



## **INAUGURAL JERSEY MIKE'S NAISMITH COURAGE AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

**ATLANTA (April 15, 2020)** – Today, the Atlanta Tipoff Club announced the winners of the inaugural 2020 Jersey Mike's Naismith High School Basketball Courage Award as sophomores LayRay Paw of Holland High School in Holland, Michigan, and Michael Beauchesne of Bay High School in Bay Village, Ohio. They will be honored in ceremonies at their respective high schools later in the year.

The Jersey Mike's Naismith High School Basketball Courage Award recognizes a boys and girls high school basketball player who has consistently gone above and beyond throughout the basketball season and has demonstrated courage in their approach to their team, their school, the game and their community. The nationwide call for entries began on January 6, when the submission process opened to high school basketball coaches and athletic directors (or administrators) around the country.

In 2010 at age six, Paw immigrated to the United States as part of a United Nations asylum program. Born in a refugee camp in Thailand after her parents fled from their home in the war-torn country of Myanmar, Paw faced adversity very early in her life. She and her siblings were raised by their eldest sister, who had to take care of all of them after their father was beaten to death and their mother passed away due to sickness. Despite the many challenges facing Paw and her siblings, they started over in the U.S., having to learn English and adjust to an entirely different culture. Ten years later, Paw has settled into a new life and is excelling in school and sports, including basketball. During the season, she helps run basketball camps for the elementary school students and is a positive influence on other players.

At age 10, Beauchesne was born with a rare genetic disorder called Mowat-Wilson syndrome. It impacts almost every system in the body including motor and developmental skills and sometimes prevents children from being able to walk or even stand. Despite his challenges, Beauchesne is an active member of the junior varsity basketball team, attending practice almost every day to cheer his teammates on. His courage and spirit are seen on a daily basis by those around him, and when he made his debut start in a junior varsity game, the entire gym saw the commitment and passion he has to the sport of basketball.

"We are proud to honor LayRay and Michael as Naismith award honorees," said Eric Oberman, executive director of the Atlanta Tipoff Club. "Their courage, persistence and passion for basketball shines through in everything they do for their teams, families and communities. Both are truly deserving of the first annual Jersey Mike's Naismith Courage Award."

Thousands of applications for the Jersey Mike's Naismith Courage Award were submitted, leading to 10 national semifinalists. From there, the two winners were chosen by an esteemed Board of Selectors, which included key journalists, former Naismith winners and Atlanta Tipoff Club board members.

"Jersey Mike's is humbled and inspired by the stories that were submitted for the Jersey Mike's Naismith High School Basketball Courage Award program," said Rich Hope, chief marketing officer, Jersey Mike's Franchise Systems, Inc. "All of the submissions represented strong examples of courage and how these

amazing student-athletes overcame obstacles. We are proud to honor LayRay and Michael as the inaugural winners of this award.”

Each winner will be honored at their school and with a special video feature of their story, which will be shared across the Naismith Trophy and Jersey Mike’s websites and social pages. Jersey Mike’s will also make a donation to the players’ high school basketball programs in honor of the two winners.

For more information about the winners, visit [www.astudentabove.com](http://www.astudentabove.com).

#### **ABOUT THE ATLANTA TIPOFF CLUB**

Founded during the 1956-57 season, the Atlanta Tipoff Club is committed to promoting the game of basketball and recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of those who make the game so exciting. The Atlanta Tipoff Club administers the Naismith Awards, the most prestigious national honors in all of college and high school basketball. Named in honor of Dr. James Naismith, inventor of the game of basketball, the family of Naismith Awards annually recognizes the most outstanding men’s and women’s college and high school basketball players and coaches. Other Naismith Awards are presented to the men’s and women’s college basketball defensive players of the year, as well as lifetime achievement awards to basketball officials and outstanding contributors to the game. UCLA’s Lew Alcindor received the first Citizen Naismith Trophy in 1969, while the late Anne Donovan (Old Dominion) was the inaugural women’s recipient in 1983. Corporate partners of the Naismith Awards include Citizen Watch Company, Jersey Mike’s and Werner Ladder.

#### **ABOUT JERSEY MIKE’S SUBS**

Jersey Mike’s, a fast-casual sub sandwich franchise with more than 2,000 locations open and under development nationwide, believes that making a sub sandwich and making a difference can be one and the same. Voted America’s Favorite Sandwich Brand in Market Force Information’s 2019 QSR study, Jersey Mike’s offers A Sub Above®, serving authentic fresh sliced subs on freshly baked bread – the same recipe it started with in 1956 – and is passionate about giving back to its local communities. For more information, please visit [www.jerseymikes.com](http://www.jerseymikes.com) or follow us on Facebook ([facebook.com/jerseymikes](https://facebook.com/jerseymikes)), Instagram ([instagram.com/jerseymikes](https://instagram.com/jerseymikes)) and Twitter ([twitter.com/jerseymikes](https://twitter.com/jerseymikes)).

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