

# **Coaches vs. Cancer® Honors University of South Carolina Basketball Coach Frank Martin with the 2016 Champion Award**

## **Award honors college coaches for their dedication to the mission of the American Cancer Society**

**Atlanta, GA – April 4, 2016** – University of South Carolina Basketball Coach Frank Martin has received the 2016 Champion Award, a prestigious national honor recognizing leadership in helping to save lives and celebrate life through the Coaches vs. Cancer program.

The Champion Award is presented annually to a college coach who has shown extraordinary commitment and leadership with the Coaches vs. Cancer program's fundraising, education and promotional initiatives to move one step closer to a world free from the pain and suffering of cancer. The award was presented during a ceremony in Houston on Saturday, April 2, 2016.

Coaches vs. Cancer is a collaboration between the American Cancer Society and the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) that empowers coaches, their teams, and communities to join in saving more lives. The program leverages the personal experiences, community leadership, and professional excellence of basketball coaches nationwide to increase cancer awareness and promote healthy living through year-round awareness efforts, fundraising activities, and advocacy programs.

Coach Martin has been an integral part of the annual Coaches vs. Cancer gala at the University of South Carolina, B-Ball of the South, raising nearly \$400,000 over three years for the American Cancer Society. Through this gala, he's been able to gain the support of more than 275 sponsors and supporters yearly.

"The American Cancer Society, in conjunction with the NABC, is privileged to present this award to Coach Martin for his inspirational accomplishments as an ambassador for Coaches vs. Cancer," said Gary Reedy, chief executive officer, American Cancer Society. "We are honored to have such valuable volunteer leaders like Coach Martin and his wife, Anya, who continue to help us achieve our mission to free the world from the pain and suffering of cancer."

For Coach Martin, defeating cancer is personal, as his mother in law, Valerie Forrest, is a breast cancer survivor. Coach Martin and Anya are active members of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), interacting with legislators and supporting legislative priorities.

During his tenure as coach at Kansas State, Coach Martin regularly participated in Suits and Sneakers Week, when more than 4,000 basketball coaches across the country wear sneakers with their suits during games to raise cancer awareness and demonstrate support for the American Cancer Society. Since moving to South Carolina, he has continued to make cancer a priority, supporting Coaches vs. Cancer events throughout the year.

Last year, Coach Martin and Anya dedicated the University of South Carolina basketball season to the assistant women's basketball coach Nikki McCray, who was battling breast cancer, helping raise breast cancer awareness and funds. Their goal is to continue to bring forth cancer awareness and education, and engage the coaching network throughout the nation.

The Champion Award was instituted in 1996, with former Missouri Coach Norm Stewart receiving the inaugural

honor. Since that time, the award has been presented to head coaches nationally including Jim Boeheim (Syracuse); Denny Crum (Louisville); Roy Williams (then at Kansas, now at North Carolina); Riley Wallace (Hawaii); Fran Dunphy (then at Pennsylvania and now at Temple); Gary Williams (Maryland); Mark Few (Gonzaga); Mike Brey (Notre Dame); Bruce Weber (then at Illinois, now at Kansas State); Jim Calhoun (Connecticut); Tom Izzo (Michigan State); Oliver Purnell (DePaul); Paul Hewitt (then at Georgia Tech and now at George Mason); Lon Kruger (Oklahoma); Bo Ryan (Wisconsin); Steve Lavin (St. John's University); Fran McCaffery (Iowa); and now Martin.

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