

Summitt Honored At ESPYs

Written by Megan Spedden
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Joining an incredibly-distinguished list of honorees, Tennessee Women's Basketball Head Coach Emeritus Pat Summitt became the latest recipient of the Arthur Ashe Courage Award Wednesday night at the ESPYs. The Arthur

Ashe Courage Award is presented to individuals whose contributions transcend sports. Summitt not only has done that during her coaching career, but she displayed amazing courage in coaching the Lady Vols during the 2011-12 season despite being diagnosed last August with early onset dementia, Alzheimer's type.

After legendary Volunteer and NFL quarterback Peyton Manning set the stage by sharing about the influence that Summitt has had on so many, Tennessee-raised actress Reese Witherspoon narrated a poignant video tribute that traced the footprints of Summitt's impactful life and how she has been an example to others through dealing with the challenge that has come her way. Following a lengthy standing ovation from the star-studded audience, Manning presented the Ashe Award to Summitt. She was joined on stage by son Tyler, a former Vol basketball player and now an assistant women's basketball coach at Marquette University.

"I've always said, you win in life with people," Summitt said as she addressed the crowd. "And I have been so blessed to have great people in my life. My son, Tyler, and I appreciate all of your support.

"It is time to fight, and I ask all of you to join together with me, so we will win. I can tell you, tonight I am deeply touched as all of you heard my story. I'm going to keep on keeping on, I promise you that."

The all-time winningest coach in NCAA men's or women's basketball with 1,098 victories, Summitt stepped away from head coaching duties in April after 38 seasons. She led the Lady Vols to eight national championships, 18 NCAA Final Fours and a combined 32 SEC regular season and tournament titles during that time before handing over her whistle to long-time assistant and former Lady Vol All-American Holly Warlick.

The Arthur Ashe Courage Award: The Arthur Ashe Courage Award is presented each year to individuals whose contributions transcend sports. Past honorees include: Jim Valvano (1993); Steve Palermo (1994); Howard Cosell (1995); Loretta Claiborne (1996); Muhammad Ali (1997); Dean Smith (1998); Billie Jean King (1999); Dave Sanders (2000); Olympian Cathy Freeman (2001); Todd Beamer, Mark Bingham, Tom Burnett and Jeremy Glick, four passengers who lost their lives September 11 on United Flight 93 (2002); Pat and Kevin Tillman (2003); Liberian-born soccer legend George Weah (2004); disabled athletes Emmanuel Oforu Yeboah and Jim MacLaren (2005); Afghan female athletes (2006); and Trevor Ringland and Dave Cullen for their work with PeacePlayers (2007); U.S. Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos (2008); former president Nelson Mandela (2009); the Thomas family of Parkersburg, IA (2010); and boxer Dewey Bozella (2011).