

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **CELEBRATION OF CHAMPIONS DINNER FEATURES ASU WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH AS KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**GLENDALE, Ariz.** – Arizona State University Head Women's Basketball Coach Charli Turner Thorne will have an opportunity to speak to state high school athletic champions from nine Glendale high schools when the inaugural "Celebration of Champions Dinner" is held Wednesday, May 16 at the Glendale Civic Center.

Turner Thorne, who will be the keynote speaker at the dinner, is the most successful coach in program history (203-134 record at ASU). She is coming off a season in which she directed the Sun Devils to its first-ever Elite Eight appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

The dinner is being put on by Glendale First, a new non-profit organization comprised of business and civic leaders just launched in Glendale to build and promote business and community partnerships to strengthen economic vitality and the quality of life in the city.

"As we embark on our first year as a new organization in Glendale, we think the time is right to stage a community event honoring exceptional athletic achievement," said Arlene Kulzer, Glendale First president.

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## Celebration of Champions Dinner/add 1-1-1

“This aligns with the city’s new reputation as a national sports and entertainment destination, as well as being named one of *Sports Illustrated’s Good Sports Communities of the Year.*”

Glendale was one of eight cities in the country to receive this honor and was selected for implementing effective, youth-focused sports programs.

Business and community organizations are invited to join in the Celebration of Champions Dinner presented by Ashley Furniture HomeStore through sponsorship of the event beginning at \$750 or by purchasing individual tickets at \$75 each. Proceeds will be used to provide awards to the student athletes and to promote future business and quality of life programs and opportunities in the city. The evening will begin with a reception at 5:30 p.m. and the dinner and program at 7 p.m. Guests will include leaders from business, education and government, as well as the student-athletes.

State champion high school teams that will be honored to date are Apollo High School - 4A Division I Boys Basketball; Cactus High School - 4A Division I Girls Basketball and Girls Volleyball; and Deer Valley High School - 5A Division II Spirit Line.

Individual state high school champions to be honored to date include Jack Hicks for Boys 100 Yard Backstroke and Justin Mauser for Wrestling 145 lbs Division -- Deer Valley High School (5A Division II); Jessica Ruiz for Girls Badminton, Anthony Wagner for Wrestling 112 lbs Division, Diego Bencomo for Wrestling 189 lbs Division and J.J. Sanchez for Wrestling Heavyweight Division -- Independence High School (4A Division I); Skylar Wilson for Girls 50 Yard Free Style and 100 Yard Free Style and Amber Weinberger for Girls 1 Meter Diving -- Ironwood High School (5A Division II); and Nadia Biston for Girls Cross Country -- Mountain Ridge High School (5A Division I).

To purchase tickets for the upcoming dinner or for more information on Glendale First, call Shawn Pensinger at 623-209-2727.       ###