



Advancement of Blacks In Sports Celebrates Achievements of Notable Honorees During Annual Champions & Legends Fundraising Weekend

Honoring accomplishments, advancing equality, and celebrating enduring legacies

BALDWIN, N.Y., June 3, 2024 – Advancement of Blacks In Sports (ABIS) held its Annual Champions & Legends Fundraising Weekend on May 31 – June 2, 2024 at the MGM National Harbor Hotel & Casino in the scenic area of Maryland’s National Harbor waterfront. The three-day event featured professional development sessions, a fundraising gala, and a jazz brunch. The focal point of the weekend’s events was the Champions & Legends Gala which included the presentation of awards to the following distinguished honorees:

- **Sashi Brown**, president of the Baltimore Ravens: **ABIS Executive of the Year Award**
- **Paxton Baker**, minority owner of the Washington Nationals: **ABIS Ulice Payne Ambassador Award**
- **Benjamin Crump**, trial lawyer for justice: **ABIS John Carlos/Tommie Smith Social Activist Award**
- **Dr. D’Wayne Edwards**, president of PLC Detroit: **ABIS Leadership Award**
- **Spencer Haywood**, NBA Hall of Fame: **ABIS Sonny Vaccaro Champion of Change Award**
- **Yolanda ‘Lonnie’ Ali**, wife of Muhammad Ali and philanthropist: **ABIS Lifetime Achievement Award**
- **Frank Scott**, The Wendell Scott Foundation: **ABIS Wendell Scott Pioneer Award**
- **Beverly Kearney**, six-time NCAA championships coach: **ABIS Eddie Robinson Coaches Award**
- **The 1982 Cheyney State Lady Wolves**, first and only HBCU women’s basketball team to compete in the NCAA Division 1 Final Four Championship: **ABIS Trailblazer Award**

2023 Howard University Swim Team, 2023 Northeast Conference Men's Swimming & Diving Champions, and only HBCU with a swim program: ABIS Collegiate Team of the Year Award

ABIS was established four years ago by Gary Charles following profound inspiration from the events of 2020 and the persistent racial injustices affecting our society. Recognizing the urgent need to champion racial equity, social justice, and economic empowerment, Mr. Charles resolved to leverage his platform in sports as a catalyst for meaningful change.

"The weekend has truly exceeded our expectations, celebrating the excellence and legacy of trailblazers who are advancing racial and gender equity," said Gary Charles, CEO and founder of ABIS. "It is wonderful to have so many people come together for a weekend to celebrate 'us.'"

ABIS has contributed to the rise in representation of Black athletes, coaches, athletic directors, and administrators within collegiate and professional sports. Additionally, ABIS has successfully graduated numerous students from its financial literacy program, equipping college athletes with essential knowledge and skills for maintaining their financial well-being throughout and beyond their collegiate careers.

The awards ceremony, hosted by Marissa Mitchell of Fox5 Washington, D.C., recognized distinguished honorees in ten different categories of achievement. The honorees were selected by the ABIS board members based on their diverse accomplishments and their significant contributions toward advancing racial and gender equity.

To request photos from this weekend's events, please contact yanick@uniquelyd.com.

ABOUT ABIS

ABIS is a non-profit organization with a mission to boldly advocate for a culture of equity and inclusion that results in the advancement of racial, economic, and social justice for all in sports. Founded by Gary Charles, New York's Godfather of Grassroots Basketball, in September 2020, ABIS partners with notable African Americans and social justice activists and allies. Its members include coaches, administrators, and athletes at all levels of sports, academicians, civil rights attorneys, social justice influencers, diversity, equity, and inclusion allies and advocates. To learn more, visit www.weareabis.org.

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