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## WIN for KC Announces 2023 Women's Sports Awards Honorees

KANSAS CITY, MO (January 18, 2023) – On Thursday, February 9, WIN for KC will host the Women's Sports Awards presented by Burns & McDonnell. The longstanding awards ceremony, now in its 29<sup>th</sup> year, is the largest celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day in the country. This annual event recognizes women and girls throughout the Kansas City area making a difference through sports and fitness.

"Our 2023 award winners exemplify resilience, innovation and a lifelong passion for sports," says Ruth Feldblum, Director of WIN for KC. "Whether it's utilizing social media platforms to reach a global audience or spending decades leveling the playing field for women, they serve as inspiring examples for all of us."

The awards luncheon, held at Municipal Auditorium, features a networking reception from 10:30am to 11:30am, lunch from 11:30am to 1pm and an autograph session with keynote speaker **Briana Scurry**, 1999 World Cup champion and National Soccer Hall of Fame inductee, from 1pm to 1:30pm. To purchase tickets and tables or inquire about sponsorship click [here](#).

Here are the 2023 Women Sport's Award Honorees:

The **Lockton Courage Award** is presented to a local woman or girl who demonstrates the ability to redefine barriers despite physical or mental challenges through her participation in sports, who has overcome tremendous obstacles to succeed in sports, or who has made a significant comeback in life and sports.

**Katie Zornes:** In 2020, Katie suffered from an extreme depression brought on by the pandemic. In the following months, she gained more than 100 pounds, a devastating development since she'd lost more than 180 pounds over a decade ago. By the end of 2021, Katie decided she needed to do something different than the typical weight loss programs and diets which showed progress by the number on the scale. She created a challenge for herself and called it "22 hard things in 2022." Many of the goals were physical, like running a 5k, 10k and competing in a triathlon, but others were emotional and mental. As part of the challenge, Katie began posting on Instagram and TikTok to keep herself accountable. To her surprise, her social media accounts went viral and were featured on Good Morning America's website. With more than 129,000 followers on Instagram, Katie regularly reaches hundreds of thousands of people across the world and inspires them on a daily basis with her posts.

The **Kissick Construction Game Changer Award** is presented to a local individual or group who personifies the true spirit of sport not as a participant, but as a supporter, promoter, or champion of girls' and women's sports and fitness. This award recognizes those who give their all to girls' and women's sports through an outlet other than participation, working behind the scenes to promote or create opportunities that empower women and girls through sports.

**Anna Sarol:** Around the age of six, Anna began gymnastics and immediately fell in love with the sport. She progressed quickly, advancing to level 8 before high school, and dreamed of competing in the Olympics. However, at the beginning of her freshman year, Anna fell while warming up on the uneven bars. The fall resulted in a spinal cord injury and Anna lost the use of her legs. While the recovery process was arduous – physically and emotionally – Anna refused to let her injury keep her from living life to the fullest. With the help of her siblings she surprised an awestruck audience and walked at her high school graduation. Now, Anna inspires others as a motivational speaker and continues to give back to the sport she loves as the women’s gymnastics coach for the Olathe School District.

The **Hallmark Cards Leadership Award** is presented to a local female inspirational leader who best exemplifies the characteristics of a mentor to female athletes of all ages. Honorees actively make significant contributions and have a lasting impact on female athletes throughout the community.

**Krishna Lee:** Since she was a little girl, Krishna hoped to one day represent the United States in a world championship competition. As a student-athlete at University of Missouri – Columbia, she earned honors in the hammer throw and shot put, was the 2009 Big 12 Champion in hammer throw and ended her career with three Missouri All-Time Top Ten marks. After college, Krishna served as an assistant coach and Director of Operations for the track and field team. In 2015, she began playing a new sport: women’s tackle football. She first played for the KC Titans and then the Kansas City Glory. Finally, in 2022, Krishna achieved her lifelong goal, playing for Team USA in the IFAF Women’s World Championship and winning gold. Now, she leads the Kansas City Glory as its General Manager.

The **UMBFC Charitable Foundation Lifetime Sportswoman Award** is presented to a local woman, age 55 or older, who demonstrates outstanding leadership qualities, encourages participation of girls and women in sports and still engages in athletics.

**Patty Dick:** Growing up before Title IX, Patty was often alarmed and frustrated by the lack of athletic opportunities for girls and women. Her high school only offered gymnastics for female students and intercollegiate basketball and softball were not added at Washburn University until her junior year. Patty’s coaching career began in 1971 as the girl’s coach at Washburn Rural High School, one year before Title IX was passed. There was little to no budget, and she would often pick up her athletes by bus in the morning so they could practice, and tape numbers to homemade jerseys. Additionally, she was not paid for her first year of coaching. In 1977, Patty returned to Washburn University to coach softball and basketball. During an iconic tenure at her alma mater, Patty continued fighting for equality and the enforcement of Title IX, serving as a member of NCAA Division II Women’s Basketball Committee. She retired in 2000, but Patty’s legacy continues in the student-athletes she coached, the people she inspired, and the lasting changes she made for women’s athletics.

The **Children’s Mercy Sports Medicine Center Rising Star Award** is presented to a local girl (18 years of age or younger) who demonstrates outstanding leadership qualities, setting and achieving goals and has made a special impact on the community.

**Reese Bates:** A senior at Blue Valley Southwest High School, Reese is one of Kansas City’s top prep volleyball players. In addition to being an AVCA Phenom and Spectrum Sports KC Athlete of the Week, she made the Prep Volleyball Top 100, Prep Dig Watch List and All Academic 1<sup>st</sup> Team Kansas. In March of 2020, as schools and gyms closed, Reese decided to maintain her training in the family’s garage gym. She began posting videos of her drills and workouts to motivate others who were dealing with similar struggles due to the pandemic. Her social media exploded, generating millions of views, and capturing the attention of Olympian Kerri Walsh-Jennings. Reese recently accepted two DI scholarships to Jacksonville State University in Alabama to play indoor and beach volleyball.

**WIN for KC**

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The **Forvis WOW Award** is presented to an individual or group in the community who has made an outstanding impact on women and girls in sports. **This award is nominated and voted on by the WIN for KC Advisory Board.**

**KC Current Players:** With their rise from a first-year program in Kansas City in 2021, the KC Current players orchestrated one of the greatest single-season turnarounds in National Women's Soccer League history, with a thirteen-game unbeaten streak from June to August. This propelled them to a Central Division title and a spot in the NWSL Championship game. The team energized the city with its perseverance and resilience. The players are role models who are changing the landscape for women's professional soccer and sports at all levels.

For more information about the Women's Sports Awards presented by Burns & McDonnell go to <https://www.sportkc.org/win-for-kc/awards-celebration>.

#### **About WIN for KC**

The Women's Intersport Network for Kansas City (WIN for KC), was established in 1994 under the umbrella of the Greater Kansas City Sports Commission, with the mission to ignite girls and women through advocating and promoting the lifetime value of sports and fitness, while providing opportunities for participation and leadership development. WIN is a volunteer, membership-driven organization that operates as a program of the Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation. For more information, visit [WINforKC.org](http://WINforKC.org). For the latest on WIN for KC news, follow on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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