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TONY BENNETT RECIPIENT OF 2025 GENE BARTOW AWARD

Presented annually to a current or former coach for his contributions to the game.

SAN ANTONIO, TX -- Former Virginia head coach Tony Bennett is the recipient of the 2025 Gene Bartow award, which is presented annually to a current or former coach for his contributions to the game. It measures a coach's win-loss record but also the impact he's made on his players, school, and community.

Bennett spent 18 seasons as a head coach, including the final 15 years at the University of Virginia. He finished his career with an impressive 433-169 record.

His 15 seasons at UVA included two ACC Tournament titles, six regular season championships, 10 trips to the NCAA Tournament and an NCAA Championship in 2019. He posted a 364-136 record at Virginia and was named ACC Coach of the Year four times and earned National Coach of the Year three times.

"Tony Bennett embodies everything that is great about college basketball," said Joe Dwyer, President of CollegeInsider.com. "Beyond all the wins and the accolades, his coaching career will be remembered for the impact he had on so many players and coaches. College basketball needs more people like Tony Bennett."

Prior to Virginia, he spent three seasons at Washington State, where he posted a 69-33 mark and took the Cougars to the NCAA Tournament in his first two seasons. In his first season, the Cougars were projected to finish last in the Pac-10, but Bennett led WSU to 26 wins, matching the school record, and a second-place finish in the conference with a 13-5 mark. It was

Washington State's first NCAA Tournament appearance in 13 years.

The following season Washington State was ranked in the preseason AP poll (No. 10) for the first time in school history and were ranked a school-record No. 4 during the season. Washington State would advance to the Sweet 16 for the first time in school history.

Before becoming a head coach, Bennett was on the staff of his father, Dick, for three seasons in Pullman, the last two as associate head coach. The previous four years Bennett was at Wisconsin, serving on the staffs of his father, Brad Soderberg and Bo Ryan.

Bennett played for his father at Green Bay from 1989-92. He graduated from Green Bay in 1992 and finished his career as the Mid-Continent Conference's all-time leader in career points (2,285) and assists (601). His 49.7 career 3-point field goal percentage is still an NCAA record.

Bennett helped the Phoenix to an 87-34 record during his collegiate career, including one NCAA Tournament and two NIT appearances. He was twice named MCC Player of the Year, was the 1992 Frances Pomeroy Naismith Award winner (best senior player under six-feet tall) and was the 1992 GTE Academic All-American of the Year. Bennett was the 35th overall selection in the 1992 NBA Draft by the Charlotte Hornets and played with the team for three seasons.

The Gene Bartow award is named in honor of a legendary coach who compiled a 647-353 record, and is one of only 17 coaches in division I college basketball history to take multiple teams to the Final Four.

In four seasons at Memphis State, Bartow averaged over 20 wins per season and led the Tigers to the 1973 national title game.

After a one-year stint at Illinois, Bartow was given the unenviable task of following the legendary Coach John Wooden at UCLA. In his first season he guided the Bruins to the Final Four. After just two seasons in Westwood, Bartow left to literally start a new program at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB).

Seemingly unheard of today, Bartow built the program from scratch and built it into a perennial player in March. He won four Sun Belt tournament and three regular season titles during his 17 years at UAB, leading the program to a 350-193 record and seven consecutive NCAA tournament appearances.

Coach Bartow passed away in 2012 at age 81, following a two-year battle with stomach cancer.

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Jim Larranaga, Miami (2024); Jerry Wainwright, UNCW (2023); Roy Williams, North Carolina (2022); Anthony Stewart, UT Martin (2021); Tim Cluess, Iona (2020); Fran Dunphy, Temple (2019); Ron Hunter, Georgia State (2018); Pat Skerry, Towson (2017); Phil Martelli, Saint Joseph's (2016); Fran O'Hanlon, Lafayette (2015); Cliff Ellis, Coastal Carolina (2014); Bob Thomason, Pacific (2013).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25[®], the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas and Virginia.

NOTE: Portions of the press release came from University of Virginia releases.

