

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.



SLA Officers

Richard E.Thigpen,Jr., President
Kenneth Shropshire, President-Elect
Peter Roisman, Secretary
Ash Narayan, Treasurer

SLA Board of Directors

Anthony J. Agnone
Richard A. Berthelsen
Jean-Jacques Bertrand
Stokely G. Caldwell, Jr.
Elsa Cole
Dennis Curran
Leonard Elmore
Donald M. Fehr
Craig E. Fenech
Robert Goodenow
Peter Goplerud
G. William Hunter
Stanley H. Kasten
Gordon I. Kirke
Pamela R. Lester
A. Jackson Mills
Matthew J. Mitten

Richard M. Moss
Jay Moyer
Jill Pilgrim
Gary R. Roberts
Herbert L. Rudoy
Robert H. Ruxin
Kenneth Shropshire
Deborah L. Spander
Kimarie R. Stratos
Richard E. Thigpen, Jr.
Stephen M. Townley
Stephanie Vardavas
Richard L. Wagenheim
Robert E. Wallace, Jr.
William Y. Webb
Glenn M. Wong

Directors Emeriti

Reuven J. Katz
Lloyd E. Shefsky
John F. Wendel



Sports Lawyers Association

Award of Excellence



Commissioner Paul J. Tagliabue



2005 Winner: Commissioner Paul J. Tagliabue

Paul Tagliabue's leadership has enabled the NFL to address several key priorities since becoming commissioner.

Among them, the NFL has grown from 28 to 32 teams, revised its divisional alignment and scheduling formula, operated under successive long-term labor agreements with the NFL Players Association, and secured the largest television contracts in entertainment history. During this time, the NFL also has expanded league and team commitments to community service and refocused the NFL's efforts in developing public-private partnerships for new stadiums. In addition, the NFL under Tagliabue has been the new media leader in sports, creating the first leaguewide Internet network for fans and first satellite television subscription service, and launching the NFL Network on cable and satellite television.

Tagliabue has presided over the adoption of a range of services to assist NFL players and their families, including the enforcement of stringent policies on steroids and other drugs. In addition, the Tagliabue era has seen the NFL expand its presence internationally and create the NFL Youth Football Fund to support the game at amateur levels.

Under his leadership, the NFL has taken steps to guarantee the appeal and safety of the game on the field and to ensure that all teams have financial and other resources to compete effectively for championships. Fan interest, as reflected in game attendance, television audiences, and other measures, is at record levels, and the NFL is widely recognized as holding the preeminent position in sports entertainment.

Tagliabue's leadership of the NFL was featured in a Business Week cover story ("The NFL Machine," January 27, 2003), and in TIME Magazine ("The

American Money Machine," December 6, 2004); and he has also been recognized as a "best manager" by Business Week (January 12, 2004).

For the NFL's work on behalf of many charitable, educational, and community boards and causes, Tagliabue has been widely recognized.

Paul J. Tagliabue's leadership – "...the NFL has grown from 28 to 32 teams, revised its divisional alignment and scheduling formula, operated under successive long-term labor agreements with the NFL Players Association, and secured the largest television contracts in entertainment history."

Tagliabue is founding chairman of the board of directors of the Neil D. Levin Graduate Institute of International Relations and Commerce, part of the State University of New York (SUNY). He is a member of the board of directors of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and other not-for-profit organizations. He also has served on the board

of governors of the United Way of America, chairing it during 1998-99, and on the board of the National Urban League.

Tagliabue was named the 2004 and 2001 Most Powerful Person in Sports by The Sporting News, the 2001 Sports Executive of the Year by The Sports Business Journal, and the 2000 Sports Industrialist of the Year by The Sports Business Daily.

Before becoming the league's CEO, Tagliabue represented the NFL as an attorney in many important areas as a partner at Covington & Burling, a Washington, D.C., law firm, the NFL's principal outside counsel. At C&B, he also represented organizations engaged in the global development of professional soccer and tennis (North American Soccer League and World Championship Tennis) and other professional and amateur sports organizations.

Earlier, Tagliabue served in the office of the United States Secretary of Defense as a policy analyst. Tagliabue remains abreast of such matters as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Commissioner Tagliabue was born in New Jersey in 1940. He attended Georgetown University in Washington, DC on an athletic scholarship, and graduated from Georgetown with honors with a degree in political science. He subsequently received his law degree with honors at New York University School of Law.

Previous Award Recipients

1991 Alan I. Rothenberg

1992 Anita L. DeFrantz

1993 Lloyd E. Shefsky and John F. Wendel

1994 Gary Bettman and Jay Moyer

1997 Reuven J. Katz

2000 Stanley H. Kasten

2004 Marvin J. Miller