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GEORGIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES 2010 INDUCTION CLASS
Selections Showcase Breadth and Depth of Talent in Peach State

MACON, GA – The Georgia Sports Hall of Fame’s Honors Court met on Thursday and selected **Al Ciraldo, Edward Everett, Ernie Johnson, Sam Mitchell, Larry Rakestraw, Ronald Simmons, and Suzanne Yoculan** as the GSHF Class of 2010. These 7 individuals were chosen from an eligible pool of 252 nominees as those men and women who best exemplify the tradition of sports excellence in the State of Georgia.

“Georgia is truly blessed to have such a wide array of talented people in the world of sports”, commented GSHF Executive Director Jacquelyn Decell. “It is our privilege each year to be able to give voice to the citizens of our state in congratulating our inductees on a job well done.”

The 2010 Induction Class highlights the broad range of sports in which Georgia’s athletes excel. The class includes two broadcasters, a golfer, a basketball player, a multi-sport athlete, a football player, and a gymnastics coach. The combined careers of those selected span six decades.

Al Ciraldo was born in Akron, Ohio but spent 43 years as the play-by-play announcer for Georgia Tech football and basketball games beginning in 1954. Over his career he called 416 football games and 1,030 basketball games for the Yellow Jackets including Georgia Tech’s 1990 Citrus Bowl victory over Nebraska and the basketball team’s Final Four appearance the same year. Ciraldo’s signature kickoff call, “Toe meets leather”, remains famous throughout college football.

Edward Everett is a native of Macon where he attended both Lanier High School and Mercer University. Everett began winning golf tournaments at the age of 11 in 1955 at the Macon Junior Tournament and continued to win tournaments as an amateur and professional for more than 40 years. Among his many tournament victories are the Rose City Open in 1973, 1975, and 1976; the Perry Classic in 1990; the Georgia Senior Open in 1997 and 2000; and the National PGA Senior Club Professional Championship in 1997.

Ernie Johnson grew up in Vermont before becoming a pitcher for the Boston Braves, Milwaukee Braves, and Baltimore Orioles. Johnson’s greatest contribution to baseball, however, came as the iconic voice of the Atlanta Braves from 1966–1999. Named Georgia Sportscaster of the Year in 1977, 1983, and 1986, he also won three regional Emmy Awards in 1993, 1995, and 1997. Johnson was elected to the Atlanta Braves Hall of Fame in 2001.

Sam Mitchell was a two year starter on the basketball team at Columbus (GA) High School where he earned All-City honors. From there, he went on to lead Mercer University to the TAAC Championship and a berth in the NCAA Tournament in 1985, and he remains Mercer's all-time leading scorer with 1,986 points. Mitchell played professionally in Canada and France before joining the NBA's Minnesota Timberwolves in 1989. He is second only to Kevin Garnett in all-time scoring and rebounding in Timberwolves' franchise history. As head coach of the Toronto Raptors, Mitchell was named NBA Coach of the Year in 2007.

Larry Rakestraw is a native of Atlanta where he attended West Fulton High School. At West Fulton, he was a four year letterman in baseball and football and a three year letterman on the basketball team. In 1959 he was named to the All-State Football Team and was selected as the Back of the Year by the Atlanta Touchdown Club. As a baseball player and football player at the University of Georgia, Rakestraw was named MVP of the baseball team in 1961 and threw for 407 yards against Miami in 1963 to break the NCAA record for passing yards at that time. He went on to play professional football for the Chicago Bears and Atlanta Falcons and has won numerous amateur golf tournaments since his retirement from the NFL.

Ronald Simmons was born in Perry, GA and led Warner Robins High School to the state and national championships in 1976 as a defensive lineman. He played college football at Florida State and has been credited by Bobby Bowden as one of the key players in beginning the long run of success for the Seminoles. Simmons was a Consensus All-American at FSU in 1979 and 1980 and finished his career with 25 sacks and 44 tackles for a loss. Drafted by the Cleveland Browns in the third round of the 1981 NFL draft, he chose to play in the USFL and later became a professional wrestler.

Suzanne Yoculan led the University of Georgia's Women's Gymnastics Team to one of the greatest runs of success in any sport in NCAA history. Over her 26 year career, the Gym Dogs won 16 SEC titles and 10 NCAA titles including five consecutive national championships from 2005-2009. Yoculan coached 37 gymnasts that won NCAA individual championships and 58 gymnasts that garnered a total of 306 All-America honors. She was named National Coach of the Year five times and SEC Coach of the Year eight times. Yoculan retired from coaching in 2009 with a career record of 836-117-7.

The 2010 Georgia Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony will be held in Macon in February.

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