports! The *biggest night in women's sports* is even bigger this year, as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF.)

And what a year it has been for WSF! From co-hosting a Women's History Month reception honoring the societal impact of women in sports with the Vice President of the United States and celebrating our 50-year legacy by lighting the iconic Empire State Building in WSF colors to proudly joining USTA in advocating for the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of our Founder — who will be the first individual woman athlete to receive this prestigious honor — and cheering on 60 WSF grant recipients as they competed in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris, this year has been a year for the history books, fitting of WSF leadership and legacy.

# 2024







## WELCOME

Fifty years ago, shortly following the enactment of Title IX — the landmark law that helped pave the way for girls’ and women’s participation in sports — WSF was founded by sports icon and social justice pioneer Billie Jean King as one of the **first** organizations to recognize the role of sports in helping girls and women achieve their full potential in sports and life. What was started by our visionary founder in 1974 with a \$5,000 check has grown into a multifaceted organization that has invested over *\$100 million* to help girls and women play, compete, and lead — in sports and beyond — without barriers.

Five decades of impact; look how far we have come. The explosion of interest and excitement today around women’s sports — shifting from “having a moment” to being recognized as a powerful movement — is not a coincidence. It is a direct result of the passage of Title IX 52 years ago. The girls and women playing today are beneficiaries of those 37 words, having had access to sports throughout their lives. As much as we celebrate that progress, we also know there is still much more work to be done to fulfill Title IX’s full promise. Our work is not done yet.

It takes vision, courage, and resilience to accelerate progress. Our honorees this year exemplify that. The grit and determination of The 99ers™ to use their platform to advocate for better pay and working conditions set an example that future women’s teams and leagues followed; visionary investors like Kimbra and Mark Walter who went all-in to launch the Professional Women’s Hockey League, which saw record attendance, surging viewership and new partnerships in its inaugural year; and this year’s rookie class of the WNBA adding to the league’s powerful legacy while shattering records, spurring next-level excitement, and carrying the torch forward.



# WELCOME

Though no matter the level of play, the profound impact of sport participation continues to reverberate across culture and society as evidenced by our latest breakthrough WSF research. Our recently published *Play to Lead* report – a **first of its kind** study canvassing seven generations of women in their 20s, 30s and up to 80s – shows that the skills, traits, and experiences girls learn through the transformative power of sport can build a vibrant leadership pipeline that benefits society and bolsters the economy. Additionally, our *Thriving Through Sport* report published earlier this year, demonstrates how sport participation cultivates positive mental health in girls, fostering lower levels of anxiety and depression, and higher levels of meaning and purpose.

Our research is more than just data. Each report's findings help us prove why sports are a **must-have** for ALL girls and women, fueling our advocacy and community programming that help strengthen the entire sports ecosystem. Investment in sports for girls and women will help us achieve equality in life, which is vital because **when girls play, they lead, and we all win.**

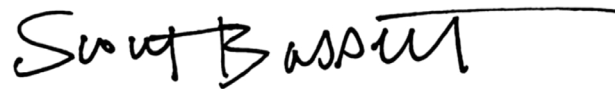
Our work and impact would not be possible without the support of our exceptional group of stakeholders – our founder Billie Jean King, our Board of Trustees and Trustees Emeriti, our National Partners, corporate supporters, athletes, fellow advocates, and generous individuals who support us with their sustaining contributions each year. Thank you!

The leaders of tomorrow are the girls and women of today, and that is why it is imperative we support and invest in their limitless potential on and off the field of play. It will take us all to propel our mission for the next 50 years. We got this; *let's GO!*

Yours in sport,



Danette Leighton  
Women's Sports Foundation CEO



Scout Bassett  
Women's Sports Foundation President



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES & TRUSTEES EMERITI

## Executive Committee

- Billie Jean King**, Founder & Honorary Chair
- Danette Leighton**, Chief Executive Officer
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- Scott Pioli**, Secretary-Treasurer; Committee Chair
- Jim Wilkinson**, Committee Co-chair – Development

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| Larissa Fontaine        | Becky Morgan     | Mori Taheripour    |                    |







# GALA SCHEDULE

- Red Carpet Arrivals
- Cocktail Reception
- Annual Salute Begins
- 50 Years of Impact
- CEO Remarks
- Special Tribute
- Dinner
- Billie Jean King Leadership Award
- Next Gen Award
- 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sports 4 Life – Impact Moment
- President’s Remarks
- Celebration of Paris '24 Olympians & Paralympians
- Wilma Rudolph Courage Award
- A Salute to our Madam Presidents & WSF Captains



# PRESENTING PARTNERS



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## Change the Game Supporters

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Sandy Vivas and Bridget Belgiovine

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Kathleen Kayse and Hope Hughes  
Jaime Knopman  
Sarah Lesko  
Little League International  
Marvella: The Girls Sports Leadership  
Experience  
Bernard Muir  
Next League  
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©Seattle Seahawks

# BENEFACTORS

## Elite Ticket Supporters

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- OneTeam Partners, Athlete Division
- Scott and Dallas Pioli
- Racquet Sports Professionals Association
- Boyd Schoeller
- SDI Sports
- Judy Sladky
- Jeremy Snyder
- Stiff Sports Media Consulting
- Jean Tatge and Phil Collis
- Lisa Wilson-Foley
- Joanna Wolkowski and Susan West

## Half Page Commemorative Message

- Kansas City Current

## Donations

### \$5,000

- Christine Driessen
- Danette Leighton
- Aimee Mullins
- Sarah Robb O'Hagan
- Judith Sweet

### \$2,500

- Anne Hoge

### \$500

- Ann Meyer-Drysdale
- Sharon Taylor

### Up to \$499

- Yvonne Arnold
- Bell Marketing
- Gerard Bifulco
- Dorothy and Robert Colburn
- Sandra Hufford
- Cynthia Jones
- John Keyser
- Lawrence Lefkowitz
- William Payne
- Susan Schafer
- Katherine Switzer
- Jacqueline Williams

## OUR FOUNDER

### Billie Jean King

Sports Icon and Equality Champion

Named one of the “100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century” by *Life* magazine and the first female athlete to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Billie Jean King is the founder of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative, the Women’s Tennis Association and the Women’s Sports Foundation, and part of the ownership groups of the Los Angeles Dodgers, Angel City FC and the Los Angeles Sparks.

In her legendary tennis career, King captured 39 Grand Slam singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles, including a record 20 Wimbledon championships. Her historic win over Bobby Riggs in the 1973 Battle of the Sexes, is one of the greatest moments in sports history. In June 2022, she received France’s highest order of merit, the Ordre national de la Légion d’honneur, from President Macron, and was inducted into the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee Hall of Fame as a special contributor.

In 2020, Fed Cup, the world cup of women’s tennis, was renamed the Billie Jean King Cup, making it the first global team competition to be named after a woman. In 2019, King’s Southern California roots were recognized with the opening of the Billie Jean King Main Library in her hometown of Long Beach, Calif. In 2006, the home of the US Open was renamed the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in honor of her accomplishments on and off the court. In 2017, Fox Searchlight released the critically acclaimed film, *Battle of the Sexes*, which depicts the cultural and social impact of the groundbreaking match.

In 2018, King received a Lifetime Achievement Award as part of the prestigious BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards. In 2021, she received the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award and the *Sports Illustrated* Muhammad Ali Legacy Award. King serves on the board of the Women’s Sports Foundation, is an adidas Global Ambassador and is the Honorary Lifetime President of the Elton John AIDS Foundation and a past member of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. King is a *New York Times* best-selling author, and her memoir, *ALL IN: An Autobiography*, was published by Knopf in 2021 and released in paperback in 2023.







**DANETTE LEIGHTON**  
Women's Sports Foundation CEO



**48%**

of women who played sports have held formal leadership roles, with 71% of those women holding titles like Manager, Director, President, or C-Suite Executive

**SPORT BUILDS LEADERSHIP. #PLAYTOLEAD**



**FOLLOW  
THE  
LEADER**

#PlaytoLead



TAG A LEADER IN YOUR LIFE AND USE THE HASHTAG #PlaytoLead!

## #PLAYTOLEAD

As we at WSF rejoice in 50 years of changing the game, our latest research report, *Play to Lead: The Generational Impact of Sport on Women's Leadership*, proves why we all must work together to propel our vital mission into the next 50 years.

### Youth Sports Fuel Women's Leadership and It Is Time to Prioritize Participation

*Play to Lead* is more than a research report, it is a **call to action** for all to prioritize youth sports participation, proving that the skills, traits and experiences girls learn from sports transcend the field of play, and have the ability to build a vibrant leadership pipeline that benefits society and bolsters the economy. Its findings shine a critical light on why **we must invest** in youth sports programs because the report shows that girls who play sports, at any level, will develop the skills to lead in their communities, schools and workplaces.

### How to Get Involved and Spread the Word

We invite you to join our **#PlayToLead** social media campaign and share how your personal sports journey has helped you lead throughout your life. Your participation will help place a spotlight on the fact that sport is more than just a game – it is a vital tool in nurturing the next generation of leaders who will shape our world.

Join us and share how you **#PlayToLead** by using our "**Play to Lead Toolkit**," which provides all the details and information you need to participate and amplify this powerful movement. Access the toolkit today; and together, let's show the world why sports are a **must-have** for all girls!

*When girls play, they lead, and we all win!*



## SALUTE HOSTS

### Mary Carillo

Sports Broadcaster, Emmy Award Winner

Widely regarded as one of the most talented and opinionated network TV sports announcers, Mary Carillo currently works for NBC Sports and was a correspondent for “Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel” for 27 of its storied 29-year run. She recently wrapped up her 16<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games and has covered every major tennis tournament for more than three decades. She is the winner of four Emmys and three Peabody Awards, and is in the Sportscasters Hall of Fame. Prior to picking up the microphone, she won the 1977 French Open mixed doubles title with her childhood friend, John McEnroe.





## SALUTE HOSTS

### **Ari Chambers**

ESPN & Andscape Commentator, WSF Board Member

Ari Chambers, a *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Honoree, has quickly emerged as a trusted voice in women's sports. Known for her work as a multimedia journalist, host, and women's sports and culture amplifier, Chambers is an expert storyteller who uplifts the voices of women athletes through a blend of non-traditional media vehicles to close the coverage gap for women's sports. Ahead of joining ESPN and ESPN's Andscape in 2024, she founded and drove the success of Warner Bros. Discovery's HighlightHER, a rapidly growing women's sports platform. She also coined the phrase "THE WNBA IS SO IMPORTANT," which became the tagline for Twitter Sports' WNBA 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign. Beyond her reporting and commentary, Chambers is known for her advocacy work and has been a voice for social justice, as well as gender and racial equity in sports.

## SALUTE HOSTS

### Julie Foudy

Three-time Olympic Medalist, Soccer

One of sport's most recognized personalities, Julie Foudy has leveraged an accomplished soccer career into a leading role as a women's sports advocate and respected sports reporter and commentator. Foudy, a four-year All-American at Stanford University, played for the U.S. National Women's Soccer Team (USWNT) for 17 years, serving as captain for 13 years. She won two World Cup Championships, two Olympic gold medals and one Olympic silver medal. Foudy also served as the Women's Sports Foundation President from 2001-02 and was a member of its Board of Trustees for seven years. In 2003, she was appointed by President Bush and Secretary of Education Rod Paige to the Commission on Title IX. "Laughter Permitted with Julie Foudy," the podcast she launched in 2019, continues to receive rave reviews as she hosts trailblazers from across the women's sports ecosystem.



# ATHLETES & SPECIAL GUESTS

**Katrina Adams**, Tennis  
**Lucinda Adams**, Track & Field  
**Lisa Andersen**, Surfing  
**Femita Ayanbeku**, Para Track & Field <sup>SBG</sup>  
**Scout Bassett**, Para Track & Field, WSF President <sup>B, C, TT</sup>  
**Alycia Baumgardner**, Boxing  
**Lisa Bluder**, Basketball  
**Samantha Bosco**, Para Cycling  
**Toni Breidinger**, Auto Racing <sup>C</sup>  
**Swin Cash**, Basketball <sup>B</sup>  
**Sunny Choi**, Breaking  
**Mary Ellen Clark**, Diving  
**Meryl Davis**, Ice Dancing <sup>C, SOY</sup>  
**Donna de Varona**, Swimming <sup>PP</sup>  
**Sonya Deville**, WWE  
**Sasha DiGiulian**, Climbing <sup>C</sup>  
**Ann Meyers Drysdale**, Basketball  
**Nicole Edelman**, Volleyball  
**Logan Eggleston**, Volleyball  
**Grete Eliassen**, Freestyle Skiing <sup>PP, C</sup>  
**Aja Evans**, Bobsled <sup>C, TT</sup>  
**Lorrie Fair**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage Award Honoree  
**Joy Fawcett**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage Award Honoree  
**Diana Flores**, Flag Football

**Julie Foudy**, Soccer, Annual Salute Co-Host, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage Award Honoree <sup>PP</sup>  
**Rachel Garcia**, Softball <sup>C</sup>  
**Mikyla Grant-Mentis**, Ice Hockey  
**Adeline Gray**, Wrestling <sup>CCG</sup>  
**Tobin Heath**, Soccer  
**Jayna Hefford**, Ice Hockey  
**Jessica Heims**, Para Track & Field  
**Sophia Herzog-Gibb**, Para Swimming <sup>C, TT</sup>  
**Sara Whalen Hess**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage Award Honoree  
**Wendy Hilliard**, Rhythmic Gymnastics <sup>PP, TT</sup>  
**Sarah Hughes**, Figure Skating <sup>C, SOY</sup>  
**Erin Jackson**, Speedskating  
**Ashleigh Johnson**, Water Polo <sup>SOY</sup>  
**Billie Jean King**, Tennis, WSF Founder  
**Ilana Kloss**, Tennis <sup>B</sup>  
**Phaidra Knight**, Rugby, MMA <sup>PP, B, C, TT</sup>  
**Vanita Krouch**, Flag Football  
**Jordan Larson**, Volleyball <sup>SOY</sup>  
**Jeanette Lee**, Pool  
**Evy Leibfarth**, Canoe/Kayak <sup>TT</sup>  
**Cassidy Lichtman**, Volleyball  
**Jessica Long**, Para Swimming <sup>C</sup>  
**Air Force 2 Lt. Madison Marsh**, Miss America 2024  
**Dana Mathewson**, Wheelchair Tennis

PP – Past President, Women's Sports Foundation; B – Current Member, Board of Trustees; C – Current Member, WSF Captains Team; TT – Grantee, Travel & Training Fund; CCG – Grantee, Child Care Fund; RKG – Grantee, Rusty Kanokogi Fund; SBG – Grantee, Scout Bassett Fund; WR – Wilma Rudolph Courage Award, past recipient; BJK – BJK Leadership Award, past recipient; SOY – Sportswoman of the Year, past recipient



# ATHLETES & SPECIAL GUESTS

**Tatyana McFadden**, Para Track & Field, Marathon,  
Para Nordic Skiing<sup>WR</sup>

**Cheryl Miller**, Basketball

**Benita Fitzgerald Mosley**, Track & Field<sup>PP</sup>

**Maria Liana Mutia**, Para Judo<sup>RKG</sup>

**Clervie Ngounoue**, Tennis

**Alana Nichols**, Wheelchair Basketball, Para Alpine Skiing,  
Paracanoeing, Para Surfing<sup>PP, C</sup>

**Melissa Ortiz**, Soccer

**Olivia Pichardo**, Baseball

**Amy Purdy**, Para Snowboarding

**Christie Pearce Rampone**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph  
Courage Award Honoree

**Dawn Riley**, Sailing<sup>PP</sup>

**Jocelyn Rivas**, Marathon

**Angela Ruggiero**, Ice Hockey<sup>PP, C</sup>

**Izzy Scane**, Lacrosse

**Kendall Coyne Schofield**, Ice Hockey<sup>WR</sup>

**Lauren Scruggs**, Fencing

**Briana Scurry**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage  
Award Honoree

**Claressa Shields**, Boxing, MMA<sup>SOY</sup>

**Judy Sladky**, Ice Dancing

**Amanda Sorensen**, Auto Racing

**Lyn St. James**, Auto Racing<sup>PP</sup>

**Maggie Steffens**, Water Polo<sup>SOY</sup>

**Rennae Stubbs**, Tennis

**Kathrine Switzer**, Marathon<sup>BJK</sup>

**Naya Tapper**, Rugby

**Ali Truwit**, Para Swimming

**Kristen Ulmer**, Extreme Skiing

**Parker Valby**, Track & Field

**Brenda Villa**, Water Polo<sup>B, C</sup>

**Heather Watanabe**, Freestyle Skiing

**Saskia Webber**, Soccer, 2024 Wilma Rudolph Courage  
Award Honoree

**Lora Webster**, Sitting Volleyball<sup>CCG</sup>

**Mallory Weggemann**, Para Swimming<sup>TT</sup>

**Jordan Whetstone**, Marathon

**Lauryn Williams**, Bobsled, Track & Field<sup>C</sup>

**Lindsey Zurbrugg**, Wheelchair Basketball

PP – Past President, Women's Sports Foundation; B – Current Member, Board of Trustees; C – Current Member, WSF Captains Team; TT – Grantee, Travel & Training Fund; CCG – Grantee, Child Care Fund; RKG – Grantee, Rusty Kanokogi Fund; SBG – Grantee, Scout Bassett Fund; WR – Wilma Rudolph Courage Award, past recipient; BJK – BJK Leadership Award, past recipient; SOY – Sportswoman of the Year, past recipient

## ATHLETES & SPECIAL GUESTS

### Community Partners & Young Athletes

#### **Girls in the Game, Chicago, Ill.**

**Dawn Kobel**, Director of Development and Communications

**Jessica Larson**, Senior Manager of Community Impact & Strategy

**Abigail Delgado**, Regional Programs Coordinator

**Alecia Ivery**, Programs Director

**Meghan Morgan**, Executive Director

**Keimya O Freeman**, Teen Programs Coordinator

**Laila Alexandria Brooks**, Program Participant

**Jailah Taylor Camille Lewis**, Program Participant

**Tiffany Latriece Lewis**, Parent

**Jocabed Leyva**, Senior Programs Manager

### Award Presenters

**Lucinda Adams**

**Ann Meyers Drysdale**

**Tobin Heath**

**Billie Jean King**

**Cheryl Miller**

*as of October 10, 2024*



Annual Salute to

**WOMEN  
IN  
SPORTS<sup>®</sup>**



**OUR 2024 HONOREES ARE...**





## BILLIE JEAN KING LEADERSHIP AWARD

### **Kimbra and Mark Walter**

Philanthropists committed to equity and opportunity in sports and beyond

For decades, Kimbra and Mark Walter have been working to make the world a better place, one investment at a time. They share a commitment to social justice and equity that has led them to help drive the explosive growth of women's sports. Their understanding that women's sports is a wise investment, their bold choice to go all-in on a new professional women's league, and their determination to empower women athletes in different arenas are why they are this year's Billie Jean King Leadership Award recipients.

Kimbra is a distinguished attorney, and Mark is the CEO of TWG Global and Guggenheim Partners. Mark and his partners purchased the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2012 and revived the storied franchise. The relationships the Walters built with other members of the ownership group have further shaped their sports investment journey.

## BILLIE JEAN KING LEADERSHIP AWARD

Not long after Mark, basketball legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson and their investment partners acquired the Dodgers, they saw that the future of the Los Angeles Sparks was at risk. The importance of preserving one of the original WNBA franchises made it an easy decision for members of the group to purchase the Sparks in 2014 – keeping the team’s legacy intact while continuing to grow its fan base. Today, the Sparks remain one of the more popular teams in the league, as the WNBA continues to reach new heights in attendance.

Additionally, the Walters and a number of their partners have acquired stakes in the iconic Los Angeles Lakers and Chelsea Football Club franchises; the commercial arm of the Professional Squash Association; the Billie Jean King Cup, the world cup of women’s tennis; and the Andretti Global motorsports conglomerate.

Kimbra and Mark have founded or are major benefactors of several organizations that expand opportunity for young people from under-served communities. These include the Academy Group, Chicago Beyond, OneGoal and the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation. And through TWF Conservation, the Walter family works to save imperiled species and natural habitats around the world by protecting wildlife, securing vast wilderness areas, and establishing assurance populations.

It is no surprise that Kimbra and Mark would hit it off with sports icon, social justice pioneer and WSF Founder Billie Jean King and WSF past Board Chair Ilana Kloss, who became part of the Dodgers ownership group in 2018. Together, they led the launching of the Professional Women’s Hockey League (PWHL). The six-team league dropped the puck commencing its inaugural season in January 2024, which led to record-breaking attendance, viewership, social engagement and new partnerships.

Though they avoid the spotlight as they create meaningful change, their work is extraordinarily worthy of recognition. Kimbra and Mark have shown that intentional investments and hard work can build a more equitable world – in sports and beyond.



©NBA Photos/Getty Images

## NEXT GEN AWARD

### WNBA Rookie Class of 2024

Watching a WNBA game today is power and promise in action: the power of its foundational legacy and the promise of the next generation. Talent and thrilling competition have always been in the league; now the world knows it. The momentum of the past several years — parents taking their daughters and sons to WNBA games, kids lining up to get player autographs, NBA players and Hollywood stars wearing the league’s orange hoodie — has led to this 28<sup>th</sup> season’s sold-out arenas, record-breaking viewership, and unprecedented merchandise sales. Together, these mark a well-deserved reflection on the grit and determination of the hundreds of women athletes who have steadily built the league from its tipoff on June 21, 1997, to the present.

But this season is special. The next-level buzz happening around the women’s game is due in large part to one of the most star-studded and stacked rookie classes in the league’s recent history. The 2024 WNBA Draft class not only brought their talent to the league, but also came with social media influence and marketing clout — which helps further grow WNBA coverage, viewership, and followers.

This group is changing the game. For their collective impact building on the foundation and propelling the



## NEXT GEN AWARD

game to new heights, the WNBA rookie class of 2024 is receiving the Women's Sports Foundation's first-ever Next Gen Award.

This rookie class was drafted into a WNBA that looks far different than it did when the formation of the league was first announced in April of 1996. That inaugural 1997 season, and many seasons that followed, came before the proliferation of smartphones, social media platforms, and NIL deals. These powerful tools have helped players build their own brands and become recognizable household names – which in turn has helped the league reach a formidable \$1 billion valuation, making it the first women's sports league valued in the billions. No small feat, it has taken investment over time at all levels of the sports ecosystem to achieve.

Watching the WNBA 2024 rookie class fiercely compete on the court – and influence culture off the court – is witnessing the impact of Title IX play out in live action. This landmark law has led to increased opportunities for girls and women – in basketball and beyond – and as a result, we have progressively seen more players with remarkable talent vying for the 144 roster spots throughout the league's 12 teams. Title IX's 37 words changed the trajectory of women's sports that this season's rookies have benefited from throughout their lives.

History in sport is both past and present; a collection of firsts on which foundations are built and records are made and in time surpassed by the next generation. Over its almost three-decade

history, players of the WNBA have helped their teams win back-to-back league championships, led Team USA to winning gold in a record eight straight Olympic Games, and showed the world how a league dedicates an entire season to social justice. All of this and more helped grow the game and pave the path for the generation that followed.

Today, we see rookies accomplishing great feats, such as Angel Reese setting a new WNBA record for the most consecutive double-doubles (15); Caitlin Clark compiling the most points, assists, and 3-point field goals made by a rookie in WNBA history; Rickea Jackson scoring over 400 points; and more. A fitting return on the pre-draft excitement that saw massive lines wrapped around the Barclays Center and a record 2.45 million viewers tune in, broadcast partners commit to increasing the number of nationally televised games, and for the first time in league history, three teams sell out their season ticket plans well ahead of May's season tipoff.

It's clear that the future of women's basketball is bright. And in this moment, it is important to give a "shout out" to all the women that built this sport and League, those that came before its formation, and those that have been building it for the last 28 years. And *now*, here's to the Next Gen who will boldly carry the torch forward.



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## WILMA RUDOLPH COURAGE AWARD

### The 1999 U.S. Women's National Soccer Team

Instant legends with a lasting impact

It has been 25 years since the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team's legendary penalty shoot-out against China during the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup final, which secured the team — who became known as “The 99ers™” — a victory in front of 90,000 fans at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif. It is a triumph that is remembered for catalyzing so much more than just winning a game. It was a moment that inspired millions around the world and changed the trajectory of women's sports forever. What makes The 99ers deserving of the Women's Sports Foundation's Wilma Rudolph Courage Award is not only their grit, power and determination demonstrated on the pitch that day, but also how they have bravely used their platform to advocate for critical gains in soccer and, more broadly, for girls and women, that have reverberated throughout the sports ecosystem.

The 99ers' fight for equality, including better pay and working conditions, has been well documented, but some may not realize that their uphill battle began a few years prior to that epic Women's World Cup final in Pasadena.

## WILMA RUDOLPH COURAGE AWARD

Ahead of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta — where women's soccer made its debut — the U.S. Soccer Federation locked out nine players from training camp for advocating for equitable contracts between the women's and men's teams. After several weeks, their tenacity paid off. They secured new contracts that guaranteed bonuses for making the podium, not just winning gold, as well as previously unheard-of basic benefits, including paid pregnancy leave, severance pay, additional performance bonuses and paid childcare for two of the players who had young children. Though the nine holdouts' first-ever chance to compete at the Olympic Games was on the line, they knew they could use their platform for good and make a difference for future generations. They returned to the team in early 1996 and went on to win gold in Atlanta.

Their Olympic gold put women's soccer on the national map; yet ahead of the 1999 Women's World Cup, the team found itself in another dispute, this time against FIFA, which wanted the World Cup matches to be played in small stadiums solely in the Northeast. Confident in their ability to draw big crowds fitting for a global sport tournament, the team petitioned FIFA, arguing that the women's tournament should be played inside big stadiums in major cities, just like the men did in 1994. Despite offering virtually no financial support, FIFA gave them the green light. The team bet on itself, and they won big. They played first in front of a sold-out crowd at Giants Stadium, where iconic boy-band \*NSYNC performed at the opening ceremony; and the final

at the Rose Bowl drew such large numbers that it got Jennifer Lopez's attention, filming her music video for "Let's Get Loud" live ahead of kickoff.

The 99ers' success was a testament to the power of unity. As they stood together, prioritizing "we before me," they refused to accept minimal support from the U.S. Soccer Federation. They found their own sponsor for the World Cup victory tour, leading to improved salaries, better training facilities, and enhanced recovery benefits. Their collective effort laid a strong foundation for future achievements, including the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team's landmark equal pay lawsuit, which resulted in a historic settlement in 2022, and the passage of the Equal Pay for Team USA Act by Congress.

WSF founder Billie Jean King's vision to pave a path to equity for girls and women both on and off the field of play was exemplified by The 99ers' courage to challenge the status quo. Their determination moved the needle forward and helped women's sports get to where they are today — shattering records and outdated assumptions. They fueled the flame of progress, and, though there is still work to do, their impact should never be forgotten.



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# WOMEN'S SPORTS FOUNDATION TEAM

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## IN MEMORIAM

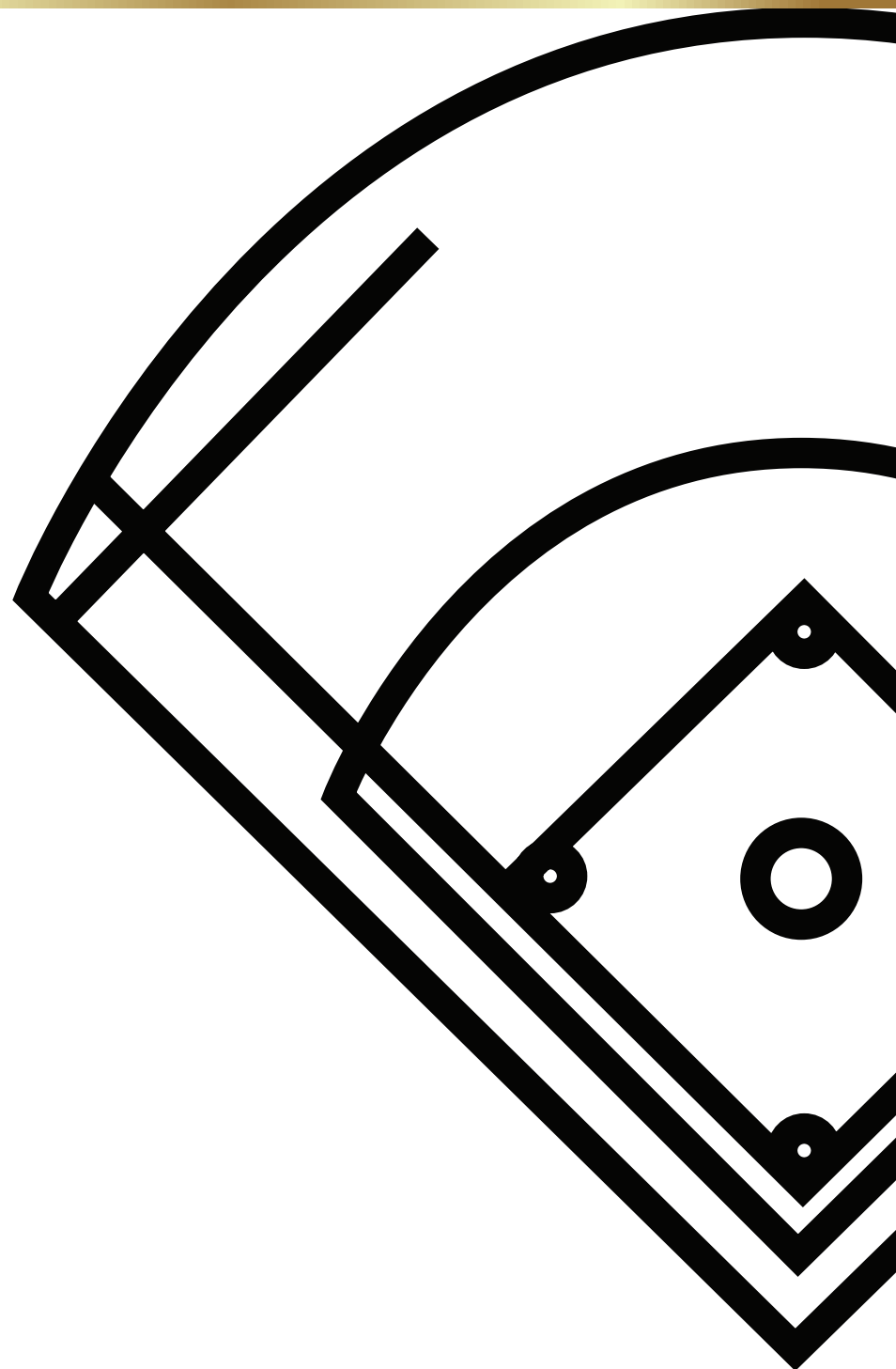
### **All-American Girls Professional Baseball League**

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was a professional women's baseball league, which was founded by Philip K. Wrigley in 1943 and existed until 1954. The AAGPBL is the forerunner of women's professional sports leagues in the United States. More than 600 women played in the league, which eventually consisted of 10 teams located in the American Midwest. In 1948, league attendance peaked at over 900,000 spectators. The most successful team, the Rockford Peaches, won a league-best four championships. The 1992 motion picture *A League of Their Own* is a mostly fictionalized account of the early days of the league and its stars.

All members were inducted into the 1988 Baseball Hall of Fame.

**Maxine Edna (Drinkwater) Simmons, 87, Baseball**  
South Bend Blue Sox

**Jeanette Stocker Bottazzi, 96, Baseball**  
Kenosha Comets



## IN MEMORIAM

### **Tasha Butts, 41, Head Coach, Basketball**

As a college basketball star at Tennessee, Tasha Butts played for the legendary Pat Summitt, going 124-17 with her on the court. She was part of four SEC regular-season championship teams and advanced to the NCAA championship game in 2003 and 2004. Butts was picked 20th by the Minnesota Lynx in the 2004 WNBA draft; in addition to Minnesota, she played for Charlotte and Houston. After her time in the WNBA, she joined the Georgia Tech women's basketball staff as an assistant coach and was named associate head coach two years later. After Georgia Tech, she joined Georgetown University as the head women's basketball coach.

### **Rebecca Cheptegei, 33, Cross-country, Long-distance and Marathon runner**

Rebecca Cheptegei, finished in 44th place at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Cheptegei also won gold at the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2022. After completing her first marathon in 2021, she set a Ugandan record of 2:22:47 in 2022 in what was just her fourth race at 26.2 miles.

### **Michaela DePrince, 29, Ballerina**

Michaela DePrine grew up as an orphan in Sierra Leone, Africa. At the orphanage, she saw a photo of an American ballet dancer in a magazine that would change her life. DePrine was adopted by an American family that enrolled her in dance classes once she learned English. She dedicated her life to ballet

and earned a scholarship to the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at the American Ballet Theater in New York. She then became a principal dancer with the Dance Theater of Harlem, where she was the youngest principal dancer in the theater's history and was recruited by the Dutch National Ballet in Amsterdam. DePrine performed in lead roles in "The Nutcracker" and "Coppelia," and was a soloist in "Cinderella" and George Balanchine's "Tarantella."

### **Josie Harper, 81, Head Coach, Athletic Director**

Josie Harper's career at Dartmouth began in 1981, becoming the head women's lacrosse coach and assistant field hockey coach. Five years later, Harper led the team to the program's first Ivy League Championships in 1986 and 1987. Continuing her storied career, Harper joined the U.S. women's national team as an assistant coach for the first Women's Lacrosse World Cup in 1982 in England and served as the head coach for the 1986 World Cup. After her time as a coach, Harper worked in administration at Dartmouth, she went on to become the first female Ivy League athletic director. In 2006, she was inducted into the USA Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

## IN MEMORIAM

### **Cindy Lewis, 66, Sports Administrator**

Cindy Lewis was a two-sport athlete at Hofstra, spending four seasons playing field hockey and lacrosse. Lewis went on to earn a master's degree in physical education from the University of New Hampshire, before returning to Hofstra to serve as the head coach of both the field hockey and women's lacrosse teams. During her time at Hofstra, she worked as the executive associate director of athletics, senior woman administrator, and Title IX coordinator. One of her biggest accomplishments was overseeing the introduction of women's soccer and women's golf as intercollegiate sports. She also was very involved in the growing lacrosse and field hockey in the community, serving as president of the Long Island Women's Lacrosse Association and as a women's lacrosse official on both the collegiate and high school levels. Lewis was inducted into the 2022 Hofstra Athletics Hall of Fame and the 2020 Long Island Metropolitan Lacrosse Foundation Hall of Fame. In August 2023, she received the CAA's John H. Randolph Inspiration Award.

### **Dr. Carol Ludvigson, 63, Head Coach, Golf**

Dr. Carol Ludvigson was deeply invested in the University of Oklahoma (OU), spending more than 40 years as part of the athletic department as a student-athlete, coach, and administrator. While playing golf at OU, Ludvigson was a three-year team captain and three-time Academic All-American. From 1985 to 2009, she was the head women's golf coach, taking the team to the 1991 Big Eight Championship and 2000 Big 12 Championship, becoming one of only a few coaches to win

team titles in both leagues. During her tenure as head coach, the team won 31 tournaments and made five NCAA tournament appearances; and she was named co-national coach of the year in 1995, Big Eight Coach of the Year in 1991 and 1995, and Big 12 Coach of the Year in 2001. After 24 years of coaching, she worked as an academic advisor and then director of student-athlete development in 2013, before becoming deputy athletics director. In 2022, the Dr. Carol Ludvigson OU Women's Golf Leadership Award was established with Ludvigson as the first recipient.

### **Kristina Navarro-Krupka, 39, Athletic Director**

Kristina Navarro-Krupka served as UW-Platteville's athletic director for four years, where she led the university's Division of Athletics and Recreation. In addition to her role in the athletic department, Navarro-Krupka taught five courses at UW-Platteville and coordinated the graduate program in sports administration. She attended UW-Madison's School of Education and earned her Ph.D. from the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in 2012. In 2014, she received the school's Outstanding Recent Graduate Award.



## IN MEMORIAM

### **Margot Pilovy, 85, Lawyer, Title IX and Gender Equity Advocate**

Margot Pilovy was a college tennis player, a physical education teacher, and a graduate of New York University School of Law. After graduation, Pilovy was hired as an associate counsel by the Federal Communications Commission, she also worked for Representative Bella Abzug of New York in Washington before starting a law firm, Renouf & Pilovy, where she was then recruited by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). Pilovy worked as a lawyer for the AIAW and partnered with the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education to insist that the "regulations being drafted to implement the legislation fulfill the expectations of the organizations' supporters." Pilovy left her mark on the world of sports by ensuring that college athletic departments offer women equal opportunities to participate in sports.

### **Kasha Rigby, 54, Expedition Skier**

Kasha Rigby is recognized for having the first climb and ski descent of Cho Oyu (26,907 feet), also credited as the first telemark descent; for her Mongolia Women's Ski Expedition, in which her team was first to ski the Five Holy Peaks in Tavan Bogd and many more big mountain recognitions. In 1995, she joined The North Face where she became teammates and friends with Hilaree Nelson, and together, they put together the Hanuman Tibba Women's Expedition. Rigby is one of three American women to ski an 8,000m peak in the Himalayas.

### **Stephanie Sparks, 50, Golf**

Co-host of "Big Break" and host of "Golf with Style," Stephanie Sparks was a former All-American golfer at Duke University. She finished tied for 10th in the 1993-94 NCAA championships and finished tied for 25th in the 1995-96 NCAA championships. After college, Sparks continued her success winning the 1992 North and South Women's Amateur at Pinehurst, and in 1993 she won the Women's Western Amateur, Women's Eastern Amateur and the West Virginia State Amateur. Sparks played one season in the LPGA before having to retire due to injury.

### **Terry Taylor, 71, Sports Editor**

Terry Taylor was the first woman sports editor of The Associated Press. In her over 20 years at the Associated Press, Taylor covered the Olympic Games, the World Cup, and many leagues and teams across the world. Taylor covered figure skating at the 1984 Olympic Winter Games, and in 1985 she was named assistant sports editor in charge of enterprise coverage. In 1987 she was named deputy sports editor and directed coverage of the 1988 Winter and Summer Olympic Games. After a brief time away from the AP, Taylor returned as assistant chief of the bureau in New York supervised coverage of the 1992 Olympic Games and took over as sports editor a few months later. Taylor's incredible career has been recognized by many, receiving the 2018 Red Smith Award by the Associated Press Sports Editors for outstanding contributions to sports journalism, as well as the Association for Women in Sports Media's 2016 Mary Garber Pioneer Award.

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Proud to support the 2024 Annual Salute to Women in Sports as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Women's Sports Foundation.



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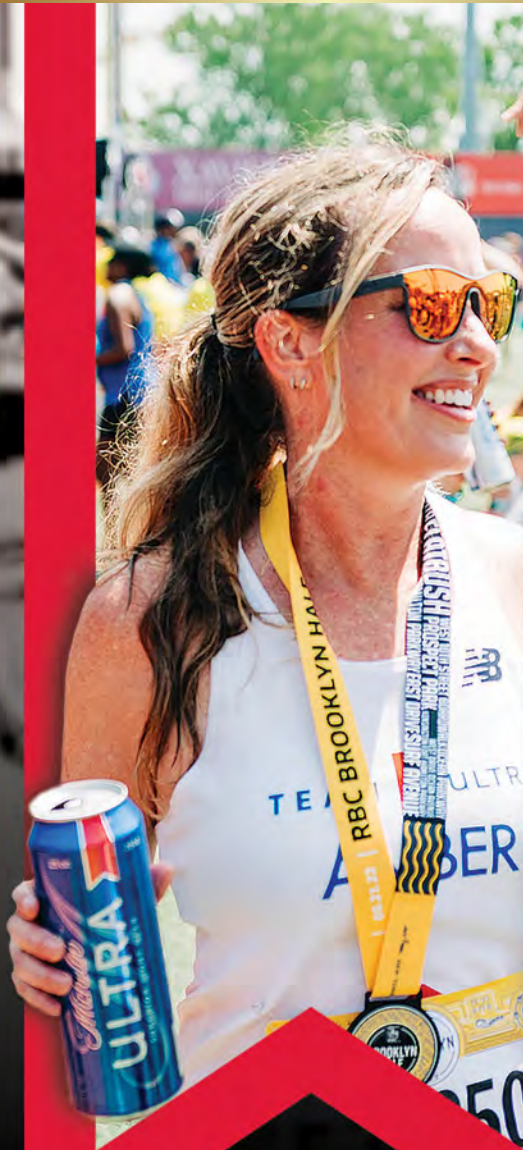
Gatorade salutes the Women's Sports Foundation on 50 Years





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# Here's to the gamechangers.

To the Women's Sports Foundation® 2024 Honorees—and everyone working toward equality in sports and beyond—Gainbridge salutes you and your achievements.

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**KIMBRA AND MARK WALTER**

AND ALL OF TONIGHT'S HONOREES



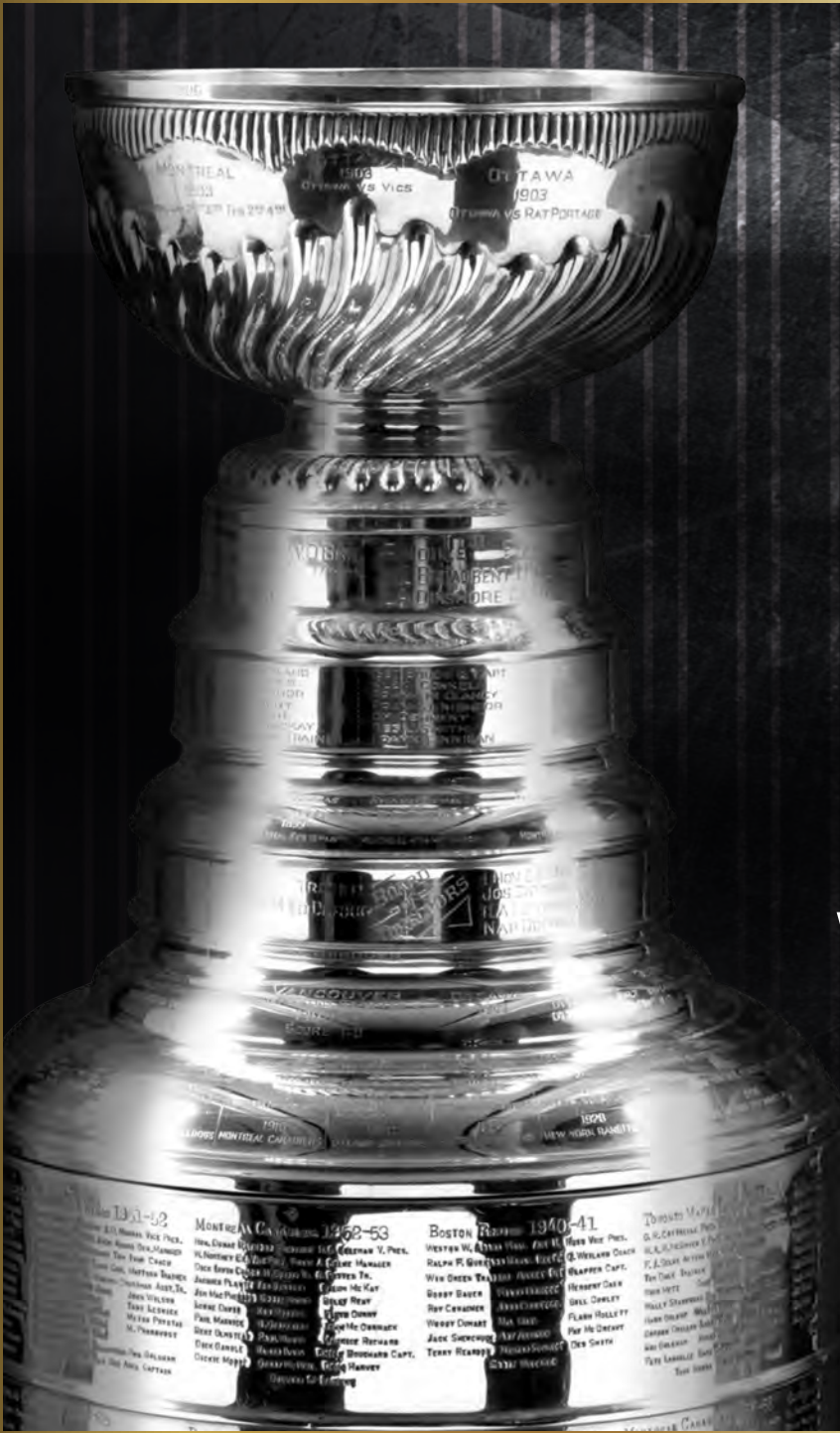
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# CONGRATULATIONS

The NBA and WNBA congratulates all tonight's honorees,  
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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONOREES**  
**KIMBRA AND MARK WALTER**

**BILLIE JEAN KING LEADERSHIP AWARD**

**THE 1999 U.S. WOMEN'S**  
**NATIONAL SOCCER TEAM**

**WILMA RUDOLPH COURAGE AWARD**

**WNBA ROOKIE CLASS OF 2024**  
**NEXT GEN AWARD**

The NHL is proud to support the Women's Sports  
 Foundation on 50 years of changing the game



*Congratulations*  
to tonight's honorees

and  
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and the Women's Sports Foundation  
for your commitment to  
improving the lives of girls and women  
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TO THE 2024 ANNUAL SALUTE TO  
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