

Rainbow PUSH to Honor SC State Athletics Director

Written by Staff Writer

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ORANGEBURG, S.C. - SC State Athletics Director Charlene Johnson will be among the persons honored during the Rainbow PUSH 14th annual Creating Opportunity Conference from Nov. 1-2 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta.

The purpose of the conference, according to a press release from the organization, is to promote fairness in contracting, hiring, retention and promotion, as well as fair terms and conditions in purchasing, lending and investment; and to inspire youth and their parents to take advantage of every opportunity to achieve the highest potential.

Johnson, who is in her 10th year as athletics director and her 30th year overall at SC State, will receive the group's Jesse Jackson Sr. Sports Person of the Year Award, presented annually to a person who represents "life beyond the playing field," and is a role model for young people, according to a Rainbow PUSH spokesperson. She will be presented the prestigious award Saturday by former WNBA standout Rushia Brown during the group's Youth and Sports Luncheon, beginning at noon.

"Charlene's career represents the type of post athletic success that all high school, collegiate and professional athletes aspire to have and emulate," said Dextor Clinkscale, Rainbow PUSH's sports director and a former SC State Dallas Cowboy football standout.

Johnson, an SC State alumna, has been a 'trailblazer,' as she became the first woman appointed to a full-time coaching position at her alma mater in 1983. Six years ago, she became

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the first woman to serve as chairperson of the Directors of Athletics Association in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference. And, she has served on several NCAA committees and is currently a member of the NCAA Division I Football Championship Committee.

“I’m both excited and grateful to be receiving such a prestigious award,” said Johnson when notified of the honor. “My chosen career (in athletics) has afforded me the opportunity to work with and mentor young people, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my experiences. It’s a distinct honor to be recognized for contributions in the field of athletics and to the development of our youth especially.”

During her tenure as athletics director at SC State, many of the facilities have undergone major improvements, attendance at athletic contests and revenues have increased significantly and academic enhancement strengthened.

As a student athlete at SC State (1976-80), Johnson played on the Lady Bulldogs’ 1979 AIAW national basketball championship team. She was inducted into her alma mater’s Hall of Fame in 1998 and received special recognition as a member of the 1979 championship team in 2000.

Johnson, who earned both a bachelor’s (1980) and master’s (1987) at SC State, is married to Attorney Virgin Johnson Jr., and is the mother of three children, all currently enrolled in college.