

Contact Information:

College Insider, Inc.
Natalie Rivers
(781) 414-1698
natalie_rivers@collegeinsider.com

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DAEMEN'S MIKE MACDONALD RECIPIENT OF 2025 CLARENCE GAINES AWARD

Presented annually to the top head coach in division II college basketball.

SAN ANTONIO, TX -- Daemen's Mike MacDonald is the recipient of the 2025 Clarence "Big House" Gaines National Coach of the Year award, which is presented annually to the top head coach in division II college basketball.

MacDonald led the Wildcats to one of the best seasons in program history, finishing 28-1 (16-0 East Coast Conference). Daemen finished the regular season ranked No. 1 in Division II basketball.

The longtime Wildcats head coach led Daemen to an undefeated regular season (25-0) and became the first team since C.W. Post during the 2008-09 campaign to go undefeated during the regular season. MacDonald also led the Wildcats to a No. 1 national ranking for three consecutive weeks, the first Division I or II school in New York to accomplish the feat since Syracuse was ranked No. 1 in three consecutive AP Polls from Feb. 3 - Feb. 17, 2014.

"You won't find a more humble and down to earth coach than Mike MacDonald," said Joe Dwyer, President of CollegeInsider.com. "Mike has also been an outstanding coach for many years, so it should be no surprise that he led Daemen to one of the best seasons in program history. Mike MacDonald is first class on and off the court."

The Wildcats, who have been ranked top five Dec. 17, claimed their third ECC Regular Season Title in program history and earned 20-or-more wins for the seventh consecutive full season under MacDonald, the longest such streak of any Western New York school.

Daemen's magical season came to an end in the second round of the NCAA Division II Basketball Tournament. Their one loss is a "Modern Era" record for the least number of losses in a season.

MacDonald has guided the Wildcats to a 205-83 overall record, an East Coast Conference regular season championship, four NCAA tournament berths and the 2021 NCAA Division II East Region championship. Daemen ranks second for total wins among New York State's Division II programs since MacDonald came to Main Street.

With previous stops at Canisius University and Medaille University, MacDonald has worked across all three NCAA divisions, racking up 462 victories in 27 seasons as a head coach.

The Clarence Gaines Award is named in honor of the legendary Winston Salem State head coach.

One of the true legends of all-time, Clarence "Big House" Gaines retired from Winston-Salem State University in 1993 with a record of 828-446. At the time he was the winningest active basketball coach in NCAA history. Gaines was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 1982.

During his 47-year tenure as coach and athletic director at WSSU he coached professional basketball greats Cleo Hill, the first African-American from an historically Black college and university to be drafted No. 1 by the National Basketball Association, St. Louis Hawks, 1961, and Earl "The Pearl" Monroe.

Coach Gaines passed away on April 18, 2005.

PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

Jordan Fee, Gannon (2024); Jim Crutchfield, Nova Southeastern (2023); Ben McCollum, Northwest Missouri State (2022); Todd Duncan, Lubbock Christian (2021); Ben McCollum, Northwest Missouri State (2020); Andre Cook, St. Edward's (2019); Grady Brewer, Morehouse College (2018); Darren Vorderbruegge, Hawai'i Pacific (2017); Josh Schertz, Lincoln Memorial (2016); Chad Walthall, Minnesota State-Moorhead (2015); Jeff Wilson, East Stroudsburg (2014); Tom Billeter, Augustana College (2103); Ben McCollum, Northwest Missouri State (2012); Steve Kinder, Humboldt State (2011).

ABOUT COLLEGEINSIDER.COM

Established in 1996, CollegeInsider.com has been at the forefront of promoting college

basketball online. In the July 27, 1998, issue of ESPN the Magazine, College Insider was ranked No. 24 on the magazine's list of *99 Things to do Before you Die*. College Insider created the Mid-Major Top 25[®], the measuring stick for men's and women's programs outside of the proverbial power leagues, and has 18 national awards presented annually, including the Lute Olson Award, Lou Henson Award, and the John McLendon Award. The CollegeInsider.com All-Access series has been nominated for 5 Emmy Awards and won 2013 Emmy, for its' feature on New York City Basketball (Iona, LIU-Brooklyn and Manhattan). CI also created *This Game No Secret*, which debuted during the 2016 CIT and now has become an annual event, which has included programs like Duke, Houston, Miami, Ohio State, Ole Miss, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

NOTE: Portions of the press release came from Daemen University releases.

