

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.

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Sports Lawyers Association

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2012 Award of Excellence



Dick Moss



2012 Recipient: Dick Moss

Dick Moss, as he is known professionally, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and grew up in a small town nearby. He is a graduate of Solebury School, the University of Pittsburgh and the Harvard Law School. Following law school and two years in the army, he joined a small labor firm in Pittsburgh, and also served briefly as an Assistant Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 1963, Dick joined the legal staff of the United Steelworkers of America as the Associate General Counsel, and was placed in charge of the Union's legal department at its International Headquarters. When Marvin Miller, who had been the chief economic advisor for the Steelworkers, left in 1966 to become Executive Director of the new baseball players union, he asked Dick to join him as General Counsel. Together, for the next eleven years, they constituted the two-man staff of the fledgling union.

While serving as the Players Association's lawyer, Dick was involved in all the collective bargaining negotiations and contract administration matters. He tried all the union's grievance arbitration cases, including in 1975 the Messersmith case which ended baseball's overly restrictive reserve system and created free agency for the players. He was also the union's lawyer in all of its court litigation, most notably the Curt Flood case which was ultimately decided in the U.S. Supreme Court. He is one of the innovators of baseball's salary arbitration system, and tried, as the union's General Counsel, the first several cases for players who could not afford or did not trust outside representation.

Dick resigned in 1977, but continued serving the union as special counsel during the next three rounds of collective bargaining negotiations. He also began representing baseball players on an individual basis, and in the years that have followed, he has represented over 250 Major League players in contract matters. Among his early accomplishments in that regard were negotiating the first million-dollar-a-year contract in professional team sports for Nolan Ryan in 1979, and trying and winning the first million dollar salary arbitration case for Fernando Valenzuela in 1982.

In the past few years, Dick has also represented many prominent players in the other team sports in arbitration regarding disputes with their former agents. He has also represented agents in disputes with other agents.

Dick was an Adjunct Professor at the University of Southern California's law school where he taught a course titled Sports and the Law. He has lectured at many other law schools, including Harvard, Yale and Stanford. He has also given papers at national meetings of many professional organizations including the American Bar Association and the National Academy of Arbitrators.

Dick is a member of the board of directors of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Sports Lawyers Association, and in Los Angeles, Today's Fresh Start, a non-profit organization providing for tutoring of disadvantaged public school students. He also is a member of the board of trustees of Solebury School.

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
- 2010 — Jerry Colangelo
- 2011 — Gene Upshaw