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SUNS NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR SPIRIT OF COTTON AWARD

Team pays tribute to Ring of Honor member Cotton Fitzsimmons with award for high school hoops coaches

PHOENIX – For the sixth consecutive year, Phoenix Suns Charities will honor the memory of former Suns head coach Cotton Fitzsimmons, with The Spirit of Cotton Award.

The award recognizes a high school basketball coach who consistently demonstrates the best qualities of coach, educator, mentor and community leader. These are the same characteristics that made Cotton Fitzsimmons such a successful and respected coach and teacher of life at every level of his distinguished career. All high school head basketball coaches in Arizona are eligible to be nominated. Nominations can be made by a community member, fellow coach/teacher, school administrator or student-athlete.

The Spirit of Cotton Award winner will receive:

- A Phoenix Suns Charities grant of \$10,000 for use in the school's athletic programs;
- A commemorative plaque and ring, courtesy of Coffin and Trout Fine Jewelers;
- An Arizona weekend get-away for two, courtesy of the Wigwam Golf Resort and Spa.

Nominations for The Spirit of Cotton Award are being accepted through March 7, 2011. The winner will be announced and honored at the Suns home game on April 11. For more information on The Spirit of Cotton Award, or to download a nomination form, please visit SunsCharities.org.

Previous Spirit of Cotton Award recipients include David Lopez of St. Mary's High School in Phoenix (2010), Howard Mueller of Phoenix Greenway High School (2009), Karen Self of Seton Catholic High School in Chandler (2008), Gary Ernst of Mesa Mountain View High School (2007) and Dick McConnell of Sahuaro High School in Tucson (2006).

Fitzsimmons, who passed away in July 2004, had been an integral part of the franchise since 1970, with his first of three stints as the team's head coach. He returned to the Suns in 1987 as director of player personnel. In 1988-89, Fitzsimmons added coaching to his duties with the Suns and engineered what, at the time, was the third-biggest one-season turnaround in NBA history, converting the Suns from a 28-win non-playoff team to a 55-win team that advanced to the 1989 Western Conference Finals.

Over a 20-year NBA coaching career, Fitzsimmons won 832 games with four different franchises. He was twice honored as NBA Coach of the Year (1979 with Kansas City, 1989 with the Suns).

Continue your Suns Legacy! Season ticket holders are urged to renew online at Mysixthman.com by February 17. Fans interested in new season ticket plans for the 2011-12 Suns season should call (602) 379-SUNS or visit Suns.com.

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