

## The Award Criteria

- Candidate may be a lawyer or non-lawyer and must have at least five years experience in sports law or a sports field in general. Candidate does not have to be currently active in the sports industry. Award can be made posthumously.
- Candidate exhibits “service-above-self” attitude. This would have been demonstrated by a record of community involvement, public service, or other engagements that clearly have had a positive, motivating effect on others.
- Candidate must be regarded as a person with high integrity and ethics and possess the qualities held in highest regard by those in the field of sports law.
- Candidate must have a consistent record of presenting the practice and/or theory of sports law in a positive light to the sports world and the public in general.

## Nomination Process

- Nominations are accepted from active members of the Sports Lawyers Association and members of the Selection Committee.

## Selection Committee

- The Selection Committee is, at a minimum, composed of three representatives of the association. At the discretion of SLA’s president, the Selection Committee can be expanded to include not more than seven members, and one member of the committee serves as chairperson.

## Presentation of the Award

- The Award of Excellence is presented during the Sports Lawyers Association annual conference.

## Public Relations

- The Sports Lawyers Association engages in focusing attention on the award through its contacts with the sports media and sports broadcast industry.

## Previous Award Recipients:

1991 — Alan I. Rothenberg  
1992 — Anita L. DeFrantz  
1993 — Lloyd E. Shefsky & John F. Wendel  
1994 — Gary Bettman & Jay Moyer  
1997 — Reuven J. Katz  
2000 — Stanley H. Kasten  
2004 — Marvin J. Miller  
2005 — Paul J. Tagliabue  
2007 — Alan H. (Bud) Selig  
2008 — Donna A. Lopiano, BS, MA, PhD  
2009 — Jerry Reinsdorf

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## Sports Lawyers Association

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# 2010 Award of Excellence



**Jerry Colangelo**



## 2010 Recipient: Jerry Colangelo

Jerry Colangelo was named chair of USA Basketball's Board of Directors for the 2009-2012 term on Nov. 12, 2008.

Colangelo first became involved in USA Basketball on April 27, 2005, when he was named Managing Director of the USA Basketball Men's Senior National Team program.

Colangelo developed a USA Senior National Team program that ultimately would include 33 top players and some of basketball's most respected coaches, including 2006-08 USA Basketball Senior National Team head coach and Duke University's Hall of Fame mentor Mike Krzyzewski. USA Basketball's Senior National Team program during the three-year period between 2006-08 compiled a striking 36-1 overall win-loss record and just as importantly reestablished the USA team as positive ambassadors for the United States and the sport.

The USA squad culminated the quadrennium by finishing 8-0 to reclaim the gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the USA's first gold in a major international competition since 2000.

The USA Senior National Team also won the 2007 FIBA Americas Championship with a 10-0 record to qualify the U.S. men for the 2008 Olympic Games. In the program's first year, the U.S. captured the bronze medal with an 8-1 record at the 2006 FIBA World Championship in Japan.

Colangelo has been the face of the NBA Phoenix Suns franchise since their inaugural season in 1968. With the Suns, his roles have included general manager, head coach, president, managing general partner, chief executive officer and his current role as chairman. His 40-year tenure with one franchise is the longest in the NBA. Colangelo spent two seasons with the Chicago Bulls working as marketing director, scout and assistant to the president before moving to Phoenix to help start the expansion Suns.

Phoenix, entering the 2008-09 season, owns the NBA's fourth-best all-time regular season winning percentage with a 1814-1434 record and .558 winning percentage, trailing only the Los Angeles Lakers (.614/ 2905-1824), San Antonio Spurs (.598 / 1549-1043) and Boston Celtics (.591 / 2860-1979).

On two occasions Colangelo stepped in to coach the Suns, including the 1969-70 season when he guided the club to a 24-20 mark down the stretch and to its first playoff appear-

ance. He also took over in 1972-73 and compiled a 35-40 mark. Overall, Colangelo is 59-60 as an NBA coach.

Colangelo's impact on the game of basketball has been so significant he was elected to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in April 2004.

On Nov. 4, 2007, Colangelo became the 12th member of the Phoenix Suns' Ring of Fame, the club's most elite group that includes the likes of franchise greats Alvan Adams, Charles Barkley, Tom Chambers, Walter Davis, Cotton Fitzsimmons, Connie Hawkins, Kevin Johnson, Dan Majerle, Joe Proski, Dick Van Arsdale and Paul Westphal.

The *Arizona Republic* named him the Most Influential Sports Figure in the state of Arizona for the 20th century, and the *Phoenix Business Journal* regularly voted him among its "Most Influential" business persons in the Valley. Nationally, Colangelo has been among *The Sporting News*' most powerful people in sports for over the last decade and most recently was listed 60th in *BusinessWeek*'s annual "The Power 100" ranking of the 100 most powerful people in sports for 2008.

He brought Major League Baseball to the Phoenix in 1998 and served as Chairman and CEO of the 2001 World Champion Arizona Diamondbacks. Going from expansion team to World Champion in just four years was a record for Major League Baseball. Arizona won the National League West in just its second season to become the fastest expansion team in baseball history to qualify for the postseason, just as the Suns did in their second season in 1969-70.

Colangelo also was the key element in facilitating the move of the NHL's Winnipeg Jets to Arizona in 1996, where they became the Phoenix Coyotes.

Chairman of the NBA's Board of Governors from October 2001 through October 2005, Colangelo has had influence on the growth of the NBA as a member of the league's Finance Committee, Long Range Planning Committee, Expansion Committee and Competition and Rules Committee. NBA Commissioner David Stern turned to Colangelo to chair a special group in the 2000-01 season that evaluated the state of the game and made rules modifications.

Colangelo added to his NBA involvement with a position on the founding committee for the WNBA, helping advance professional women's basketball in the U.S. The Phoenix Mercury were one of the WNBA's inaugural teams in 1997.

As with the NBA, Colangelo was involved with the governing of baseball, serving on the Legislative Committee, Equal Opportunity Committee and on the board of directors of the MLB Advanced Media, the technology arm of the league.

Colangelo was recognized by Phoenix mayor Phil Gordon who proclaimed March 26, 2004, Jerry Colangelo Day in the city of Phoenix. The Valley of the Sun United Way also bestowed its highest honor, the Spirit of Caring award, to Colangelo on June 30, 2005, for his passion for improving lives in the community.

Currently a principal partner of JDM Partners, LLC a real estate development company, Colangelo is also chairman of the board of the Council of Leadership Education, and a past chairman of Collaboration for a New Century; Southwest Leadership Foundation; the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame; Leadership Foundations of America; Arizona State University's Dean's Council of 100 and the Honor Board for Junior Achievement of Central Arizona; and he served as president of Valley Big Brothers and was chairman of the board of the Christian Businessmen's Club. Colangelo has served on the board of directors of the Phoenix Art Museum; Greater Phoenix Economic Council; Athletes in Action; and Phoenix Suns Charities. He is a lifetime member of the Phoenix Thunderbirds, an organization dedicated to the promotion of Phoenix through sports.

He is currently a Vice Chairman of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, and is Vice Chairman of the National Italian American Foundation and Young Life International; past vice president of the Phoenix Downtown Partnership; past chairman and CEO of Phoenix Community Alliance; and he was a leader in the establishment of Employers Against Domestic Violence.

The author of a book titled *How You Play the Game*, Colangelo gives insight into the world of the business of sports and his own life. Proceeds of the book sales go to Young Life of Arizona, Phoenix Suns Charities and Arizona Diamondbacks Charities.

Colangelo prepped at Bloom Township High School in Chicago Heights, Ill., where he was an all-state basketball honoree as a senior, and a top pitcher on the baseball team.

He enrolled at the University of Kansas, but transferred after his prospective teammate, Wilt Chamberlain, left the Jayhawks for a pro contract. Colangelo transferred to the University of Illinois, where he earned All-Big Ten honors, captained the Illini as a senior and was later inducted into the Illinois Basketball Hall of Fame. He also played two years of baseball at Illinois.

Colangelo grew up in the "Hungry Hill" neighborhood of Chicago Heights. His ties to "The Heights" and Bloom Township are evident in the Jerry Colangelo Gymnasium, dedicated in his honor November 10, 1996, and Colangelo Way, a street named after him. Construction was recently completed on the Colangelo Center that houses the Italian-American Athletic Hall of Fame in Chicago.

Colangelo and his wife, Joan, whom he met on a blind date while at the University of Illinois, have four children: Kathy Holcombe, Kristen Brubaker, Bryan, and Mandie Colangelo, and six granddaughters and four grandsons.