Lehman Pays Tribute To Student Athletes at 55th Annual Athletic Dinner

It was a night to remember, last Monday on the campus of Lehman College, as the athletic department paid tribute to all of the student-athletes at the 55th annual Athletic Awards dinner. The dinner was held in the East Dining Room on the Bronx campus, and was truly a special night for everyone in attendance.

The evening started with excitement, as the highly anticipated Championship Ring ceremony began the ceremony. Lehman College athletic director Dr. Martin L. Zwiren and Vice President for Student Affairs Jose Magdaleno presented championship rings to the members of the women’s basketball team and the men’s swimming teams. Both teams captured the CUNY championship this season, and were honored for their achievements.

“This championship ring presentation is something that I will truly remember for the rest of my life,” said Lehman College women’s basketball star Kathy Santiago. “To be honored in such a way, is truly a reward and a testament to the hard work and dedication our teams put in this season.”

Highlighting the evening was the presentation of the Male and Female Athletes of the Year. Men’s swimming sensation Darnell James made it back to back awards as he captured the honor for the second year in a row, while women’s basketball star Sally Nnamani was bestowed the honor on the women’s side.

As a junior, Darnell James has established himself as one of the preeminent swimmers in the metropolitan area. Leading the Lightning to their second consecutive men’s swimming championship, his time of 52:68 seconds for the 100 meter butterfly, and his 1:51:38 for the 200 meter freestyle has become the new championship standard for the CUNY conference. James continued to emerge on the national scene, where at the Metropolitan Collegiate Swimming Conference Championships against many Division I and II athletes, he finished second in the event, and concluded with a 25th overall national ranking.

The Female Athlete of the Year is no stranger to success this season. In just her second year on the Bronx campus, this young lady has captivated the basketball world with her amazing talents, and her ability to lead by example. Averaging a team high 20.4 points per game, to go along with 3.4 blocks per game, her youthful enthusiasm led Lehman to a 19-10 overall record. Her poise as a sophomore was instrumental in the Lightning’s first ever CUNY championship and the college first ever bid to the NCAA Division III national tournament. During the NCAA tournament game in Scranton, Pennsylvania, she entered the record books, as she joined the 1,000 point club in just her sophomore season. In this memorable season, she was named the CUNY conference’s Most Valuable Player, a D3Hoops.com First-team all-star, and a Metropolitan Sports Writer’s First-team all-star to conclude the season.

“Sally Nnamani is truly deserving of the Female Athlete of the Year,” said ninth year Lehman coach Eric Harrison. “She is a tireless worker who has given so much to our program in just two years the best is yet to come.”

The prestigious President’s Award was presented to legendary swim coach Peter Kiernan by Lehman College president, Dr. Ricardo Fernandez. The award is the highest honor given at the dinner, and was given to coach Kiernan for his orchestrating back to back swim titles and his dedication to the Lehman athletic programs.

In other awards, seniors Daniel Gurdak and Lianee Torres were presented the Male and Female Scholar Athlete Award winners. Gurdak a member of the men’s track program posted a 3.9 grade point average and will be attending Oxford in the fall, while Torres was a three-sport athlete who posted a 3.76 grade point average. Both recipients were also honored by the CUNY athletic conference.

“This annual event give us an opportunity to show our appreciation and respect to the many student-athletes, coaches and support staff who represent our athletic programs at Lehman,” said Lehman College athletic director Dr. Martin L. Zwiren.
2006-2007 LEHMAN COLLEGE ATHLETIC AWARD RECIPIENTS

BASEBALL
Most Valuable Player-JHONNY REYES
Rookie of the Year-MATTHEW ARVELO

MEN’S BASKETBALL
Most Valuable Player-DUANE RHODEN
Most Improved Player-LAVAR LARRIER

MEN’S CROSS-COUNTRY
Most Valuable Runner-RAUL SANCHEZ
Rookie of the Year-FISEHA BROOKS

MEN’S INDOOR TRACK & FIELD
Most Valuable Runner-MICHAEL FRANCIS
Rookie of the Year-PETE CHARLES

MEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD
Most Valuable Runner-PETE CHARLES
Rookie of the Year-JASE FRANKLYN

MEN’S SWIMMING
Most Valuable Swimmer-DARNELL JAMES
Most Improved Swimmer-JOSEPH BODDEN

MEN’S TENNIS
Most Valuable Player-RAUL SANTANA III
Rookie of the Year-RYAN MAGSINO

MEN’S VOLLEYBALL
Most Valuable Player-WILMY DIPRE
Rookie of the Year-HORACE MORRIS

CHEERLEADING
Co-Most Valuable Cheerleader-MILAGROS ACOSTA
Co-Most Valuable Cheerleader-JILLIAN PIZARRO

SOFTBALL
Co-Most Valuable Player-SHIRLEY ARRIETA
Co-Most Improved Player-OLGA TORRES

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
Most Valuable Player-SALLY NNAMANI
Most Improved Player-KATHY SANTIAGO

WOMEN’S CROSS-COUNTRY
Most Valuable Runner-OLGA TORRES
Rookie of the Year-DOROTHY JEAN-PIERRE

WOMEN’S INDOOR TRACK & FIELD
Most Valuable Runner-DOROTHY JEAN-PIERRE
Rookie of the Year-JANINAS MURUSMA

WOMEN’S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD
Most Valuable Runner-DOROTHY JEAN-PIERRE
Rookie of the Year-JANNESA MURUSMA

WOMEN’S SWIMMING
Most Valuable Swimmer-LUISA GARCIA
Most Improved Swimmer-YUDELKA ESPINAL

WOMEN’S TENNIS
Most Valuable Player-CRISTY REYNOSO
Rookie of the Year-EVAUNNA NEVIL

WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL
Most Valuable Player-ISABEL LORENZO
Most Improved Player-LIDABEL MORANT

SPECIALIZED AWARDS
Pedro Vialet Award-JIM CARNEY
Service Award-JOE PARONE
Service Award-FREDDY LEON
Paula Soto-DOMINICK RIZZO
Paula Soto-LEANDRO FORTY

Charlie Greenberg Scholarship-ACRISTL ACEVEDO
Ed Kramer Scholarship-ISSA TALL
President’s Award-PETER KIERNAN
Male Athlete of the Year-DARNELL JAMES
Female Athlete of the Year-SALLY NNAMANI
Male Scholar Athlete of the Year-DANIEL GURDAK
Female Scholar Athlete of the Year-LIENEAN TORRES

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Sports News Editors:
Eric Harrison, Ivelisse Rosario

Athletic Director:
Martin L. Zwiren, Ed.D.

For Lehman College Athletic News, contact (718) 960-1146.

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