

Saint Mary's Donny Nadeau receives Mike Augustin Award

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WINONA, Minn. – Recognition from peers is often the highest praise one can receive in any given profession, and that was the reaction of Saint Mary's University sports information director (SID) Donny Nadeau upon learning that he is the 2010-11 recipient of the Mike Augustin Award. The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) SIDs unanimously selected Nadeau for the honor based on his outstanding contributions and years of service to both Saint Mary's and the conference.

The award, named in memory of the late Mike Augustin, a longtime sportswriter at the St. Paul Pioneer Press, is presented annually to recognize outstanding contributions to MIAC athletic programs and student-athletes. Recipients are chosen each year by the conference SIDs and, in 2010-11, they fittingly bestowed the honor to Nadeau, a respected colleague and friend.

"After I got the call about the award, I quickly called my wife and tried to explain to her just how special this honor is, mostly because it was my peers who nominated me to receive it," Nadeau said. "She was, of course, proud of her husband, but to be honest, not nearly as proud as I am to be able to accept this honor.

"I am in a great profession and there is no group of individuals that I would rather be associated with."

Nadeau has been the driving promotional force behind Cardinal athletics since the start of the 1994-95 academic year and, in a constantly evolving industry, his promotion of Saint Mary's teams, coaches and student-athletes has been second-to-none. After starting a career in print journalism – Nadeau spent 10 years as a sports copy editor, reporter and editor for the La Crosse (Wis.) Tribune, the Austin Daily Herald and the Winona Daily News – he made the switch to sports information, and has long been one of the model SIDs in the MIAC and all of NCAA Division III.



At Saint Mary's, Nadeau is responsible for all aspects of sports information, including statistics, press releases, media relations, print materials, promotions and more. In addition, he is also the Web master of SMU's athletic Web site and a member of the University magazine editorial staff. He has also emphasized technology as well as any MIAC SID, supplementing his abundance of written online content with innovative videos, digital media guides and social media.

Nadeau is also an active member of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA), and he has earned national recognition for his coverage of Cardinal athletics. His honors include second in the district (event coverage) and third nationally (athlete profile) in CoSIDA's Fred J. Stabley writing contest.

"[Nadeau] is one of the real pros in our business," St. Thomas SID Gene McGivern said. "His work ethic and passion for Saint Mary's and the MIAC really shine through. He sets the bar high for fellow sports information directors to try and match. I especially admire his organizational skills and the creativity he brings to his job and his writing."

"Donny Nadeau is as good a sports information director as you will find in college athletics and beyond that he is an even better human being," added Gustavus SID Tim Kennedy. "I am proud to call him my colleague and friend.

"[Nadeau] is as passionate about his work as anyone I have ever met. He is always willing to make the extra effort to make sure the job is done right and he is the first in line to help when anyone in the conference is in need. He is also a gifted writer, who brings the excitement of Division III Athletics to life in his stories."

Nadeau receives equally high praise from his colleagues and friends within the Cardinal athletic department. Saint Mary's athletic director Nikki Fennern and head men's hockey coach Bill Moore also sang the praises of their SID for his tireless work effort and exceptional talents. The both echoed the same sentiment – that Saint Mary's athletics just wouldn't be the same without Nadeau driving the promotional bus.

"[Nadeau] is the most dedicated and hard-working person with whom I have had the privilege of working," Fennern said. "From his care and concern for each individual student-athlete to his ability to holistically recognize the accomplishments of the department and university, [Nadeau] selflessly enters his work with passion, dedication and eternal pride.

"He continually provides fans of SMU athletics up-to-the-minute updates on results and accomplishments of the Cardinals. He has made the



extraordinary and cutting edge aspects of sports information the norm at SMU. I cannot express enough my gratitude and appreciate for the countless hours of outstanding work he does to recognize our student-athletes.”

“In my three years at Saint Mary's University, I have never heard the word 'no' come out of [Nadeau's] mouth when I have asked for something to be done,” Moore added. “I have been lucky to have [Nadeau] as a friend for the past 40 years. He is the most dedicated person that I know. He never wants any recognition for what he has done, but our program is much better because of him. We are very lucky to have Donny at SMU.”

In recent years, Nadeau has continued to work at an impossibly high level while also facing a significant personal challenge. He was diagnosed with a condition called choroideremia, which is a degenerative eye condition that Nadeau said is: “stealing my vision slowly over time.” In an industry where observation is essential, Nadeau's workload has become more challenging, but the volume and quality of his content hasn't wavered a bit.

“What I find really amazing is learning that Donny has had some major challenges with his eyesight in recent months and years,” McGivern said. “From the outside, it sure seems like he hasn't missed a beat. He's handled his situation with grace and poise. I hope to be reading those SMU e-mail updates with his name on the top for years and years to come.”

Even with his condition, Nadeau expects to remain an integral member of the Saint Mary's family for a long time – as part of a partnership that began during his days as an SMU student in the 1980s. Nadeau's bond to the institution is evident, and his family's connection with Saint Mary's is intrinsically deep. He met his wife, Deedee, at the school and both are 1985 grads. His two sons are also members of the Cardinal athletic family, which led to some of his favorite memories as both a father and an SID.

“My time at Saint Mary's has been such a memorable experience – and it goes so much deeper than just the past 16 years as SMU's SID,” Nadeau said. “I graduated from this awesome institution in 1985, met and married my best friend and college sweetheart, Deedee, and have had the chance to be a proud father who got to watch from the press box as both my sons — first Andy, and now Joey — donned the red, white and blue Saint Mary's sweater as members of the Cardinal hockey team.”

The other career highlight for Nadeau centers on his interaction with the revolving door of student-athletes that have come through Saint Mary's during his tenure in the athletic department. The opportunity to promote and interact with young people during such an influential time in their lives is something he truly cherishes, and has made his job eternally rewarding.

“I have been given the opportunity to meet so many amazing student-athletes – to watch them come in as wide-eyed freshmen and leave as mature, young adults is pretty special,” Nadeau said. “I can honestly say that I'm excited to come to work every day — I bet there aren't too many people around who can say, 'I love my job,' the way I do.”

In addition to the announcement of the honor, both Saint Mary's and the MIAC plan to publicly honor Nadeau for the Mike Augustin Award. Fennern said he would receive recognition at an SMU athletic awards event this fall, and MIAC Executive Director Dan McKane said the conference will honor Nadeau at the 2011 MIAC Men's Hockey Showcase in late October. Nadeau has volunteered his sports information talents to the Showcase since its inception.

Nadeau is the ninth recipient of the Mike Augustin Award, and the first since 2007-08. He is the second SID to receive the honor, and the first SID in the award's history to be selected as a recipient for his work in his current position. Jerry Pyle (Concordia College) is the other former SID to receive the honor in 2002-03, as the other seven honorees were media members, broadcasters or announcers.

The Mike Augustin Award was first awarded in 1999. Augustin, the award's namesake, was an articulate friend, follower and advocate of the MIAC. He respected Division III institutions, student-athletes and coaches. He died after a sudden illness in December of 1997.

Mike Augustin Award

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