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**SAINTS QB DREW BREES & CHARGERS RB LaDAINIAN TOMLINSON
NAMED WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR**

SECOND TIME CO-WINNERS SELECTED

New Orleans quarterback **DREW BREES** and San Diego running back **LaDAINIAN TOMLINSON** were named the **WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR**, it was announced today.

CONNIE PAYTON, Walter Payton's wife, presented the two Pro Bowlers with the awards this morning at a press conference and NFL Vice President of Player and Employee Development and Hall of Fame member **MICHAEL HAYNES** made the announcement.

The Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, named after the legendary Chicago Bears running back who died in 1999, is the only league award that recognizes a player's off-the-field community service as well as his playing excellence.

Brees and Tomlinson – the top two vote-getters for 2006 NFL MVP honors and teammates for five seasons with the Chargers – join an esteemed list of past winners that includes 15 members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Recent winners include **PEYTON MANNING** of the Indianapolis Colts (2005), **WARRICK DUNN** of the Atlanta Falcons (2004), **WILL SHIELDS** of the Kansas City Chiefs (2003), **TROY VINCENT** of the Buffalo Bills (2002), **JEROME BETTIS** formerly of the Pittsburgh Steelers (2001), and co-winners in 2000 **DERRICK BROOKS** of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and **JIM FLANIGAN** formerly of the Chicago Bears (complete list of winners below).

Brees, who passed for an NFL-best 4,418 yards and topped the NFC with 26 touchdown passes and a 96.2 passer rating in leading the Saints to their first division title in six years, stated that "this is where I was meant to be" when he joined New Orleans last spring.

His efforts to help in the region's rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina have been widespread. Within days of his arrival in New Orleans, he partnered with Deuce McAllister on a fundraiser to help rebuild the NFL Youth Education Town and Pan American Football Field. The duo also completed a playground for the YET Center.

"This is a tremendous honor for me to win this award and share it with a good friend and tremendous competitor in LT," said Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year **DREW BREES**. "The first and most important thing about the award is the namesake, Walter Payton. He represented everything that is good about our league, the kind of man he was, the integrity and professionalism both on and off the field. I strive to emulate that and to be the best teammate I can, to understand my role in the community and to uphold the integrity of the NFL. It has been an honor for me to come to New Orleans and represent the great people of this community. The ability to

affect so many people in a positive way following Katrina was an experience for me that I will never forget. I accept this award on behalf of my teammates, our organization and the great fans that we shared the 2006 season with."

"This is an outstanding award for Drew and it speaks to the great season he had and helped produce," said New Orleans Saints owner **TOM BENSON**. "He joined us and immediately took the reins as a leader both on and off the field. He has always been a team player and takes his responsibility as the leader of our team very seriously. Drew would be the first to tell you that individual awards are the results of great teamwork and success of that team working together. We are very proud of him and are very pleased to have him as a Saint."

Brees has also focused on improving youth and high school programs with donations (matched by teammates and the NFL) and sponsored the *Drew Brees Gridiron Classic* which allowed youth teams to play on the Superdome field at halftime of a Saints game. He also funded the renovation of a van for patients at Children's Hospital. Brees was joined by teammates in October at a New Orleans middle school to landscape the grounds and restore the building and participated in the Saints Thanksgiving turkey giveaway a month later.

After playing in San Diego from 2001-05, Brees has kept up his charitable involvement in that community as well, hosting an annual golf tournament to support the San Diego Children's Hospital and Cancer Research.

Tomlinson, who set NFL records for total touchdowns (31) and points scored (186) and led the league with 1,815 rushing yards as the Chargers captured the AFC West title, has made just as large an impact off the field.

Since joining the NFL and the Chargers in 2001, he has committed to helping children in San Diego and his hometown of Waco, Texas. *L.T.'s 21 Club* provides Chargers game tickets to local children, who are then treated to a postgame dinner hosted by Tomlinson and receive a goodie bag filled with school supplies, books and games. Each year, *L.T.'s School is Cool Scholarship Fund* helps 25 college-bound students who are selected based upon academics, community involvement and volunteerism. Fifteen of the scholarship winners come from Tomlinson's alma mater University High School in Waco, with the other 10 coming from San Diego.

"I am honored to receive this award because it's named after a man who had a tremendous impact on me growing up. I idolized and wanted to be like Walter Payton when I was growing up," said **LaDAINIAN TOMLINSON**, Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year. "Walter Payton was more than a great running back. He was a great person. LaTorsha and I have been blessed, and we're grateful to be able to continue his legacy of leadership that has had such a positive impact on kids just like me growing up."

"LT personifies the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award," said San Diego Chargers president **DEAN SPANOS**. "He leads by example both as a player on the field and as a citizen in our community. He has his priorities in the right order. Faith and family are number one in his life. He takes his status as a role model seriously and truly is a role model for all of our kids. We're proud of the way LT represents himself, the Chargers and the community of San Diego."

Each year Tomlinson and his wife LaTorsha host the *Giving Thanks with L.T. & Friends Holiday Program*, working with community leaders and law enforcement in San Diego to distribute Thanksgiving turkeys and take needy children shopping. Each offseason in Waco and San Diego, Tomlinson hosts *Camp L.T.* which stresses character building and goal-setting exercises while also mixing in lessons on football fundamentals. In 2004, Tomlinson was named "Good Guy of the Year" by *The Sporting News*.

The accomplishments of the 32 finalists for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award – one from each NFL team – are reviewed by a blue-ribbon panel, which includes NFL Commissioner **ROGER GOODELL**, former NFL Commissioner **PAUL TAGLIABUE**, Pro Football Hall of Famer **ANTHONY MUÑOZ**, Sports

Illustrated football writer **PETER KING**, football greats **FRANK GIFFORD** and **JACK KEMP**, 2005 winner and current Indianapolis Colts star **PEYTON MANNING** and **CONNIE PAYTON**.

Brees and Tomlinson will receive the distinctive Gladiator statue, an original art creation by the noted sculptor, **DANIEL SCHWARTZ**. In addition, each player's favorite charity will receive a \$25,000 donation in his name.

WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR WINNERS

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PLAYER, POSITION</u>	<u>TEAM</u>
2006	Drew Brees, QB (N.O.) and LaDainian Tomlinson, RB (S.D.)	
2005	Peyton Manning, Quarterback	Indianapolis Colts
2004	Warrick Dunn, Running Back	Atlanta Falcons
2003	Will Shields, Guard	Kansas City Chiefs
2002	Troy Vincent, Defensive End	Philadelphia Eagles
2001	Jerome Bettis, Running Back	Pittsburgh Steelers
2000	Derrick Brooks (Tampa) and Jim Flanigan (Chicago)	
1999	Cris Carter, Wide Receiver	Minnesota Vikings
1998	Dan Marino, Quarterback	Miami Dolphins
1997	Troy Aikman, Quarterback	Dallas Cowboys
1996	Darrell Green, Cornerback	Washington Redskins
1995	Boomer Esiason, Quarterback	New York Jets
1994	Junior Seau, Linebacker	San Diego Chargers
1993	Derrick Thomas, Linebacker	Kansas City Chiefs
1992	John Elway, Quarterback	Denver Broncos
1991	Anthony Munoz, Tackle	Cincinnati Bengals
1990	Mike Singletary, Linebacker	Chicago Bears
1989	Warren Moon, Quarterback	Houston Oilers
1988	Steve Largent, Wide Receiver	Seattle Seahawks
1987	Dave Duerson, Safety	Chicago Bears
1986	Reggie Williams, Linebacker	Cincinnati Bengals
1985	Dwight Stephenson, Center	Miami Dolphins
1984	Marty Lyons, Tackle	New York Jets
1983	Rolf Benirschke, Kicker	San Diego Chargers
1982	Joe Theismann, Quarterback	Washington Redskins
1981	Lynn Swann, Wide Receiver	Pittsburgh Steelers
1980	Harold Carmichael, Wide Receiver	Philadelphia Eagles
1979	Joe Greene, Defensive Lineman	Pittsburgh Steelers
1978	Roger Staubach, Quarterback	Dallas Cowboys
1977	Walter Payton, Running Back	Chicago Bears
1976	Franco Harris, Running Back	Pittsburgh Steelers
1975	Ken Anderson, Quarterback	Cincinnati Bengals
1974	George Blanda, Quarterback	Oakland Raiders
1973	Len Dawson, Quarterback	Kansas City Chiefs
1972	Willie Lanier, Linebacker	Kansas City Chiefs
1971	John Hadl, Quarterback	San Diego Chargers
1970	Johnny Unitas, Quarterback	Baltimore Colts