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Five Outstanding Individuals Selected to Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2023
Selections Represent Basketball, Football, Media and Administration

Louisville, Ky. – May 23, 2023 – Five 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 2023, representing the 60th anniversary of the KSHOF.

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 46th KSHOF class are Rick Bozich, multi-time award-winning sports reporter and columnist at the Courier-Journal and WDRB.com; Brigid DeVries, trailblazing administrator at the University of Kentucky (UK) and the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA,) coach and innovator for women's and girls' sports in Kentucky; Tom Leach, longtime radio voice of UK basketball and football and multiple-time Eclipse Awards winner; Chris Lofton, SEC's all-time leading three-point shooter who played 15 years of pro basketball abroad; and William "Bubba" Paris, All-American at Michigan, no. 1 draft pick and three-time Super Bowl winner at offensive tackle for the San Francisco 49ers.

A selection committee comprised of 16 sports media professionals from throughout the Commonwealth chose this year's class. All votes by the selection committee were independently tabulated by regional accounting firm Dean Dorton, one of Kentucky's largest accounting and advisory firms, with offices in Louisville, Lexington and Raleigh, N. C.

The 2023 KSHOF class members and their families will be honored on Sept. 12, 2023, in Freedom Hall in Louisville. For ticket information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Julie Howell at jhowell@louisvillesports.org / (502) 587-6742.

"The KSHOF Class of 2023 recognizes five 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 Greg Fante. "This year's inductees represent a diverse mix of accomplishments – media, sports and administration. Each has worked diligently to make a difference in their specific areas, which is fitting as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the KSHOF."

In addition to announcing this year's class, the Louisville Sports Commission stated that Freedom Hall is now the official KSHOF enshrinement gallery. The announcement was made to recognize the venue's rich legacy in sports and deepens Freedom Hall's connection to Kentucky's sporting heritage.

"We're proud to announce Freedom Hall as the official enshrinement gallery for the Kentucky Sports Hall of Fame. This move not only honors our state's rich athletic history but also reinforces our commitment to serving as an iconic entertainment venue," said David S. Beck, president and CEO of Kentucky Venues. "It's our privilege to be the home for these celebrated sports legends, enhancing our ability to attract a diverse range of events and further driving economic growth for the Commonwealth."

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 as well as individuals who participated in their respective sport or made a significant impact in their sports-related field in Kentucky.

The KSHOF Class of 2023:

Rick Bozich. Gary, Ind., native and Indiana University graduate, Rick Bozich landed at the Louisville Courier-Journal (CJ) in 1978 and for the past 45 years has forged an award-winning career as a sports reporter and columnist covering local, regional and national events. Bozich spent more than three decades at the CJ then moved to WDRB in 2012 and during that span has covered 34 NCAA Men's Final Fours, 11 World Series, three Summer Olympics and countless University of Louisville, University of Kentucky and Indiana University men's and women's games. He has won numerous first-place awards from the Associated Press for columns, features and game stories. Bozich was inducted into the U.S. Basketball Writers Hall of Fame in 2009 and the Indiana Sportswriters and Sportscasters Hall of Fame in April 2023.

Brigid L. DeVries. Lexington native and UK graduate Brigid DeVries served as an administrator and coach for track & field, volleyball, golf and swimming and diving during UK's transition from club sports to intercollegiate athletics. DeVries joined the KHSAA in 1979 as an Assistant Commissioner, and in 2002 became the first female Commissioner. She was one of only three women at the time to head a state high school athletic association in the U.S. During her 31 years at the KHSAA, she was a pioneer for increasing high school sports opportunities for girls and boys, proactively emphasizing Title IX compliance and initiating programs to ensure competitor safety and coaching education. DeVries was a member of the National Federation of High Schools Board of Directors, and Gender Equity and Strategic Planning Committees. She was inducted into the Dawahare's KHSAA Hall of Fame in 2010.

Tom Leach. Tom Leach is in his 46th year of sports radio broadcasting in his home state of Kentucky, including 34 years on the UK broadcast teams with the past 26 seasons calling play-by-play for UK football and 22 seasons calling UK men's basketball. A native of Paris, Leach began his career at age 17 as the voice for Paris and Bourbon County high school sports. He has won two Eclipse Awards for his coverage of Thoroughbred racing, six times has been selected by his peers as Kentucky Sportscaster of the Year, and for 24 years he was a news and sports reporter/director in Lexington, first for WVLK and then WLAP. Leach has written two books: "Rich Tradition" that chronicles the turnaround of UK football under Rich Brooks; and "Kentucky Basketball, 20 Years Behind the Scenes" co-authored with Mike Pratt.

Chris Lofton. Maysville native Chris Lofton led Mason County High School to three state tournament appearances; was named to the all-tournament team each year; and led the Royals to the state title in 2003 as a junior and a runner-up spot in 2004. Lofton scored 2,763 career points in high school and 252 points in 10 state tournament games. A prolific scorer at the University of Tennessee, Lofton was named third-team All-America as a freshman and second-team as a sophomore. As a junior, he averaged 20.8

points per game and was named SEC Player-of-the-Year. Lofton played 10 seasons of professional ball in Europe, including helping Le Mans Sarthe win the French Cup in 2016 and Finals MVP. In 2018, he helped Le Mans win a Pro A championship and earned all-star honors several times. He retired after playing in the Korean Basketball League.

William “Bubba” Paris. Louisville native and DeSales High School graduate William “Bubba” Paris played 10 years in the NFL as a starting offensive tackle, including nine seasons in San Francisco when the 49ers won three Super Bowls, eight Western Division Titles and played in five NFC Championship games. Paris came from humble beginnings in Louisville’s West End, worked his way through high school and earned DeSales’ team captain and MVP as a senior and is one of the school’s first inductees in its Hall of Honor. At the University of Michigan, he was an All-American and Academic All-American, played on two Big Ten title teams and in the Rose Bowl and Bluebonnet Bowl championships. Paris was the 49ers’ no. 1 pick in the 1983 NFL draft. Since retiring, he has launched a successful sports media career that spans three decades, is an ordained minister, accomplished public speaker and writer.

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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 and 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 made a significant impact in their respective sports-related field in, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Each inductee is recognized with a bronze plaque that is showcased in the iconic 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 overseer and administrator for all aspects of the KSHOF.