



For Release

October 22, 2019 at 11 a.m. CT

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National Wrestling Hall of Fame Announces Class of 2020

STILLWATER, Okla. – The National Wrestling Hall of Fame announced on Tuesday that the Class of 2020 inductees are Distinguished Members Bruce Burnett, Dremiel Byers, Mark Lieberman and Bill Zadick, Meritorious Official Tim Shiels, Order of Merit recipient Gary Abbott, Medal of Courage recipient Gary Chopp and Outstanding American Carl Eschenbach.

“This group has accomplished and done so much for wrestling and they continue to give back to our great sport,” said Lee Roy Smith, Executive Director of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. “We are proud to honor these remarkable individuals as our Class of 2020.”

The Hall of Fame Board of Governors approved the selections at its meeting in Kansas City on Oct. 16. The induction ceremony will be held at the 44th Annual Honors Weekend on June 5-6, 2020 in Stillwater, Oklahoma. For more information on Honors Weekend, please telephone (405) 377-5243.

Byers and Zadick were chosen as Distinguished Members for the Modern Era while Burnett and Lieberman were selected by the Veterans Committee. The Hall of Fame has reached a milestone and will induct its 200th Distinguished Member since it began in 1976.

Distinguished Members can be a wrestler who has achieved extraordinary success in national and/or international competition; a coach who has demonstrated great leadership in the profession and who has compiled an outstanding record; or a

contributor whose long-term activities have substantially enhanced the development and advancement of the sport.

Bruce Burnett has been a successful coach at the high school, college and international level. He was USA Wrestling's national freestyle coach from 2014-2016 and from 1993-2000, considered the most successful Olympic cycles in U.S. history. During his tenure, five Americans won Olympic gold medals - Kendall Cross (1996), Tom Brands (1996), Kurt Angle (1996), Brandon Slay (2000) and Kyle Snyder (2016) – and 11 U.S. athletes won 13 World Championships - Bruce Baumgartner (1993 and 1995), Terry Brands (1993 and 1995), Tom Brands (1993), Melvin Douglas (1993), Kurt Angle (1995), Kevin Jackson (1995), Les Gutches (1997), Sammie Henson (1998), Stephen Neal (1999), Jordan Burroughs (2015) and Kyle Snyder (2015). From 1993-2000, U.S. wrestlers won 22 World medals (11 gold, four silver and seven bronze) and placed in the Top 10 at the World Championships as a team every year. United States won its first-ever Senior World Freestyle team title in 1993 and again in 1995. U.S. won the medal count at the 1996 Olympic Games with three gold (Kurt Angle, Tom Brands and Kendall Cross), a silver (Townsend Saunders) and a bronze (Bruce Baumgartner). Burnett coached J'den Cox to a bronze medal and Kyle Snyder to a gold medal at 2016 Olympic Games after coaching Jordan Burroughs and Snyder to World titles in 2015. He led the United States to seven World Cup team titles and five Pan American Championships, including 2011 when the U.S. had six medalists, including champions Jordan Burroughs, Jake Herbert, Jake Varner and Tervel Diagnev. From the national teams that he coached, Kurt Angle, Bruce Baumgartner, Terry Brands, Tom Brands, Kendall Cross, Melvin Douglas, Les Gutches, Sammie Henson, Kevin Jackson, Zeke Jones, Kenny Monday, Stephen Neal, Townsend Saunders and Dave Schultz are all Distinguished Members of the Hall of Fame. Burnett was the wrestling coach at the United States Naval Academy from 2000-13, leading his teams to a 113-57 overall dual meet record and six consecutive 10-win seasons from 2002-07. Team finished in Top Five at the EIWA Championships seven times and placed in the Top 25 at the NCAA Championships three times. Burnett coached 10 EIWA champions, 50 NCAA qualifiers and 10 wrestlers who earned All-American honors. He was an assistant coach for Joe Seay at Oklahoma State from 1987-90, helping lead the Cowboys to two NCAA team titles, two National Wrestling Coaches Association National Dual titles and three Big Eight Conference titles. OSU had 26 All-Americans and five national champions, including Distinguished Members John Smith, Cross and Pat Smith. Burnett began his coaching career at Meridian High School in Meridian, Idaho, where he led his teams to a 154-13-2 dual meet record with four state team titles, four state runner-up finishes, six district titles and nine conference titles from 1974-87. He won the Idaho Coaches Association Coach of the Year award seven times, and served as state chairperson and junior chairperson for Idaho USA Wrestling. On the mat, Burnett was undefeated in dual meets and a two-time Big Sky Conference and Mountain Intercollegiate Wrestling Association champion for Idaho State University in 1971-72. He was a two-time California Junior College state champion for Bakersfield College, compiling a 55-3 career record and being named the state's outstanding wrestler in 1970. Burnett was a two-

time league champion and three-time state place-winner for North Bakersfield (California) High School. He was inducted into the Idaho State Sports Hall of Fame in 1986, the California Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2004 and the North High School Hall of Fame in 2013. Burnett received the Lifetime Service to Wrestling award from the Idaho Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2015 and was named the Myron Roderick Man of the Year by USA Wrestling in 2016.

Dremiel Byers is considered one of the best Greco-Roman wrestlers in U.S. history, joining Distinguished Member Matt Ghaffari as the only Americans to win three medals at the Greco-Roman World Championships. Byers won a gold medal at the 2002 World Championships and is one of just five Americans to win a Greco-Roman World gold medal - Mike Houck (1985), Dennis Hall (1995), Rulon Gardner (2001) and Joe Warren (2006). He added a bronze medal in 2007 and a silver medal in 2009. His bronze medal win in 2007 helped the United States win its first and only Greco-Roman World team title, by a single point over Russia. Byers made eight World Greco-Roman teams (1999, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011) and two Olympic teams, finishing seventh in 2008 and ninth in 2012. He is the winningest wrestler, in any style, in Dave Schultz Memorial International history with six gold medals and 11 total medals. Byers attended Kings Mountain High School in Kings Mountain, North Carolina, where he was an All-State wrestler and won the North Carolina state high school heavyweight championship in 1993. He attended North Carolina A&T on a football scholarship, but was forced to leave college to take care of family matters. Byers then enlisted in the U.S. Army and joined the Army's World Class Athletes Program in 1996. He retired from the Army as a Sergeant First Class and currently serves as an assistant coach for the WCAP team at Fort Benning, Georgia. Byers was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame's Alan and Gloria Rice Greco-Roman Hall of Champions in 2015.

Mark Lieberman is acclaimed as Lehigh University's greatest overall wrestler, if combining all styles. He was a two-time undefeated NCAA champion at 177 pounds in 1978 and 1979 after a runner-up finish in 1977 at 167. He is part of another special wrestling family with his brother, Mike, winning the NCAA championship for Lehigh in 1975 at 177 pounds. Mark was the first four-time EIWA champion in school history pinning an unbelievable 12 of 16 wrestlers in the EIWA tournament, a record for the 110-year old event. In his senior year, he swept the EIWA's major awards, winning the Outstanding Wrestler Trophy, the Sheridan Trophy for most falls and the Fletcher Award for scoring the most team points in his career. He still holds Lehigh records for season falls (16), career falls (43) and most bonus points in a season (95.2% of his matches in 1979). Wrestling for the New York Athletic Club, he was an AAU national champion in 1977 and won the U.S. Wrestling Federation national championship in 1978, 1979 and 1980. Lieberman won a gold medal at the World Cup in 1978 and a silver medal in 1979. He won the Pan Am Wrestling Championships in 1977. He pinned his idol, 1976 Olympic gold medalist and Distinguished Member John Peterson, in the finals of the National Open in 1978 to earn the Outstanding Wrestler Award, the Most Falls Award, the U.S. Wrestling Federation Grand Champion Award and 1978 Athlete of

the Year. Three of Lieberman's national open titles and all of his international medals were won as a college undergraduate. Lieberman also defeated Distinguished Members Wade Schalles, Chris Campbell and Ed Banach in freestyle competition. Helping launch the Blair Academy (New Jersey) freestyle program, he won the AAU Junior World national championship in 1974 and 1975 and was the U.S. Wrestling Federation Junior national champion in 1973. Lieberman won the National Independent Schools championship (National Preps) in 1972, 1973 and 1974 and was outstanding wrestler two times. Lieberman was inducted into the Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches' Hall of Fame in 1987, the Roger S. Penske/Lehigh Athletics Hall of Fame in 1994, the EIWA Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Blair Academy Athletics Hall of Fame in 2017.

Bill Zadick won a gold medal at the World Championships in 2006 after finishing seventh in 2001. In 2006, he and his younger brother, Mike, became the first set of brothers since Terry and Tom Brands in 1995 to both make the same World or Olympic team. Zadick won the U.S. Open in 2001 and 2002 and had runner-up finishes in 2003, 2006 and 2008. He finished second at the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in 2000 and 2008 and was runner-up at the U.S. World Team Trials in 1999 and 2002. Zadick was an NCAA champion as a senior in 1996 after a fifth-place finish in 1995, helping the University of Iowa win back-to-back NCAA team titles. He wrestled at Great Falls (Montana) High School and is one of only 17 wrestlers to win four Montana state high school championships, which he accomplished in four different weight classes - 98 pounds (1988), 112 pounds (1989), 119 pounds (1990), and 135 pounds (1991). Zadick joined USA Wrestling as its resident coordinator and assistant national freestyle coach in 2009 and was promoted to national freestyle development coach and assistant national freestyle coach in 2010. During his four years with the age-group teams from 2011-14, the U.S. won eight Cadet World medals, nine Junior World medals and 10 medals at the University Worlds or University World Games. Included were Cadet World champions Adam Coon, Mark Hall, Spencer Lee, Mason Manville, Aaron Pico and Zain Retherford, Junior World champion Kyle Snyder and University World champions Tyler Caldwell and Tyrell Fortune. In 2014, the U.S. age group World teams reached new levels of success in freestyle as the Cadets placed third in the world, the juniors placed second in the world and the University team won the world title. In 2015, Zadick began working directly with national coach Bruce Burnett and the elite senior athletes. He was part of the coaching staff at the 2015 World Championships, where Jordan Burroughs and Kyle Snyder won gold medals and James Green won a bronze medal. The U.S. also won the medal count at the 2015 Pan American Games with six medals, led by champions Burroughs, Brent Metcalf, Zach Rey and Snyder. Zadick was named national freestyle coach in 2016, assuming his duties after the 2016 Olympics. In 2017, the U.S. won its first World team title in 22 years led by gold medalists Burroughs and Snyder, silver medalists Thomas Gilman and Green and bronze medalists J'den Cox and Nick Gwiazdowski. Zadick and his staff also produced one of the greatest years in USA Wrestling age-group history, including winning the Junior World team title for the first time in over 30 years. At the 2017 Cadet World Championships, the United States placed second with four champions and six medalists and had two individual medalists

and placed fourth at the U23 World Championships. At the 2018 Senior World Championships, the Americans finished second and had seven medalists, including World champions Cox, Kyle Dake and David Taylor. In 2019, Zadick led the United States to another successful season, including becoming the first team to win all 10 gold medals at the Senior Pan American Championships. At the Senior World Championships, the U.S. finished third and had four medalists, including Cox and Dake repeating as World champions while Burroughs earned his eighth career World/Olympic medal and Snyder picked up his fifth in a row.

The Outstanding American award is presented to those individuals who have used the disciplines of wrestling to launch notable careers in other walks of life, such as science and technology, business and industry, government and the military, and the arts and humanities.

Carl Eschenbach begin his wrestling career with East Stroudsburg Youth Association where he was the first ever to win six individual league championships in seven years. He was the first wrestler to be named to the Pocono Record's All-Pocono First-Team four straight years, and won a gold medal at the Centennial League wrestling tournament as a senior in 1985 after winning a silver medal in 1982 and bronze medals in 1983 and 1984. Eschenbach had a runner-up finish at District XI and a third-place finish in the Northeast Regional in 1985. He is currently a Partner with Sequoia Capital in Menlo Park, California. Sequoia is an iconic venture capital firm who helps the daring build legendary companies. Prior to Sequoia Eschenbach was President and COO of VMware from 2002-2016 where he helped build the company from 200 to 20,000 employees and from \$30M in revenues to \$7B. Today VMware is a \$60B+ market cap company. Prior to VMware he held various sales leadership positions at 3Com, Lucent, Inktomi and EMC. In 2007, Eschenbach was ranked third on a list of the Top 25 Most Innovative IT Executives in the nation. Eschenbach currently serves on the boards of Armis Security, Aurora, Cohesity, Palo Alto Networks, Snowflake Computing, UiPath, Workday and Zoom Video Communications. He also lettered three years in baseball and football and earned Most Valuable Athlete awards in wrestling in 1983, 1984 and 1985 and in baseball and football in 1985. Eschenbach was an All-Centennial League First Team selection in baseball and football in 1985 and was voted Best All-Around Male Athlete. He was captain of the wrestling team for three years and was captain of both the baseball and football teams as a senior. Eschenbach is enshrined on the East Stroudsburg-South Athletics Hall of Fame and football's Walls of Fame. He earned an electronics technical diploma from DeVry University. Eschenbach is passionate about leadership and believes that wrestling has had a massive impact on his life and professional career.

The Meritorious Official award recognizes outstanding service as a referee, judge, or pairing official.

Tim Shiels began officiating fulltime in 1988, working the regional and state tournaments in his home state of Minnesota. He began focusing on college officiating in 1989 and has worked 12 NCAA Division I national championships, seven NCAA Division II national championships, 19 NCAA Division III national championships, five national junior college tournaments and a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national tournament. Shiels has worked five NCAA DI finals and was selected as a Top 5 Official by the NCAA Officials Association in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. He served as the head official at the NCAA DIII national tournament six times and has worked nine National Wrestling Coaches Association Dual Meet Championships and nine Big Ten Championships. Shiels became the first active official to serve on the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee when he was elected in 2013 and he has served as an evaluator of officials at the Minnesota state high school tournament since 2008. In 2015, Shiels became NCAA Wrestling's National Coordinator of Officials, replacing Hall of Fame official Dr. Pat McCormick, who had held the position for 42 years. Shiels wrestled for his father, Hall of Fame coach Dick Shiels, at Faribault (Minnesota) High School, qualifying for the state tournament twice and placing fifth as a junior. He lettered in wrestling and golf at Waldorf College, serving as team captain in wrestling, and then at the University of Minnesota Morris. Shiels earned All-American honors and helped his team finish third with a sixth-place finish at the NCAA Division III tournament in 1981. He had a career record of 106-41-1 and qualified for the National Junior College tournament twice at Waldorf and qualified for the NCAA DIII championships twice at Minnesota Morris. Coaching wrestling at St. Olaf College from 1982 to 1988, Shiels coached six All-Americans and led the team to a 12th-place finish at the NCAA DIII tournament in 1986 and an 11th-place finish in 1987. Shiels was named Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Coach of the Year in 1987 after his team won the All-Lutheran tournament and finished second at the MIAC tournament, 1/2 of a point behind champion St. Thomas. He received the Lifetime Service to Wrestling award from the Minnesota Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2016.

The Medal of Courage recipient is a wrestler or former wrestler who has overcome what appear to be insurmountable challenges, providing inspiration to others.

A couple of months after concluding his wrestling career at Grand Valley State University with a sixth-place finish at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national tournament, **Gary Chopp** went skydiving. During the 3,000-foot jump, his main and reserve parachutes malfunctioned, causing him to fall freely during the last 300 feet until he crashed into the ground. Chopp fractured his spine, shattered his pelvis, lost a kidney and spleen while suffering paralysis in one leg. He credits the physical, mental and emotional strength he gained as a wrestler for helping to not only stay alive at the time of the accident but also to achieve inspired goals during the ensuing seven months in the hospital and throughout his life. After recovering in the hospital where he lost 90 pounds as he fought to stay alive, he changed his major and returned to school. He eventually entered law school, sat on the school's first law review, graduated in the top ten percent of his class in 1981, and won the Distinguished

Student Award. Successfully practicing as a trial lawyer for 35 years, Chopp continued to experience complications from the accident. He underwent several surgeries, including the amputation of a leg and the development of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, a chronic pain condition that recently forced him to retire from the practice of law. Chopp lettered four years (1971-1975) in wrestling at Grand Valley State which began its wrestling program in 1968. He had a career record of 67-26, and he was one of the team leaders who helped Grand Valley achieve its goal of becoming a nationally competitive wrestling program. Chopp lettered four years in wrestling and two years in football at Grand Ledge (Michigan) High School. In wrestling, he was a conference champion as a junior and senior, helping Grand Ledge capture the team title both years. Chopp was team captain and qualified for the state tournament as a senior while also placing in Greco-Roman at the Junior World Olympics.

The Order of Merit is presented to an individual that has made a significant contribution to the sport of wrestling, but who is not an athlete or a coach.

Gary Abbott is Director of Communications and Special Projects for USA Wrestling. He began working at USA Wrestling as Manager of Communications in 1988, was promoted to Director, and was named Director of Special Projects in 2001. Abbott has worked at major wrestling events in the United States and around the globe, including eight Olympic Games, dozens of Senior and age-group World Championships and 38 straight NCAA Championships. He is responsible for USA Wrestling communications activities, including publications and other media platforms, media relations, promotions, public relations and special projects. Abbott oversees USA Wrestling's magazine USA Wrestler and handles the organization's corporate communications program. In 2013, he was a prominent figure in the Committee for the Preservation of Olympic Wrestling in wrestling's fight to remain an Olympic sport. Abbott has been a pioneer in building women's wrestling for decades, including most recently, the creation of a national girls high school wrestling poll and helping women's wrestling receive emerging sport status from the NCAA. He has promoted the growth of wrestling by providing coverage for all of wrestling's disciplines. He manages USA Wrestling's Associated Styles program, including grappling and beach wrestling. Abbott has been instrumental in the growth of Cadet and Junior Nationals, which drew a record 5,400 athletes in 2019. Prior to joining USA Wrestling, he was editor of Wrestling Masters from 1982-87, creating content and producing the national magazine. He also served as publicist for the National Wrestling Coaches Association and developed the NWCA Division I Coaches Poll. He founded the ASICS Tiger High School Wrestling All-American Team in 1985. Abbott was a four-year starter on Boston University's varsity wrestling team, competing for Hall of Fame coach Carl Adams. He received the Publicist of the Year award from the National Wrestling Media Association in 1991 and won the organization's Publication of the Year in 1996. In 1992, Amateur Wrestling News presented him with its Bob Dellinger Award, presented to the wrestling writer of the year. He was the 2005 AWN Man of the Year, and received the 2005 NWCA Meritorious Service Award. Abbott was one of three founders of the NWMA in 1988 and served as its president from 1991-92. He has served

as chairperson of the Hall of Fame's Distinguished Members screening committee and as a member of the selection and veterans committees. Abbott served on the steering committee of the Olympic Public Relations Association and participated in the Team USA Leadership Certificate Program, which is the flagship leadership development program for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. He received his bachelor's degree in journalism from Boston University in 1982.

National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum

America's shrine to the sport of wrestling, the National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum was founded as a nonprofit organization in 1976 to honor the sport of wrestling, preserve its history, recognize extraordinary individual achievements, and inspire future generations. The National Wrestling Hall of Fame has museums in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Waterloo, Iowa. The Stillwater, Oklahoma, location reopened in June 2016 following a \$3.8 million renovation while the Waterloo, Iowa, location reopened in March 2019 after undergoing a \$1.4 million renovation. Both museums now feature interactive exhibits and electronic kiosks, as well as the opportunity to watch NCAA Championship matches from the 1930s to present day. Stillwater also has the John T. Vaughan Hall of Honors where the greatest names in wrestling are recognized, including iconic granite plaques presented to Distinguished Members since the Hall of Fame opened in 1976. The museum has the largest collection of wrestling artifacts and memorabilia in the world, including the most collegiate and Olympic wrestling uniforms. Wrestling truly is for everyone and the diversity and accessibility of the sport continues to be highlighted through exhibits featuring females, African-Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans. There is also a library featuring historical documents, including NCAA guides and results, as well as books on the sport.

For more information about the Hall of Fame, please visit www.NWHOF.org.