



September 15, 2008

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Iowa Games 2008 Marty McHone Athletes of the Year Announced

Ames, IA – Heather Ezell of Ames and Ron Peterson of Waukee have been named the Iowa Games 2008 Marty McHone Athletes of the Year. Both athletes will be presented their awards on September 16 at 7:00 pm at the Iowa Hall of Pride in Des Moines during the annual Iowa Sports Foundation sponsorship reception.

Ezell was a member of the 2008 Summer Iowa Games adult women's basketball gold medal team, the "Twister Sisters." She was much more than a player during the 2008 Summer Iowa Games, volunteering her time as a basketball venue coordinator during the regional competitions in June, as well as, the finals in July.

Ezell is no stranger to state games competitions, originally from Springfield, Missouri she competed in the Show-Me State Games as a youngster. In high school, she was part of two state championships, four district titles, an impressive 113-7 record, and to top off a stellar career she was named 2005 Miss Show-Me basketball.

Upon her completion of high school, Ezell decided to make the move north to attend Iowa State University and major in Management and Marketing. She has become a standout of the Cyclone Women's basketball team and a leader both on and off the court. Iowa State head women's basketball coach Bill Fennelly stated, "Heather is the kind of young person that draws people to the sport of women's basketball. She is always giving it her all and performs to the highest standards. Sports have allowed her to impact the lives of others."

Being part of the Iowa Games competition offered her team an opportunity to play against some talented women's basketball teams while testing the team's endurance. The team had its first of three games for the day at 9:00 am and did not play for the Gold Medal until 8:00 pm. The "Twister Sisters" were pleasantly surprised by the high level of competition that played in the tournament. The team had to overcome a tight game with an overtime win to earn their gold medals.

Ezell's commitment and accomplishments in the sport of basketball, as well as her volunteerism for the sport have earned her a spot in Iowa Games history as the 2008 Marty McHone Female Athlete of the Year. "It is such an honor to receive this award. I really enjoyed participating in the Iowa Games this summer. It is a great organization and to be named the Female Athlete of the Year is something special," commented Ezell.

Ron Peterson celebrated his 64th birthday during the 2008 Summer Iowa Games. On Saturday, July 19 Peterson won gold in the basketball shooting shootout with a score of 61 and received 3rd place in the free-throw competition hitting 12 free-throws out of the possible 15. The day before his birthday he competed in the adult track and field bringing home four gold medals in the 400 M dash, long jump, high jump and discus.

Peterson, now of Waukee, grew up as an Iowa farm boy near Gowrie. The Prairie of Gowrie graduate played basketball, baseball and ran track in high school but indicated he couldn't commit to a lot of practice time as a kid due to his responsibilities on the farm. He said the Iowa Games allows him to 'make up for lost time'.

The retiree has been competing in the Iowa Games for 12 years and has won 40 medals (22 gold, 9 silver and 9 bronze). Besides the Iowa Games, Peterson is actively involved with the Senior Olympics competing in several sports/events and has won nearly 600 medals in the last 13 years. Peterson said, "The competitions provide incentives for him to work out and stay in shape throughout the year." And noted that of all the events he has participated in, the Iowa Games basketball shooting is the most competitive and provides the truest test of shooting skills. Even though he loves the competition the most important part of being involved with the Games is the friendships he has made over the years. He often challenges other competitors to try new sports and they end up loving the event.

His active lifestyle also includes biking with his most notable event being 'Iowa 150 Bike Ride/A Sesquicentennial Expedition' across the United States in 1995. The ride took 100 days and Peterson rode every day, every mile recording over 5,000 miles on his bike.

Peterson's healthy active lifestyle and commitment to the Iowa Games is why he is being named the 2008 Marty McHone Athlete of the Year.

Both of these athletes are devoted to their respective sports through participation, and volunteering. In honor of these athletes' commitment and dedication to athletics, they will light the cauldron at the 2009 Summer Iowa Games Opening Ceremony.

The Marty McHone Athlete of the Year award is in honor of McHone, who lost her battle with cancer in the summer of 2002. This award is presented not only for athleticism but also for good character, good citizenship and good sportsmanship. McHone had participated in every Iowa Games track meet, and was named the Iowa Games Female Athlete of the Year in 1996. Iowa Farm Bureau Federation is the proud sponsor of the Marty McHone Athlete of the Year award.

The Iowa Sports Foundation (ISF) is a nonprofit sports management organization that helps develop amateur sports in Iowa and promotes positive lifestyles and physical fitness through athletic events and health education programs. The ISF hosts the Summer Iowa Games, Winter Iowa Games, Live Healthy America, Live Healthy Iowa, Live Healthy Iowa Kids, Go The Distance Day, Hoopin' at the Dome, Net Fest, Fish Iowa Games, and the Iowa Games Golf Classic.

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