



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Legendary North Idaho College Wrestling Coach John Owen to Receive Idaho Humanitarian Award**

BOISE, Idaho, June 18, 2008 – Legendary wrestling coach John Owen, who built the North Idaho College wrestling program into a national powerhouse, has been named the 2008 recipient of the World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame's Idaho Humanitarian Award.

The Idaho Award, which will be presented during the Humanitarian Hall's 2008 Induction Ceremonies June 24 in Boise, Idaho, is presented annually to a resident of the state of Idaho whose contribution to sports in Idaho should not go unnoticed.

"Success can be assessed in many ways, in athletics and in life – wins and losses, longevity, respect, recognition, and perhaps most of all the positive influence we have on others," said Idaho Gov. CL "Butch" Otter. "By any measure, John Owen's career and life have been incredibly successful. A generation of young men, their families and the northern Idaho community benefited from his work and his integrity. Generations to come will continue to benefit from his example."

In 19 years leading wrestlers at the Coeur d'Alene school, coach Owen brought eight team national titles (1978, 1982, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1993) including four consecutive championships from 1985-88 to NIC, firmly placing the program among the nation's elite. During his career, he produced 102 All-American wrestlers and 35 individual national champions. After receiving four national Coach of the Year honors and 1989 induction into the NJCAA Wrestling Hall of Fame, coach Owen retired in 1997 with a 304-23-2 all-time career record.

Pat Whitcomb, who captured back-to-back national titles wrestling under Owen in 1986 and 1987, took over as head coach of the already successful program in 1998. Following in the path laid by Owen, Whitcomb has coached three teams to national championships (1998, 2001 and 2003) and is a two-time national coach of the year and six-time NJCAA Region 18 coach of the year.

Overall, the North Idaho College program holds the most team and individual championships and national place winners of any wrestling program in the country. Since 1969, NIC grapplers have brought 13 National Junior College Athletic Association team championships and 49 NJCAA individual championships to the state of Idaho. The school has also produced 189 NJCAA All-Americans.



Coach Owen is the first wrestling coach and the first recipient from North Idaho to win the award since its inception in 1994. Other winners include: 2007; Millford Terrell (Roady's Humanitarian Bowl / Idaho Board of Education) 2006; Bill Lofholm, Rodeo Park (Nampa) Baseball Field Caretaker. 2005; Bill Crookham, Youth Sports (Caldwell). 2004; Mac and Barbara Bledsoe, Parenting with Dignity (Orofino). 2003; Jerron Moore, Optimist Football (Boise). 2000; Wendell Christensen, City Recreation Director (Nampa). 1998; Bill Everts, City Recreation Director (Boise). 1996; Barbara Chandler, Tennis Instructor (Boise). 1994; Christin Cooper, Olympic Skier (Sun Valley).

Other humanitarian awards to be presented at the Hall's 2008 Induction Ceremonies include: USA Weekend Most Caring Youth Coach Awards: Mark Rhodes, York, Pa., Marciano Cruz, Santa Cruz, Calif., Mike McGee, Fairfield, Md. Nell and John Wooden Coaching Achievement Award: Mark and Marcy Few of Gonzaga University. Founder's Award: John Tuschman, Houston, Texas, Sports Philanthropist.

The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame Class of 2008 includes NFL running back Warrick Dunn, international basketball legend Vlade Divac and Olympic skier Jimmie Heuga. The three sports humanitarians will be enshrined in Boise for their exceptional humanitarian achievements, distinguishing them as role models in the community.

The 2008 World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies take place Tuesday, June 24 in Boise, Idaho. Tickets are available at [www.SportsHumanitarian.com](http://www.SportsHumanitarian.com).

### **About The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame**

The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame ([www.SportsHumanitarian.com](http://www.SportsHumanitarian.com)), located on the Boise State University campus in Idaho, recognizes individuals and organizations from the world of amateur and professional athletics who, through their humanitarian efforts, distinguish themselves as role models in the community. Over 35 sports-humanitarians have been enshrined in Boise including tennis great Arthur Ashe, Major League Baseball pioneer Jackie Robinson, NFL coaching legend Tom Landry, the NBA's David Robinson, soccer great Pelé and the Harlem Globetrotters. The Hall was the inspiration behind Boise's Humanitarian Bowl and its Humanitarian Awards program annually recognizes exceptional community-focused organizations and leaders from Major League Baseball, National Basketball Association, National Football League, National Hockey League, Major League Soccer, NASCAR, NCAA College Football and other organizations. The World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is open weekdays to visitors and humanitarians of all ages.



### **Idaho Humanitarian Award Recipients**

2008 John Owen, North Idaho College Wrestling Program Coeur d'Alene, Idaho  
2007 Millford Terrell, Rody's Humanitarian Bowl / Idaho Board of Education Boise, Idaho  
2006 Bill Lofholm, Rodeo Park Baseball Field Caretaker Nampa, Idaho  
2005 Bill Crookham, Youth Sports Caldwell, Idaho  
2004 Mac and Barbara Bledsoe, Parenting with Dignity Orofino, Idaho  
2003 Jerron Moore, Optimist Football Boise, Idaho  
2000 Wendell Christensen, City Recreation Director Nampa, Idaho  
1998 Bill Everts, City Recreation Director Boise, Idaho  
1996 Barbara Chandler, Tennis Instructor Boise, Idaho  
1994 Christin Cooper, Olympic Skier Sun Valley, Idaho

**- [www.SportsHumanitarian.com](http://www.SportsHumanitarian.com) -**

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