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**Four Outstanding Individuals Selected to Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2022**  
***Selections Represent Basketball, Football and Administration; Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title IX***

Louisville, Ky. – May 19, 2022 – Four individuals with strong Kentucky connections who have made outstanding contributions to sports have been selected for the Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame (KSHOF) Class of 2022.

The announcement was made today at a press briefing at Freedom Hall by the Louisville Sports Commission, owners and operators of the KSHOF.

Comprising the 45<sup>th</sup> KSHOF class are Mitch Barnhart, nationally renowned athletics director at the University of Kentucky (UK) since 2002; Michael Bush, football star at Louisville Male High School, the University of Louisville and in the NFL in the early 2000s; Sue Feamster, former UK athletic administrator and trail blazer for girls' and women's participation in athletic competition starting in the late 1960s; and Dallas Thornton, basketball star at Male, Kentucky Wesleyan and the Harlem Globetrotters in the 60s, 70s and 80s.

A selection committee comprised of 17 sports media professionals from throughout the Commonwealth, along with the Bygone Era Selection Team, chose this year's class. All votes by the selection committee were independently tabulated by regional accounting firm Dean Dorton, one of the largest accounting and advisory firms in Kentucky, with offices in Louisville and Lexington.

The 2022 KSHOF class members and their families will be honored on Aug. 22, 2022, at the Galt House Hotel in downtown Louisville. For ticket information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Julie Howell at [jhowell@louisvillesports.org](mailto:jhowell@louisvillesports.org) / (502) 587-6742.

The KSHOF is owned and operated by the Louisville Sports Commission, a Kentucky-based non-profit whose mission is to attract, create, host and operate sporting events and activities that enhance the quality of life of the Commonwealth. The KSHOF was founded in 1963 to recognize athletes and sports figures who are Kentucky natives or who participated in their respective sport or made a significant impact in their sport in Kentucky.

"The KSHOF Class of 2022 recognizes four outstanding individuals who represent a broad spectrum of sports and occupations – individuals who had a major impact on sports in the Commonwealth and on the national stage," said Louisville Sports Commission President and CEO Karl F. Schmitt Jr. "Sue Feamster's role championing girls' and women's sports is compelling and a fitting way for the KSHOF to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Title IX legislation. The selection of Michael Bush and Dallas Thornton acknowledges the long history of outstanding athletes from Male High School, the University of Louisville and Kentucky Wesleyan. And the selection of Mitch Barnhart celebrates the on-going success of UK athletics under his tenure dating back more than two decades."

## The KSHOF Class of 2022:

**Mitch Barnhart** – Athletics Director at the University of Kentucky since 2002, Mitch Barnhart has led the Wildcats' program to unprecedented success while also serving in leadership roles in college athletics. Under his watch, UK has earned top-20 finishes the last four years in the national all-sports standings; six national championships (men's basketball, women's volleyball, rifle); 48 regular season and conference tournament championships, including first-ever Southeastern Conference titles in baseball, men's golf, women's tennis and women's swimming and diving; a current streak of six consecutive football bowl games; 20 consecutive semesters of a department-wide 3.0 grade-point average; 4,000 hours of annual community service; school records for student-athlete graduation rates; and perfect marks every year in the 18-year history of NCAA Academic Progress Rate. He also has overseen more than \$300 million facility improvements and operated a balanced budget annually with no state or university funds. Barnhart was Chair of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee in 2020-21, and working alongside the Committee and NCAA staff, led the successful implementation of a plan to stage the entire 68-team tournament in one city during the height of the pandemic. That same year, the UK volleyball and rifle teams won national championships and the Wildcats finished 12<sup>th</sup> in the NACDA Directors' Cup national all-sports standings. Barnhart has led the development of numerous programs that invest in the overall success of UK student-athletes during and after their years on campus, and he has served on the NCAA Division I Council and Division I Baseball Committee, served as chair of the NCAA Competition Oversight Committee and currently serves on the Collegiate Football Playoff Committee. In 2019 he was named Athletic Director of the Year by *Sports Business Journal*.

**Michael Bush** – A two-sport star at Louisville Male High School, Michael Bush went on to a stellar football career as a running back at the University of Louisville (UofL), then played six seasons in the NFL. At Male, Bush twice earned the Paul Hornung Award as the state's best prep football player, was named Mr. Football and Gatorade Player of the Year as a senior and was runner-up for Mr. Basketball, averaging 21.1 points and 10.5 rebounds per game. As a sophomore and junior, he amassed 3,031 yards and 37 touchdowns as a receiver and led the team in tackles. As a senior quarterback, he passed for 2,891 yards and 35 touchdowns and was a workhorse in the memorable 59-56 state championship loss to Trinity: he passed for 468 yards and six touchdowns, rushed for 116 yards and a score, caught two passes, recorded five tackles, and returned one punt and one kickoff. In three seasons as a running back at UofL, Bush rushed for 2,508 yards and 39 touchdowns and caught 50 passes for 651 yards and two touchdowns. He had six 100-yard rushing games in 2005 when he set a single-season school record for rushing touchdowns (23) that still stands. Bush played in three bowl games, including a dominating fourth quarter rushing performance in a 44-40 win over Boise State in the 2004 Liberty Bowl. As a senior, he rushed for 128 yards and three scores in the Cardinals' opening win over Kentucky before suffering a season-ending injury in the third quarter. Bush was drafted by Oakland, and played four years for the Raiders and two with the Chicago Bears, recording 3,250 yards rushing and 29 touchdowns and 1,010 yards receiving and two touchdowns.

**Sue Feamster** – Starting in the late 1960s, Frankfort native Sue Feamster was a trailblazer in the advocacy for women's participation in college athletics nationally, played a vital role in helping UK become a national leader in this area and was a champion for girls' high school sports in Kentucky. She played tennis in high school when few sports were available for girls, then earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at UK where she worked with club and intramural sports for women. While still a graduate assistant at UK, Feamster was the mastermind behind a high school invitational tournament to determine a girls' basketball state champion before the KHSAA implemented the Girls' Sweet

Sixteen. Feamster joined the UK faculty where she served on the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW), founded in 1969 to govern women's sports and sponsor national championships. When the CIAW transitioned into the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), UK became a founding member. Feamster was one of the founding members of the Kentucky Women's Intercollegiate Conference (KWIC) that provided college sports teams in Kentucky opportunities to compete in postseason tournaments starting in 1971 and served as the organization's president 1975-77. After the passing of Title IX, Feamster developed a strategic plan for UK women's athletics, then oversaw the administration of UK women's athletic teams for several years; was head women's basketball coach in the mid-70s; and as assistant athletic director (1978-86), developed programs and hired coaches for swimming and diving, tennis, volleyball, golf and gymnastics. On the national level, Feamster served on three powerful committees at the NCAA: the Special Legislative Committee, the Division I Steering Committee and the Television Committee. She also served as Secretary for the SEC Women's Athletic Directors Council.

**Dallas Thornton** – Louisville native and Male High School alumnus Dallas Thornton was a star basketball player at the high school, college and professional levels. He was a four-year starter at Kentucky Wesleyan where he started a school-record 112 straight games and played for the 1966 and 1968 NCAA DII national champions and the 1967 runners-up. He was named to the NCAA All-Tournament team in '67 and '68 and earned first team All-American as a senior, second team All-American as a junior and third team All-American as a sophomore. He was invited to the 1968 Olympic Trials. Thornton averaged 17.5 points and 8.1 rebounds per game for his college career and was drafted by the Baltimore Bullets in the NBA and the Miami Floridians in the ABA. He played two years in the ABA then spent 17 years with the Harlem Globetrotters where he visited 75 countries, traveled the globe three times and performed at Queen Elizabeth's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at Windsor Castle. He appeared in several TV shows as a Globetrotter, has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and was the guest of two presidents at the White House. Thornton has been inducted into six sports halls-of-fame, including the National Small College Hall of Fame in 2021. Prior to Kentucky Wesleyan, Thornton was an outstanding four-sport star at Male High School. He earned prep All-American honors in basketball as a senior at Male High in 1964 averaging 16.5 points 14 rebounds per game. A three-time All-State selection in basketball during his prep career, Thornton also played football, threw a no-hitter in baseball and ran track as a sophomore and junior, leading Male to state finals in 880-yard relay.

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#### **ABOUT Louisville Sports Commission**

The Louisville Sports Commission (LSC) is a Louisville, Kentucky-based 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to create a legacy of economic and social vitality through sports. The LSC attracts and hosts sporting events and activities that have a positive economic impact on Louisville, enhance the area's image as a premier sports destination, promote active lifestyles and improve the quality of life for community members of all ages, and connect local businesses with student-athletes for future job opportunities. More information is available online at [louisvillesports.org](http://louisvillesports.org) and [www.facebook.com/louisvillesportscommission](http://www.facebook.com/louisvillesportscommission).

#### **ABOUT Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame**

The Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame (KSHOF) was founded in 1963 to recognize athletes and sports figures who were born in, or who played their respective sport in, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Each inductee is recognized with a bronze plaque that historically has been showcased at Freedom Hall at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky. After a hiatus in the 1970s and 1980s, the KSHOF was

reinstated. In 2018, the Louisville Sports Commission became the overseers and administrators for all aspects of the KSHOF.