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For Immediate Release

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USBWA PRESENTS 2017-18 WOMEN'S HONORS

COLUMBUS, OHIO (USBWA) – The **U.S. Basketball Writers Association** announced the winners of its three major women's awards Friday at the site of this weekend's Final Four. All three winners hail from the Southeastern Conference.

A'ja Wilson of South Carolina is the winner of the **Ann Meyers Drysdale Award** as the National Player of the Year. **Vic Schaefer** of Mississippi State earned the **National Coach of the Year Award**, and **Chennedy Carter** of Texas A&M is the **National Freshman of the Year**, based on voting by the USBWA membership. USBWA representative Mel Greenberg made the presentations.

Wilson has been a dominant force on both ends of the court for South Carolina. The senior forward from Hopkins, S.C., ranked in the top 10 nationally in points (7th at 22.6) and blocks (5th, 3.2), and led the SEC in both categories. The now three-time USBWA All-American and SEC Player of the Year led South Carolina in scoring in 25 of 29 games, and posted a career-high 11.8 rebounds per game in her final season, notching 24 double-doubles as a senior.

Wilson averaged a team-best 22.8 points in this season's NCAA Tournament, where she helped lead South Carolina to a third Elite Eight appearance in the last four years. She is the first Ann Meyers Drysdale Award winner from the SEC since Candace Parker of Tennessee won back-to-back awards in the 2006-07 and 2007-08 seasons and the eighth winner from the SEC overall.

This is the first USBWA National Coach of the Year Award for Schaefer, who has Mississippi State in a second consecutive Final Four this weekend where the Bulldogs (36-1) will face Louisville (36-2) in the national semifinals. In his sixth season in Starkville, Schaefer led MSU to its first SEC regular-season championship – the first for any women's program at MSU. The Bulldogs advanced to the Sweet 16 for a third straight season, and they now are on the doorstep of playing for the national title again.

Schaefer is the first SEC coach to win the USBWA's national coach of the year award since Pokey Chatman of LSU in the 2004-05 season and the fifth since the award began in 1990.

A 5-7 guard from Mansfield, Texas, Chennedy Carter led all Division I freshmen with 22.7 points per game while shooting 44.3 percent from the field and averaging 4.9 assists per game. Carter set the Texas A&M freshman record with 785 points on the season, the second-most by a player of any classification in school history.

The Aggies finished 26-10 on the season – the team's highest win total since 2013-14 – and reached the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament. Carter is the first Texas A&M recipient of the Freshman of the Year Award, and the first from an SEC school since Shekinna Stricklen of Tennessee in the 2008-09 season. This is the third time for an SEC player to win the award since the USBWA created the award in 2004.

The **U.S. Basketball Writers Association** was formed in 1956 at the urging of then-NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers. Today, it is one of the most influential organizations in college basketball. For more information on the USBWA and its award programs, contact executive director Joe Mitch at 314-795-6821.