

NATCHITOCHES – Two iconic figures on the north Louisiana sports scene, Ruston Daily Leader sports editor O.K. “Buddy” Davis and Shreveport sportscaster and writer Bob Griffin, are the winners of the 2009 Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism from the Louisiana Sports Writers Association.

Davis and Griffin, both still active in the profession, will receive their awards Saturday night, June 27, during the 2009 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Induction Dinner and Ceremonies in Natchitoches. Davis has been the Daily Leader sports editor for 39 years, while Griffin had a 48-year career as a television sportscaster and remains active in TV and radio.

The Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism is the most prestigious honor offered to sports media in the state. Recipients are chosen by the 30-member Hall of Fame selection committee based on their professional accomplishments in local, state, regional and even national arenas, with leadership in the LSWA a contributing factor and three decades of work in the profession as a requirement.

The Distinguished Service Award winners join the "writers and broadcasters wing" of the Hall of Fame and will be recognized in the Hall along with the 269 athletes, coaches and administrators chosen for enshrinement since 1959. Only 44 prominent figures in the state's sports media have been honored with the Distinguished Service Award since its inception in 1982.

“Recognizing Buddy Davis and Bob Griffin with the Distinguished Service Award in Sports Journalism shows the LSWA’s profound appreciation and admiration of their career achievements,” said LSWA President Garland Forman. “They have played a major role in telling the story of sports in Louisiana, and especially the northern part of our state. They’ve covered countless Hall of Fame members, and they’ve done it in a style that has earned each of them a place in the Hall.”

Eight new Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame members will be enshrined: football greats Michael Brooks, Marshall Faulk and Willie Roaf, golf champion Hal Sutton, women’s basketball coaching pioneer Sonja Hogg, world motorcycling champion Freddie Spencer, high school girls basketball coaching legend Carrice Russell Baker, and iconic LSU athletic trainer Marty Broussard. Broussard will be honored posthumously.

Also honored June 27 will be the 2009 winners of the Dave Dixon Louisiana Sports Leadership Award, to be announced shortly by the LSWA.

For ticket information, to make secure on-line ticket and event reservations, and for a schedule of events during the Hall of Fame Induction Celebration June 25-27, visit www.lasportshall.com on the internet. Banquet tickets are just \$30 per person.

A Ruston native, Davis has been the city's sports authority for almost 40 years. He was named the sports editor at the Ruston Daily Leader in 1970 and has been going strong ever since. Often an award winner in the annual LSWA writing contests, Davis began as a student assistant SID at Louisiana Tech working with 2007 DSA winner Pete Doshier in the mid-1960s.

Ever since his early days when one of his first assignments was covering Louisiana Tech quarterback Terry Bradshaw, Davis has seen many of the best athletes Louisiana has had to offer. Bradshaw (nicknamed the Blond Bomber by Davis, then-Tech sports information director and future DSA winner Paul Manasseh and sportswriter Nico Van Thyn), was the NFL's No. 1 draft choice the year Davis became The Leader's sports editor. Davis's feature story on Bradshaw in The Sporting News that year was the first national story on the future Louisiana Sports Hall of Famer.

A few of the stories Davis has covered in his long and continuing career include:

- the perennially powerful Ruston High School football program with two Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame members, "Hoss" Garrett and "Chick" Childress, serving as head coach of the Bearcats during Davis' tenure.
- The Lady Techsters' basketball program since its inception in 1974, including all four of the team's national championships -- including three AIAW national women's tournaments and 21 NCAA national women's tournaments.
- The Grambling football program and legendary Eddie Robinson since the late 1960s, even while Davis was a full-time student at Louisiana Tech.
- And a list that includes two major league All-Star games; an NBA All-Star game; an NCAA men's Final Four; a BCS national title game, 12 Super Bowls, three NCAA outdoor track championships and two Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremonies (Bradshaw's in 1989 and Fred Dean last summer); the induction of former Louisiana Tech basketball coach Leon Barmore into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2005; and the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta when Karl Malone and Venus Lacy were participants.

Davis is a voter on a number of committees, including being a member of the Heisman Trophy selection committee, Wooden Award, Football Writers Association of America All-American committee and the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame. He was honored with Buddy Davis Day at a 2007 Louisiana Tech home football game.

Griffin has covered many Lincoln Parish-based stories in a remarkable span of 48 years as a sportscaster at Shreveport's KSLA-TV. Still working, now as a roving reporter for Shreveport's KTBS-TV at the age of 74, Griffin has provided defining coverage of prep, college, professional and amateur sports to TV viewers in northwest Louisiana, east Texas and southwest Arkansas.

He worked in sports at KSLA since 1961 – an incredible span of 48 years on air. He remains active with radio shows on 50,000-watt KEEL Radio and his role at KTBS-TV.

Griffin was named the state's "Sportscaster of the Year" in 2005 by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association.

He was sports director for 41 years, until 2002, and remained on air until December 2008 as weekend sports anchor and part-time reporter, including as a co-host of Channel 12's "Friday Night Football – The End Zone" prep coverage.

Several future Shreveport sports directors at competitors KTAL and KTBS got their start under Griffin.

Griffin gave prominent coverage to Grambling football and Eddie Robinson, making some road trips with the Tigers to games across the nation in the late 1960s and 1970s. He aggressively covered NFL teams in Dallas and New Orleans and covered such local and northwest Louisiana stars as Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame members Terry Bradshaw, Joe Ferguson, Joe Delaney, Doug Williams, Robert Parish, Hollis Conway, Bert Jones, and many others.

He has received numerous career awards from Shreveport-Bossier organizations in recent years, including the Independence Bowl's 2000 "Sportsman of the Year" and several civic groups, receiving the 2004 "Mr. Shreveport" award from The Optimist Club in recognition of his community activism and longtime impact. He earned the National Football Foundation northwest Louisiana chapter's "Contribution to Amateur Football" award in 2005 and serves on that organization's board.

He was appointed Shreveport-Bossier's "Goodwill Ambassador" by the mayors of both cities. After appearing in an "off Broadway" show in New York City following college at Arkansas and Nebraska, Griffin joined the KSLA in 1961 and served as weatherman and sports anchor in the early years.

Griffin, who has exceeded three Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame inductions, wrote frequent columns, some on sports and some on entertainment, for the Shreveport Journal for about 15 years. Griffin hosted a sports talk radio show on 50,000-watt KWKH AM and later 50,000-watt KEEL AM in the late 1990s and continues to host both a daily one-minute segment and a weekly half-hour general interest talk show, often featuring sports figures, on KEEL.

Griffin was enshrined in the Centenary College Sports Hall of Fame in 2005 and was named the Ark-La-Tex Sports Museum of Champions "Man of the Year" in 2008.