

Ross grad honored at Gallaudet

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Gallaudet University coach Kevin Cook has been named the recipient of the 25th annual Carol Eckman Award by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association.

The award is given annually to a coach who exemplifies Eckman's spirit, integrity and character through sportsmanship, commitment to the student-athlete, honesty, ethical behavior, courage and dedication to purpose. Eckman is a former West Chester State College coach who organized the first women's basketball championship at West Chester in 1969 and continued to garner recognition and support for the women's game until her death from cancer in 1985.

"It is a pleasure to present Kevin Cook with the Carol Eckman Award," said WBCA CEO Beth Bass. "Your commitment to sportsmanship, honesty, ethical behavior and most importantly, your student-athletes has not gone unnoticed."

Cook, a Fremont Ross graduate, is the first Division III coach to be honored since the award's inception in 1986 when Laura Mapp from Bridgewater (Va.) College was selected as the first honoree of the Carol Eckman Award.

"Coach Cook without a doubt meets the criteria for the Carol Eckman Award and he exceeds all of those expectations," said Gallaudet University Director of Athletics Michael Weinstock. "We are very fortunate to have Kevin here at Gallaudet University. He not only raises the bar for our women's basketball program but also the entire athletic program."

Cook just completed his third season at Gallaudet, the world's only university in which all programs and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students. He led the Bison to their best season in a decade with a 14-12 record and a sixth-seed in the Capital Athletic Conference tournament.

Cook also coached the CAC Player of the Year in junior center Easter Faafiti (Pittsburg, Calif.) as she led the league in scoring and rebounding. She was

the first Bison to earn the end of the season award from the CAC since the 2000-01 season. This was

also the last year for Gallaudet in the CAC after being a charter member since the conference formed in 1989. GU will join the North Eastern Athletic Conference this summer.

"I am honored and humbled by this award. I am happy to accept this award on behalf of our women's basketball program," said Cook. "There are so many excellent coaches in our profession that do so many great things for our sport, the student-athletes and with their time and generosity to help others. It is hard to put into words how much this award means to me. I am deeply touched and moved by the news."

Prior to arriving at Gallaudet, Cook served as an assistant coach with the Houston Comets for 11 years where he was part of four WNBA championships. He also served as a coach on four different WNBA All-Star teams. Prior to coaching in the WNBA, Cook served as an assistant coach with the University of Kansas from 1984 to 1993. Cook was part of four Big 8 championship teams that made four trips to the NCAA tournament. In between his stints with Houston and Kansas, Cook coached two years at Garden City Community College where he led the program to a No. 12 national junior college ranking.

"I have been aware of Coach Carol Eckman and what she has meant to our sport of women's basketball for many, many years," Cook said. "I was lucky enough to sit in the audience in 1991 when Kansas coach Marian Washington was presented this award."