



CONTACT:

Alisha Greenberg
301-657-9379
agreenberg@sportsphilanthropy.com

Cincinnati Bengals' Marvin Lewis Becomes First Coach to Receive National Sports Philanthropy Award

CINCINNATI – August 24, 2009 – Marvin Lewis will become the first coach to receive the national Steve Patterson Award for Excellence in Sports Philanthropy in recognition of the impact of his work and the example it sets for all of professional sports. The Marvin Lewis Community Fund, established in 2003, has invested more than \$5 million and touched the lives of nearly 250,000 people in the Cincinnati area.

The Sports Philanthropy Project (SPP) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) established the Patterson award in 2005 in memory of Steve Patterson, the UCLA basketball star, NBA player and college coach who became known, during and after his career, for his belief in and practice of the power of sports philanthropy to make a difference in people's lives. Patterson died of cancer in July 2004 at the age of 56.

"It's an honor to be recognized for something I care about so deeply. To me, the impact we've been able to have in Cincinnati has been every bit as important and fulfilling as coaching football and winning games," Lewis said.

Lewis' initiatives over the past six years have included an incentive program that has increased the number of first- through eighth-graders earning honor roll in the Cincinnati public schools, a free football camp for athletes age nine through 14, an annual clinic for youth and high school football coaches, and a campaign to help women in the inner city access a mammogram center, among others.

"The Marvin Lewis Community Fund is an outstanding example what can be achieved when you combine the power of sports and social action," said Greg Johnson SPP's executive director. "People and franchises in all of pro sports are doing a huge amount of really incredible philanthropic work. Our hope is that this award will keep shining a light on the impact we can have as well as on the increasing number of individuals inspired to become involved."

Past recipients of the Steve Patterson Award have included the Philadelphia Eagles Youth Partnership (2005), Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation (2006), Memphis Grizzlies Charitable Foundation (2007), The Moyer Foundation (2007), San Francisco Giants Community Fund (2008) and the Steve Nash Foundation (2008).

"It is a real privilege to be able to join the Sports Philanthropy Project in presenting an award in Steve Patterson's name," said RWJF President Risa Lavizzo-Mourey. "Marvin Lewis has devoted significant resources to critical social issues, and done so in a highly strategic way. His work is having a tangible impact, and it's a model that others can really learn from."

Lewis will be recognized during an on-field ceremony prior to the Bengals pre-season home game against the St. Louis Rams at 7:30 p.m. on August 27. In September, SPP and RWJF will name the sports organization category winner that will receive this year's Patterson award.

"We're all so proud of the dedication of Marvin Lewis Community Fund and the many others who have been recognized with this award," said Carlette Patterson, president of Patterson Sports Ventures. "We hope Steve's life and legacy will continue to inspire sports teams and athletes who have the power to create substantial change in their own backyards."

About the Steve Patterson Award for Excellence in Sports Philanthropy

The Steve Patterson Award for Excellence in Sports Philanthropy is presented annually by The Sports Philanthropy Project (SPP) and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The award acknowledges sports organizations and individual athlete philanthropies that have demonstrated excellence, leadership, and a sustained commitment toward a mission that serves and improves the lives of others.

www.sportsphilanthropy.com/patterson.

About The Sports Philanthropy Project (SPP)

*The Sports Philanthropy Project (SPP) harnesses the power of sports to help build sustained and comprehensive social programs and services throughout the United States and Canada. SPP services include building partnerships with corporations and foundations; program development for teams and athletes; and building the field of sports philanthropy by providing professional development opportunities, research and best practices for professionals in the field. SPP was launched in 1998 by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For more information, visit **www.sportsphilanthropy.com**.*

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)

*The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful, and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit **www.rwjf.org**.*

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For all media inquiries, including requests for interviews and additional information, please contact Alisha Greenberg, SPP Director of Sports Partnerships, at 301-657-9379 or agreenberg@sportsphilanthropy.com.

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