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Seahawks Legend K.J. Wright to Host as Megan Rapinoe Receives Humanitarian Award for 89th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards Show

SEATTLE – Today, the Seattle Sports Commission announced Seahawks Legend K.J. Wright as host of the 89th annual awards show, and global superstar Megan Rapinoe as the recipient of the Paul G. Allen Humanitarian Award presented by Microsoft. Rapinoe will accept the honor at the 89th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards Show on February 15 at The Westin Seattle alongside a lineup of Seattle all-stars and inspirational figures.

An international sensation on the soccer pitch, Rapinoe played the entirety of her professional career in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) with the Seattle Reign FC. And, as decorated as the forward is: Olympic gold medalist, FIFA Women's World Cup champion, and Ballon d'Or winner (the ultimate honor in soccer) among the stack; it is Rapinoe's unapologetic attacking power for sports equity and human rights that has cemented her as a change agent for this generation.

"I'm honored to be receiving the Paul G. Allen award this year," Rapinoe said. "As I look back on my career, I'm most proud of the work I've done off the pitch and so much of that work started and grew in Seattle. This city has become my home and I'm grateful for its continued love and support."

A 2022 recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Rapinoe wields her influence as a platform for LGBTQ+ rights, pay equity, and racial justice. Rapinoe played a pivotal role in the fight for wage parity, which resulted in the first-of-its-kind collective bargaining agreement for US Soccer. She is a cofounder with Sue Bird of *A Touch More* production company that tells the stories of revolutionaries and underrepresented communities. Locally, Rapinoe has partnered with Seattle-area Boys and Girls Club and supports the Intentionalist, a nonprofit that encourages people to "spend like it matters" by patronizing BIPOC-owned businesses across Washington.

Rapinoe is joining the previously announced roster of Honorees that includes Seattle staples who have been subjects or scribes of sports headlines. The final Honoree to round out the 89th Sports Star Awards is nationally recognized sportswriter and immortalized trickster of University of Washington's *The Daily*, Jim Caple, who passed away in October of 2023.

"Though he was best known for his work with ESPN.com, Jim always found ways to keep writing about sports in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest," said Christian Caple, Jim's nephew and sportswriter in his own right. "He grew up in Washington, he attended college here, he worked for multiple newspapers here, and it's where he made his home. We miss him every day. This honor from the Seattle Sports Commission is an excellent way to remember the impact Jim made on sports in our area, and the stories he brought us about so many of our favorite athletes, coaches, and broadcasters. And Jim would have been so thrilled to share the stage with Larry Stone, whom he greatly admired as a friend and fellow writer."

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Jim's family is confirmed to receive the award on his behalf, as Seahawks Legend K.J. Wright joins the event as host after being both a presenter and award winner at last year's Sports Star.

"I've had the pleasure of being a part of Sports Star for several years now. I love the energy, the passion, and the memories this community creates each and every year," said K.J. Wright, Seahawks Legend, and this year's host of the Sports Star Awards Show. "I can't wait to take on the role of host this year and to help celebrate the amazing individuals that influence our sports culture."

All award honorees and a yet-to-be-released roster of Sports Star and Sports Story of the Year awards nominees will join other notable sports figures for the 89th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards Show presented by Microsoft, which will be hosted from 5:30-9:30 pm at The Westin Seattle on February 15, 2024.

Reserved tables and individual tickets for the red-carpet awards show can be purchased at seattlesports.org

89th Annual Sports Star of the Year Awards Show | About the Honoree Awards

Paul G. Allen Humanitarian Award presented by Microsoft - *Given to an individual who has made a significant or compelling contribution to positively impact the sports community.*

2024 Recipient: Megan Rapinoe

Past Recipients: Doug Baldwin Jr., Russell and Ciara Wilson, Jamal Crawford, John and Traci Schneider, Sandy Gregory, Slade Gorton, Jacob Green, Ginger Ackerley, Steve Gleason, Ron Crockett, Lenny Wilkens, Detlef Schrempf, Paul G. Allen, Jamie Moyer

Royal Brougham Sports Legend Award presented by Alaska Airlines - *Given to an individual for a lifetime of achievement in sports and who exemplifies the spirit of sports in Washington state.*

2024 Recipient: Guyle Fielder

Past Recipients: Ken Griffey Jr., Jim Whittaker, Lou Piniella, Johnny O'Brien, Sue Bird, Doris Brown Heritage, Gary Payton, Warren Moon, Elgin Baylor, Bobo Brayton, Edgar Martinez, Bob Houbregs, Don James, Marv Harshman

Wayne Gittinger Inspirational Youth Award presented by Seattle Children's - *Given to a young Washingtonian athlete who has overcome significant obstacles – medical, environmental, or circumstantial – and inspired others.*

2024 Recipient: Olivia Vitello

Past Recipients: Tiago Viernes, Maealie Glanzer, Matthew Esselstrom, Claudia Longo, Elijah Hagstrom, Bretton Chittwood, Colton Schmidt, Riley Sorenson, Katie Collier, Milton Wright III, Zack Lystedt, Josh Dickerson, Jake Finkbonner, Ike Ditzenberger, Shawn Berg

Keith Jackson Media Excellence Award presented by BizX - *Given to a member of the media for excellence in communicating the sports stories of the state of Washington.*

2024 Recipients: Larry Stone and Jim Caple (posthumous)

Past Recipients: Jen Mueller, Mike Gastineau and Dave Grosby, Dean Rutz, Angie Mentink, Art Thiel, John Clayton, Rick Rizzs, Kevin Calabro, Steve Raible, Warren Miller, Bob Rondeau, Bob Robertson, Keith Jackson, Dave Niehaus

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89th Annual



Presented by  Microsoft



Sports Equity and Inclusion Award – *Presented in partnership with King County Play Equity Coalition, the recipient is an individual or organization that has served the region by designing and implementing system-level change to engage youth and families historically marginalized from sports.*

2024 Recipient: Rise Above

Past Recipients: Outdoors for All, Baseball Beyond Borders, All Girl Everything Ultimate Program (AGE UP)

Sports Leader of the Year Award – *Recognizes a leader whose efforts have demonstrated significant and positive impact within a sports organization or the Washington sports community.*

2024 Nominees: to be announced

Past Recipients: Kalen DeBoer, Alisha Valavanis, Adrian Hanauer, Gary Wright, Karen Bryant, Tod Leiweke

The Seattle Sports Commission (SSC) is committed to making Seattle a world-class sports community by creating opportunities that bring the world to the Pacific Northwest. The SSC seeks to strengthen social and economic impact, encourage generational engagement in athletics, and bolster pride in our communities. Go to seattlesports.org to learn more about the SSC. [LINK TO PRESS KIT HERE](#)