

**ANNIE WRIGHT SCHOOLS STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 30, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Julianna Walker of Annie Wright Schools** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Walker is the first Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Annie Wright Schools.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Walker as Washington's best high school girls basketball player. Walker joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Skylar Diggins-Smith (2008-09, Washington High School, Ind.), Nneka Ogwumike (2007-08, Cy-Fair High School, Texas), Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), and Lisa Leslie (1989-90, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-4 senior guard led the Gators to a 10-0 record in this past pandemic-shortened season, averaging 34.3 points, 9.7 assists, 8.1 steals and 7.6 rebounds per game. Walker completed her prep career with 2,834 points, third in state history and just 158 behind the leader, Cashmere's Hailey Van Lith. The Nisqually League MVP, Walker was a First Team All-State selection as a junior.

A member of her church choir, Walker has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and her school's Black Student Union. "Julianna Walker is a great player, and has been for the past four years," said Mark DeJonge, head coach at Bellevue Christian High. "She has phenomenal range and an unbelievably quick shot. They ask her to score a lot, but she also showed a great all-around game."

Walker has maintained a 3.35 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Syracuse University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Walker joins recent Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Players of the Year Hailey Van Lith (2019-20 & 2018-19, Cashmere High School), and Lexie Hull (2017-18 & 2016-17, Central Valley High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Walker has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Walker is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###