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## **Wagner’s Meredith Ketchmark Named NEC SAAC Student-Athlete of the Year**

**Somerset, NJ --** The Northeast Conference (NEC) has named Wagner swimmer **Meredith Ketchmark (Plainsboro, NJ/West Windsor-Plainsboro)** as the recipient of its Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) Student-Athlete of the Year award. Ketchmark becomes the 12th NEC student-athlete to earn the honor, which recognizes individual excellence in both the academic and athletic realms as well as leadership and contributions to one’s community.

The honor is the latest for the Seahawk co-captain, who helped lead Wagner to its first-ever NEC Women’s Swimming & Diving championship in February.

“It is truly inspiring to read through the incredible academic, athletic and leadership accomplishments that Meredith achieved as a student-athlete at Wagner College,” said Noreen Morris, NEC Commissioner. “To perform at the highest level in any one of these categories is an extremely difficult task as a Division I student-athlete, to combine such great success in all three is a tribute to Meredith’s complete dedication and commitment. Congratulations!”

Ketchmark was near perfect in the classroom, graduating last month with a 3.96 grade point average while majoring in Anthropology. A four-time member of the NEC Commissioner’s Honor Roll (3.75 or better GPA), she was a Dean’s List student and Presidential Academic Scholarship recipient at Wagner. Ketchmark was also a member of the Lambda Alpha Anthropology Honor Society. Last month she was named to the Capital One Academic All-District Women’s At-Large first team. Ketchmark contributed to the Wagner swimming and diving team achieving the fifth highest GPA among all DI programs.

Ketchmark earned All-NEC recognition in a host of events following a terrific series of performances at the 2014 NEC Championship meet. Ketchmark captured gold in the 400 and 800 freestyle relays, and was runner-up in the 200 medley and 200 free relays. All four of those teams established new school records at the event. Individually, she finished second in the 200 free and third in the 100 free. In total, she helped account for 196 of Wagner’s 844 total points at the NEC Championship.

Ketchmark also established a school record in the 200 free this past season, set Wagner pool records in the 100 and 200 free, and was a two-time NEC Swimmer of the Week.

“Meredith is the complete package when it comes to being a student-athlete,” said Wagner women’s swimming and diving head coach Colin Shannahan. “She maintained a high GPA and was a leader when organizing our work with organizations such as the archeological/anthropology society and with AIR (Attitudes In Reverse). As an athlete, it has been an absolute pleasure to work with her and she is one of the main reasons why the program has ascended to the championship level. Meredith served as a team captain, improved her times all four years, and really helped us to our first NEC Championship.”

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Wagner Director of Athletics Walt Hameline echoed Shannahan's thoughts.

"Meredith Ketchmark represents the finest qualities of both a Wagner College and a Northeast Conference student-athlete," said Hameline. "I know I speak for the entire Seahawk family in congratulating her on achieving this prestigious honor. A team captain who helped lead our swimming and diving team to the NEC title this past winter, Meredith will undoubtedly continue to be a tremendous ambassador for not only our athletic department but for Wagner College as a whole."

Outside of the pool, Ketchmark took on leadership duties for a number of community service and on-campus initiatives, and donated her time to a host of others.

She organized a Harlem Shake for AIR (Attitudes in Reverse) and helped coordinate fundraising to raise awareness for the organization and its mission to promote mental health awareness. Ketchmark was also a volunteer and participant for the annual 5K Walk/Run For AIR race. Likewise, Ketchmark helped organize an annual on-campus swim meet to raise awareness and funds for the Great Strides Foundation, and support a fellow teammate with afflicted with Cystic Fibrosis.

She served as a fundraiser and participated in the Tunnel to Towers 5K with proceeds benefitting the Foundation that honors 9/11 firefighter Stephen Siller and other military and first responders who sacrifice for their country. Ketchmark was also a fundraiser/participant for the Cystic Fibrosis Great Strides Walk for a Cure.

Ketchmark helped spearhead her team's participation in NEC Penny Wars, which supports the Children's Cancer Recovery Foundation. The swimming and diving program was recognized for raising the most money of any Wagner team in 2013-14.

As it relates to her coursework and major, Ketchmark was the student organizer of the 2014 Archaeology Fair for the Staten Island Archaeology Society. She also served as the student representative for the Anthropology Department at the 2014 Wagner College Career Fair.

"I am confident in saying that my experiences as a student-athlete have done more than simply prepared me for facing problems in life," said Ketchmark. "It has taught me how to be better organized, how to accept greater responsibilities, to solve problems and become a leader. It has instilled in me unmatched levels of maturity and confidence which I know will take me far, wherever life may lead me. I have learned invaluable lessons from my teammates and various athletes along the journey, but also through the various community members that I have had the opportunity to meet through my time as a student-athlete. I would not trade my experiences for anything in the world."

Weighing one's leadership ability, athletic prowess, academic achievement and community service, the NEC SAAC members select the annual recipient of the award. The NEC began honoring a SAAC Student Athlete of the Year in 2003 when CCSU's Sabrina Mariani claimed the inaugural honor.

#### **Northeast Conference SAAC Student-Athlete of the Year Award Winners**

2013-14	Meredith Ketchmark, Wagner
2012-13	Steve Cioicci, Wagner
2011-12	Julia Prantl, Fairleigh Dickinson
2010-11	Katherine Bossardet, CCSU
2009-10	Kundayi Mawema, Bryant
2008-09	Alexandra Tomlinson, Wagner
2007-08	Tiffany Hahn, Monmouth
2006-07	Erika Jacobs, Saint Francis U
2005-06	Joy Gallagher, Wagner
2004-05	Beth Swink, Saint Francis U
2003-04	Naomi Campano, Mount St. Mary's
2002-03	Sabrina Mariani, CCSU

### About The Northeast Conference

Now in its 33rd year, the Northeast Conference is an NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association consisting of 10 institutions of higher learning located throughout six states. Media coverage of the NEC extends to four of the largest markets in the United States - New York (#1), Pittsburgh (#23), Baltimore (#27), and Hartford/New Haven (#30). Founded in 1981 as the basketball-only ECAC Metro Conference, the NEC has grown to sponsor 22 championship sports for men and women and now enjoys automatic access to 14 different NCAA Championships. NEC member institutions include Bryant, Central Connecticut, Fairleigh Dickinson, LIU Brooklyn, Mount St. Mary's, Robert Morris, Sacred Heart, St. Francis Brooklyn, Saint Francis U and Wagner. For more information on the NEC, visit the league's official website ([www.northeastconference.org](http://www.northeastconference.org)) and digital network ([www.necfrontrow.com](http://www.necfrontrow.com)), or follow the league on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Google+, all @NECsports.