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### **CCAA names King's Neil Hooper the Athletic Director of the Year**

Halifax | University of King's College Athletics Director Neil Hooper was awarded Athletic Director of the Year by the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) at the 2019 CCAA Hall of Fame Banquet in Calgary on June 11.

"It is enormously rewarding to see Neil's exceptional contributions to King's varsity athletes honoured," said King's President William Lahey. "Neil brings his professionalism, friendship and good nature to work every day. We are proud to see Neil's leadership recognized on the national stage."

It comes at the end of a historic year for King's Blue Devils. After claiming the ACAA Badminton championship for the second straight season, King's earned its first-ever national medal at the 2019 CCAA Badminton National Championships. Three Blue Devils also qualified for the 2019 Canada Winter Games, and a record 33 student-athletes achieved honour roll status at the university this year.

"I am so glad he [Hooper] was able to witness his athletes make history and I hope he knows how large of a role he played in making that happen," said Sam Lawther, a member of King's badminton team. "Our results this year are a testament to the work Neil has put into the King's Athletics department."

Another season highlight happened in February when an unprecedented donation, valued at more than \$1 million, was gifted to the institution—fifty-six new \$20,000 scholarships that will support student-athletes beginning in 2019-20. Valued at \$5,000 each per year (\$20,000 per recipient), as many as 56 new students will hold a Debra Deane Little and Robert Little Academic Athletic Scholarships by 2022-23 and in subsequent years. And, for the next three years, the family has also agreed to offer 14 additional scholarships to current scholar-athletes.

"These scholarships have materialized because of the gratitude of two parents for Neil Hooper," said William Lahey, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of King's College. "They have, with their generosity to King's, spoken for generations of King's students who have loved and admired Neil, as well as for the many other parents who share their appreciation for the positive influence Neil has had in the life of their student-athlete."

Hooper will celebrate his 30<sup>th</sup> year of employment at King's in 2019-20. He's also served on countless Atlantic Collegiate Athletics Association (ACAA) and CCAA committees over the years, actively supports community programs like Ultimate Pick-Up (UP) Basketball and has worked with the Nova Scotia's Special Olympics youth three-on-three basketball team.

He's regarded as a genuinely humble and unassuming leader. "It is his compassion and a big heart for his athletes, and loyalty to his coaches, that can only be measured by asking any player on a King's team how they feel about him," said Jamie McGinnis, Head Coach of the Blue Devils Men's Soccer team.

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### **About the University of King's College**

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities and journalism. It has approximately 900 students, 140 student-athletes and eight varsity teams.

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