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NFL PLAYERS TO BE HONORED WITH JB AWARDS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AT ANNUAL NFL PLAYERS GRIDIRON GALA TO BENEFIT SPECIAL OLYMPICS DC HOSTED BY PLAYERS INC & NFLPA

March 28, 2006 —On Tuesday, April 18, **James Brown**, who is returning to CBS Sports as host of “THE NFL TODAY,” along with **Michael Wilbon** of the *Washington Post* and ESPN’s “Pardon the Interruption,” will honor some of the NFL’s biggest heroes at the NFL Players Gridiron Gala featuring the JB Awards, an annual awards presentation that benefits Special Olympics D.C. For the third consecutive year, the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) and PLAYERS INC have partnered with Brown to recognize NFL players for their individual contributions to their communities with the JB Awards.

“I am privileged to once again join efforts with the NFLPA and PLAYERS INC in their annual tradition of honoring NFL players for their off-the-field achievements,” said Brown. “Bringing together these positive role models for a benefit that makes a difference in the lives of the courageous men, women and children of Special Olympics DC is an honor.”

Honorees to receive individual *JB Awards* include **Mark Brunell** (Washington Redskins) – *Perseverance*; **Ernie Conwell** (New Orleans Saints) – *Act of Kindness*; **Brett Favre** (Green Bay Packers) – *Courage*; **Darrell Green** (former Washington Redskin) – *Lifetime Achievement*; **Joe Horn** (New Orleans Saints) – *Act of Kindness*; **Ray Lewis** (Baltimore Ravens) – *Empowering Youth*; and the late **Wellington Mara** and **Robert Tisch** (New York Giants’ President/Co-Chief Executive Officer and Chairman/Co-Chief Executive Officer) – *Executive Leadership*.

Additionally, *JB Award* recipients were nominated by their teammates upon the end of the season for their commitment to achieve excellence off the field through building better communities and stronger families. Out of the 32 players nominated (one per team), Brown personally selected the following 10 players to receive a *JB Award*: **Willie Anderson** (Cincinnati Bengals), **Warrick Dunn** (Atlanta Falcons), **Joey Harrington** (Detroit Lions), **Torry Holt** (St. Louis Rams), **Kevin Mawae** (Tennessee Titans), **Steve McNair** (Tennessee Titans), **Shelton Quarles** (Tampa Bay Buccaneers), **Amani Toomer** (New York Giants), **Kurt Warner** (Arizona Cardinals), and **Roy Williams** (Dallas Cowboys). Players attending the Gala will participate in a panel discussion.

The surprise of the evening will be the presentation of the prestigious 40th annual *Byron “Whizzer” White Award*, chosen from among the 10 *JB award* winners (listed in the paragraph above) by an independent, celebrity panel of judges, including **Ted Leonsis**, Vice Chairman of America Online, Inc. and President of AOL Core Service, **Rich Trumka**, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and **Richard Weiss**, Publisher of *SportsBusiness Journal*. The “Whizzer” White Award is presented annually to the player who serves his team, community and country in the spirit of Byron Raymond “Whizzer” White. The late Supreme Court Justice was a scholar, athlete, patriot, humanitarian and public servant – the personification of the ideal to which professional football players aspire.

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“The recipients of these prestigious awards are a small representation of the hundreds of NFL players who donate their time, energy and resources to give back to their communities. They are leaders in the locker room and role models for our youth,” said Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Association.

On the same day as the gala at 10am, NFL Players will team up with Special Olympians for the annual charity basketball game. The game will be at 10am on Tuesday, April 18, at George Washington University’s Charles E. Smith Center and is free and open to the public.

Last fall, PLAYERS INC created a host committee of local business leaders to collectively strengthen the efforts of the gala in hopes of raising additional funds to more than \$1 million raised from the event over the past 10 years. To purchase a table of 10 for \$5,000, please call 202-496-2893. For further information, visit www.nflplayers.com/gala.

The gala and surrounding activities will be filmed for a one-hour television special set to air in August on FSN. Reebok is the presenting sponsor of the NFL Players Gridiron Gala, which is also sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers and America Online.

Since the awards banquet was founded in 1972, the NFLPA and PLAYERS INC have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to several worthy causes and Special Olympics D.C. has benefited from the event for 11 consecutive years.

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS:

Founded by Eunice Shriver, Special Olympics provide sports training and competition opportunities for people who are mentally challenged. The organization has established chapters in more than 20,000 communities and 140 countries around the world. For the last several years, since the D.C. chapter lost funding from the city, the NFLPA and PLAYERS INC have rallied behind them to solicit support from the business and labor communities.

ABOUT PLAYERS INC:

Formed in 1994, PLAYERS INC is the licensing and marketing subsidiary of the NFL Players Association. Representing more than 1,800 active and 3,500 retired NFL players, PLAYERS INC “takes the helmets off” the players and markets them as personalities as well as professional athletes. Through an exclusive sponsorship agreement between the NFL and PLAYERS INC, NFL players are integrated into NFL sponsor activation programs through PLAYERS INC. In addition, under an exclusive agreement between the NFL and PLAYERS INC, NFLPLAYERS.COM, PLAYERS INC’s official website, is part of the NFL Internet Network. Each year PLAYERS INC negotiates and facilitates more than 3,500 player marketing opportunities for NFL players. PLAYERS INC activities include retail licensing, corporate sponsorships and promotions, special events, radio and television projects, publishing and internet. For more information, please visit NFLPLAYERS.COM.

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