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IWU's Taylor Attends NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference

INDIANAPOLIS -- Illinois Wesleyan University sophomore Gianina Taylor is one of 282 NCAA student-athletes identified as current or future leaders on their campuses and in their communities who has been selected to participate in the sixth annual NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference.

The conference is May 26-30 at Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex and the Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

Taylor, a cross country and track letterwinner from Decatur (Eisenhower HS), was the "Most Valuable Performer" for the 2001 women's track team and earned All-American status this March as part of the 4x400 relay team that placed seventh at the NCAA Division III indoor track championships.

The 2002 NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference is one of the largest non-competitive gatherings of NCAA student-athletes. The conference was designed to enhance student-athletes' leadership and communication skills to enable them to become more effective leaders and motivators when they return to their campuses. The convention setting provides the student-athletes with an opportunity to discuss key issues that affect them on campus and in their communities. The conference also provides them with exercises to enhance their decision-making and problem-solving skills, and improve planning and priority management.

The student-athlete leaders were selected from a total of 1,183 nomination forms that were submitted by colleges and universities that participate in the NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills Program. Student-athletes attending the leadership conference will represent 20 NCAA sports: alpine skiing, basketball, baseball, cross country, equestrian, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, rowing, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo and wrestling.

Criteria for selection include the student-athletes' demonstrated ability and strong desire to be a leader and the student-athletes' potential to benefit significantly from a leadership development experience. In order to be eligible for the conference, the student-athletes must be in good academic standing and must have athletics eligibility remaining in the following academic year. A committee comprised of CHAMPS/Life Skills coordinators from member institutions and NCAA student-athletes review the nominations to determine the final selections. The inaugural NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference was held in May 1997, at the Disney Wide World of Sports Complex.

For more information on the NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference and the NCAA

CHAMPS/Life Skills Program, log on to the NCAA Web site at http://www1.ncaa.org/membership/ed_outreach/champs-life_skills/index.html.

During the five-day conference, participants have the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics, such as issues that impact intercollegiate athletics and society; diversity; student-athlete welfare; social behavior; trust gaps between coaches, administrators and student-athletes; Title IX; NCAA rules; peer pressure; competition on religious holidays; and involvement in other college and university campus activities. Following the conference, the student-athletes will be asked to share their experiences and topic discussions with their campus student-athlete advisory committees as well as other campus leaders.

Lloyd Ward, U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) chief executive officer, and Donna Lopiano, Women's Sports Foundation executive director, will speak about leadership, diversity and unity in sports when they address 282 of the nation's top intercollegiate student-athletes at the sixth annual NCAA Foundation Leadership Conference.

Ward, who joined the USOC in October 2001, has an impressive corporate background. Prior to his current position with the USOC, he was chairman and CEO of iMotors.com in San Francisco, where he was responsible for all aspects of a business unit, which generated \$100 million in sales and employed 600 people.

Ward joined Maytag in 1996 and held a variety of executive positions with the corporation, which included chairman and CEO. He was named one of Brandweek Magazine's "Marketers of the Year" in 1998, and one of the "Top 25 Executives of 1998" by Business Week Magazine, before leaving Maytag in November 2000. Ward also had a successful stint with PepsiCo Inc., from 1988 to 1996, and was named Executive of the Year in 1995 by *Black Enterprise Magazine*.

Ward is a 1970 Michigan State University graduate and a former captain of the Spartan basketball team. He earned his MBA in 1984 from Xavier University.

Lopiano is one of the leading experts and resources on gender equity and is lauded by many for her activism and accomplishments with regard to women's issues in sport in the United States.

Prior to her position with the Women's Sports Foundation, Lopiano was the director of women's athletics at the University of Texas at Austin for 17 years and also served as president of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW).

She has been a college coach of men's and women's volleyball, women's basketball and softball. As an athlete, she participated in 26 national championships in four sports: softball, basketball, volleyball and field hockey. She was also a nine-time all-American at four different positions in softball, a sport in which she played on six national championship teams.

Lopiano is a member of the Softball Hall of Fame and the Texas Women's Hall of Fame.

She is also a member of the USOC Executive Board and is the author of dozens of publications.