



THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ATHLETES

A 501 c 3 Non-Profit Organization

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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African American Scholar-Athletes Receive Top Honors

Washington, DC (January 2, 2020) – On **Saturday, March 14, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.**, the National Alliance of African American Athletes (The Alliance) will recognize another stellar group of high school athletes from across the nation for the **Franklin D. Watkins Memorial Award**. The award is presented each year to the nation's top African American male high school scholar-athlete.

The six finalists in alphabetical order are:

- * **Vernon Broughton**, Houston TX, Cypress Ridge High School - 4.1 GPA: National Honor Society, 2019 Perfect Attendance, 4 Year Honor Roll, Sports Camp Volunteer, Clean Up Ministry, Volunteer for the Homeless, Member of the Community Youth Leadership Program, Houston Touchdown Awardee, Pro Football Hall of Fame World Bowl Participant, Next Level MVP, Houston Class Act Awardee for Character, Adidas All Star, Houston All District, Texas All State, and Under Armour All American.
- * **Terrell "Tonka" Hemingway**, Myrtle Beach SC, Conway High School – 4.4 GPA: National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Social Studies Honor Society, English Honor Society, South Carolina Academic All American, Member of the Youth Leadership Academy, Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy, Volunteer for Conway Football Parks & Recreation, Tutor and Spokesman at Conway Elementary/Middle Schools, Volunteer with the Shepherds Table, South Carolina All Region, South Carolina Regional Defensive Player of the Year, USA Today First Team All-State, South Carolina 5A All State, and South Carolina Shrine Bowl Participant.
- * **Michael Reese**, Nashville, TN, Cane Ridge High School – 3.8 GPA: Nashville All Region Academic Award, Recipient of the Hume Academic Award, Volunteer Mentor for Best Buddies, Volunteer for Read Across American, Volunteer for Nashville Area Youth Football, Nashville Regional Player of the Year, Nashville All City, Nashville All Region, Tennessee All State, Tennessee East-West Toyota All Star Game Participant
- * **Cody Simon**, Jersey City, NJ, St Peters Prep High School – 3.9 GPA: Member of the National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, Volunteer at the Jersey Boys and Girls Club, Volunteer at the Ebony Club, Finalist for the Butkus Award, Hudson Reporter Defensive Player of the Year, USA Today All New Jersey Defensive Team, The Open Regional Linebacker MVP, New Jersey All Region, New Jersey Regional MVP, Rivals Regional MVP, Rivals Top 100, and New Jersey All State.
- * **Christopher Thompson**, Dallas, TX, Duncanville High School – 3.9 GPA: Dallas Academic All State, Member of the Fellowship for Christian Athletes, Dallas Ambassador, Dallas Area youth Mentor, Duncanville Math Leadership Program, Dallas Food Pantry Volunteer, Youth Basketball Coach, Tom Landry Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, ESPN Top 100, 1st Team All District, Texas All State, and Under Armour Football All American.

"Empowerment Through Education and Athletics"

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- * **Kourt Williams**, Harbor City, CA – St. Johns Bosco High School – 3.5 GPA: High Honor Roll, St. John Bosco Sports Camp Volunteer, Los Angeles Shadow Day Mentor, Los Angeles Community Service Project, Los Angeles Unified Literacy Coach Volunteer, Faithful Central Bible Church Volunteer, Los Angeles NOTY Award, Long Beach Defensive Player of the Year, Finalist for Los Angeles Defensive Player of the Year, Press Telegram Dream Team, Special Ops MVP All Trinity Defensive Team, Nike Opening MVP, Adidas All American, Butkus Award Nominee, 2019 Daily Breeze All Southern California, California 1st Team All State, Max Prep California All State, and Adidas All American Man of the Year.

The Watkins Award ceremony will be held at the prestigious Marriott Gateway Crystal City, Arlington, VA

"This year's 2020 Watkins Award features an incredible collection of fine student-athletes," Everette Pearsall, Executive Director of The Alliance, shares. "Each of these young men is well equipped for success academically. We have continued to recognize and honor the premier African American Scholar-Athletes in the United States."

Finalists are chosen based on their unweighted grade point average, their personal statements, extracurricular activities, community service, and letters of recommendation. Each winner will be recognized in the Washington, DC, area and each will receive an award, ring, and dinner in his hometown.

Sponsors of this year's event include our major sponsor Under Armour, JMA Solutions, Peoples Community Foundation, Walmart, Dell, Inc., Nash Management Group, Profusion, Gary McPherson Financial, Adventus Veritas, and Jostens, manufacturer of the Watkins Award trophy and rings. Media representatives are invited to cover the awards ceremony. For more information about the Watkins Award, The Alliance, or to get tickets for the awards ceremony visit our website at www.naaaa.com or email everette@naaaa.com

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The Watkins Award has been presented annually to African American scholar-athletes since 1992. The Watkins Award is named for Franklin D. Watkins, the coach of championship football and basketball teams in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Previous award winners include Heisman Trophy winner Jameis Winston of Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Rhodes Scholar Myron Rolle, Justin Blalock, formerly of the Atlanta Falcons, Gerald McCoy, 6-time Pro Bowler of the Carolina Panthers, Heisman Trophy finalists Dwayne Haskins and Bryce Love, both of the Washington Redskins, Arrelius Benn, formerly of the Jacksonville Jaguars, Ted Ginn, Jr of the New Orleans Saints, Lorenzo Alexander of the Buffalo Bills, Mercedes Lewis of the Green Bay Packers, Darnell Dinkins, formerly of the New Orleans Saints, LaVar Arrington, formerly of the Washington Redskins, Joseph Barksdale, formerly of the Arizona Cardinals, Grant Irons and Ronald Curry, formerly of the Oakland Raiders, to name a few.

The National Alliance of African American Athletes was founded in 1989. The mission of The Alliance is to empower African American males through athletics, education and public programs.

"Empowerment Through Education and Athletics"