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**Atlanta Sports Council to Honor Warrick Dunn  
with 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award Presented by Coca-Cola**

**ATLANTA** (July 8, 2021) – Former NFL running back and founder of Warrick Dunn Charities, Warrick Dunn, will receive the Atlanta Sports Council's Lifetime Achievement Award Presented by Coca-Cola during the 2021 Atlanta Sports Awards, which will be presented on August 21 on 11Alive (WXIA-TV) beginning at 7 p.m.

Dunn played running back at Florida State University, and in 1997, he was drafted by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He played for the Bucs for five years before signing with the Atlanta Falcons in 2002. During his time in Atlanta, Dunn gained 5,981 rushing yards, the fourth-most in Falcons history, and 30 touchdowns while averaging 4.2 yards per carry. He caught 204 passes during his career with the Falcons, the second-most among running backs in franchise history, for 1,635 yards, which is the third-most among Atlanta running backs, and scored six receiving touchdowns.

In 2008, after six seasons with the Falcons, Dunn returned to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for his final season. Upon his retirement in 2009, he was approved by NFL owners to become a limited partner of the Atlanta Falcons. In 2013, Dunn graduated with his EMBA from Emory University. That same year he was selected to join the first class of NFL Legends, and in 2017, Dunn became the 10<sup>th</sup> member of the Falcons 'Ring of Honor.

Dunn is the founder of Warrick Dunn Charities, which began as a tribute to his mother, Betty Smothers, a Baton Rouge police officer who as a single mother of six worked tirelessly to achieve the American dream of owning her own home. While working a second job as a security guard, she was killed in the line of duty and was never able to realize that dream.

Since 1997, Warrick Dunn Charities has worked with affordable housing providers in 24 different markets across the country to provide assistance for 190 single-parent families who are actively working to support themselves and are purchasing their first home. The organization surprises single-parent families by completely furnishing each home and providing down payment assistance totaling \$940,000 to date. Additionally, Warrick Dunn Charities offers a financial literacy program called Count on Your Future and SCULPT, a health and wellness program, and more than 500 families have participated in the programs since 2015.

"Known for his excellent professional football career in Atlanta, Warrick's dedication to his philanthropic initiatives have had a profound impact on the city's community and continued his legacy as a

leader in Atlanta and beyond,” said Dan Corso, president of the Atlanta Sports Council. “His dedication and involvement in the community as well as his charitable giving efforts make Dunn the embodiment of the Lifetime Achievement Award.”

In February 2020, Dunn launched his second nonprofit, WD Communities. WD Communities will support families from the beginning to the end of the purchase of affordable or transitional housing, and provide support services, including financial literacy, health and wellness, education attainment, and entrepreneurship and workforce development. The organization is committed to working with families over the course of several years.

“If winning this award helps bring attention to the plight many families suffer because of the lack of affordable housing, then I am honored to accept it. The Lifetime Achievement Award, bestowed by the Atlanta Sports Council,” said Dunn, “is helping shine a light on the issues that effect many of those who live in and around Atlanta, and that is important work, so I’d like to recognize their help as well.”

Dunn will join some of Atlanta’s most renowned sports figures in receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Coca-Cola, including most recently Steve Koonin (2020), Dikembe Mutombo (2019), John Schuerholz (2018), Arthur Blank (2017), John Smoltz (2016), Tom Glavine (2015), the late Tommy Nobis (2014), Chipper Jones (2013), Dominique Wilkins (2012) and Bobby Cox (2011).

“What makes Warrick so special and deserving of the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by Coca-Cola is his commitment to helping families in need with creative solutions that promote long-term success,” said Dina Gerson, board chair, Atlanta Sports Council. “Warrick’s passion for Atlanta is unmatched, and his philanthropic efforts not only make our community better but also set a high bar for other athletes in the community to give back. His influence and advocacy have helped make Atlanta’s sports community what it is today.”

The Atlanta Sports Awards will be held virtually with a one-hour special in partnership with 11Alive (WXIA-TV) airing at 7 p.m. on August 21 and again at 11 a.m. on August 22. Viewers will also have a chance to watch the one-hour special at 8 p.m. August 22 on WATL. Leading up to the award show, fans will have a chance to vote for their favorite athletes, teams, coaches and more on <https://www.11alive.com/sportsawards>. The awards, created by the Atlanta Sports Council in 2006, highlight the high school, collegiate and professional sports community in Atlanta.

### **About the Atlanta Sports Awards**

Created in 2006 by the Atlanta Sports Council, the Atlanta Sports Awards has become a way to rally the Atlanta sports community to recognize athletic excellence on a yearly basis. The Atlanta Sports Awards honors those who distinguish themselves from among the five million people living in Atlanta. That includes all professional sports teams, universities, junior colleges and more than 250 public and private high schools in Atlanta. For more information visit <https://www.metroatlantachamber.com/events/featured/atlanta-sports-awards>.

### **About the Atlanta Sports Council**

The Atlanta Sports Council (ASC), a division of the Metro Atlanta Chamber, facilitates the growth and development of sports in metro Atlanta by serving as a recruiter for major regional, national and international sports events. The organization plays an important role in improving the quality of life for residents in the region through sports, working to drive economic growth and visibility and acting as an advocate for area teams and annual sports events. For more information, visit <https://www.metroatlantachamber.com/councils/atlanta-sports-council>.

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