



CalHOPE Courage Award Honors California College Student-Athletes Who Show Courage in the Face of Adversity

California sports legend Ronnie Lott to serve as program ambassador to raise awareness and inspire young people

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – JAN. 25, 2022— The **CalHOPE Courage Award** will soon start recognizing student-athletes at California colleges and universities of all levels who have demonstrated courage in the face of adversity. The award is presented by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), in association with The Associated Press (AP) and **CalHOPE**, a crisis support resource for communities impacted by public health emergencies or national disasters, operated by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

Beginning this February, two inspiring student-athletes will be recognized monthly as **CalHOPE Courage Award** nominees. The nominees must fit the award criteria, which may include overcoming the stress, anxiety and mental trauma associated with personal hardships, life circumstances, or injury. In April, two of the honorees will be selected as **CalHOPE Courage Award** winners, and a \$5,000 donation will be made in their names to mental health services at their schools. The program will resume in September honoring two student-athletes each month during the 2022-23 school year. At the end of the year, two winners will be named, and \$10,000 will be donated in their names to mental health services.

Sports information directors at all colleges and universities in California are encouraged to nominate deserving intercollegiate student-athletes through April 2023 at **CalHOPECourageAward.com**. The honorees will be selected by a panel of writers, editors, and sports information directors from CoSIDA and AP, along with the program’s ambassador, NFL Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott. Fans can learn more and engage on social media on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) at **@CalHOPE_Courage**.

“We thank CalHOPE for helping us create a platform to share the personal stories of courage of student-athletes at colleges and universities throughout California,” said Doug Vance, executive director of CoSIDA. “We hope the stories of the personal challenges these remarkable young men and women have overcome can inspire other young people to show courage in the face of

adversity in their own lives.”

“CalHOPE is excited to be the official sponsor of the Courage Awards and to recognize student-athletes throughout the state who, despite setbacks, have overcome these challenges to continue to perform their best as both scholars and athletes,” said Dr. Jim Kooler, Behavioral Health Special Consultant for DHCS. “Our organization’s purpose is to build community resiliency and help people recover from disasters through free outreach, crisis counseling, and support services. COVID-19 has increased the stress, anxiety, and isolation athletes have experienced, and highlighting their stories of courage will inspire us all.”

The program is being supported by a targeted advertising campaign throughout California featuring print advertising in numerous college gameday programs via PSP Sports Media and a digital campaign via Sidearm Sports on the college sports websites of more than a dozen schools throughout California. The print advertising campaign will break with a full-page ad in the Super Bowl LVI game program, scheduled for February 13, 2022 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, CA.

As the **CalHOPE Courage Award ambassador**, Mr. Lott will help raise awareness of the program and the inspiring stories of courage. Following an All-America football career at the University of Southern California (USC), the Rialto, California native was selected by the San Francisco 49ers with the eighth overall pick in the 1981 NFL Draft. He helped lead the 49ers to four Super Bowls in 10 seasons, and then played four more seasons with the Los Angeles Raiders and New York Jets. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2000 in his first year of eligibility. A successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, Lott, who lives in Cupertino with his wife Karen and children Hailey, Isaiah, and Chloe, was recently named to the Governor’s Advisory Board on Physical Fitness to ensure Californians, especially youth, get the physical exercise and self-care they need to thrive.

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ABOUT CalHOPE

CalHOPE is a multi-level campaign to connect people with vital mental health and wellness resources and information to help them find their way during these difficult times. CalHOPE is a federally supported effort (Federal Emergency Management Administration and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) that offers critical behavioral health crisis counseling programs to states and Tribes after a federal declaration of emergency. CalHOPE uses a public health approach that’s focused on strength-based strategies of building resiliency and connecting people to the supports they need. CalHOPE resources may be accessed by calling the program’s warm line at (833) 317-HOPE (4673) or by visiting www.calhope.org.

About CoSIDA (College Sports Information Directors of America): CoSIDA was founded in 1957 and is a 3,000-plus member national organization comprised of the sports public relations, media relations, and communications/information professionals of all levels of collegiate athletics in the United States and Canada. The organization is the second oldest management association in intercollegiate athletics. For more than 60 years, CoSIDA has recognized student-athletes as part of its Academic All-America awards program. Approximately 5,000 student-athletes are

recognized each year for their excellence in the classroom and in competition. To learn more, visit cosida.com.

About AP: The Associated Press is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP. On the web: www.ap.org.

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