2018 AVCA DIVERSITY AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Brandon Bader** is the head coach at Westlake High School in Waldorf, Md. Now in his second year, he’s increased the win total in both seasons. He’s also spent time promoting his program by constructing a website and utilizing social media accounts. Previously, he was an assistant coach at Roosevelt High School (Des Moines, IA) and served as a volleyball TV analyst for NCAA matches in Des Moines.

**Collin Cohen** is a volunteer assistant coach at the University of Utah. He brings a strong volleyball background from between the lines and on the sidelines. He began his college career at Santa Barbara City College then transferred to NCAA Division I Fort Wayne (IPFW), and then went on to play professional beach in Germany. He returned state side to serve as the head men’s coach and assistant women’s coach at Missouri Valley College before heading to Salt Lake City and the Utes.
Dr. Ramona Cox is an Associate Athletic Director and head coach at Detroit PAL and Cass Technical High School in Detroit, Mich. Detroit PAL is a non-profit organization positively impacting lives of more than 14,000 children each year. She uses local resources to increase volleyball exposure to girls and train 150 volunteer coaches every season. The Detroit area volleyball scene would not be what it is today without the work of Cox.

Barbara Gonzalez is a graduate assistant at Providence College. She moved to the United States from Argentina to play for Boston College, and graduated with a degree in Communications. Upon graduation she joined the Friars where she is also in the process of getting her Master of Education (Higher Education Counseling). While at Providence, she’s responsible for administrative scheduling and assisting coaches in running practices among additional duties.

Bijonae Jones is a senior outside hitter at Wofford College. She’s third on the team, where she’s also a captain, averaging 2.43 digs per set while majoring in Spanish with a minor in Studio Art. Jones has coached in numerous college volleyball camps in addition to serving as an official in the Palmetto Region. Off the court, she is a community leader as she volunteers for the Wofford Women of Color, which is an organization that strives to improve the college experience for the women of color on campus.

Taylor Littleton is an assistant coach at Barton Community College. The Cougars alum is in her second season with the program and has helped lead them to a combined 40 wins and a pair of Region VI Playoff appearances.
Michael Loyd is a 16-1 head coach at Cobb Atlanta Juniors. His teams have consistently been ranked among the best in the region and nationally, finishing fifth overall at AAU Nationals in the 2018 season. He also coaches boys and girls volleyball at Kennesaw Mountain High School where his teams have enjoyed state playoff success. “We can’t control what happens to us, but we can control how we respond. That is my vision and why I believe we are successful,” he said.

Melody Nua is an assistant coach at UNLV. She returned to the Rebels after serving as the team’s starting setter from 2005-2008. Upon graduation, she went on to coach club and high school across multiple age groups in both indoor and beach. Nua entered the college ranks in 2013 when she joined the staff of Golden West College’s indoor and beach staffs (Two Year College: CCCAA).

Justin Paggao is an Associate Director at Piedmont Volleyball Club in North Carolina. While also serving as a head coach, he leads the training sessions for over 100 athletes at a time to help mold the next generation of volleyball players. He also works closely with the club director on all daily operations to ensure the club remains a place for coaches and players to be successful.

Annesia Penright is the club director of Cool Court Volleyball Club in Houston, Texas. She uses her experience in both the collegiate and international space to offer elite level training to her players and coaches. She completed her playing career in 2005 before starting the club while continuing to build it to new heights.

Samara West is an assistant coach at Westminster College in Pennsylvania. She graduated in 2017 from Iowa State University as one of the top players in the Big 12 Conference then headed to Westminster to begin her coaching career. In her first year with the Titans, she helped lead them to a 30-win season and
the top seed in the Presidents' Athletic Conference Tournament. The Omaha, Neb. native graduated with a degree in Child, Adult, and Family Services.

Alicia Wood is an assistant coach at DePauw University in Indiana. This is her first season with the Tigers after spending the previous three years as an assistant coach at Cuyahoga Community College-Eastern Campus. She’s responsible for a litany of items such as recruiting and player development, strategies and tactics, scouting, and travel just to name a few. This season under her guidance, DePauw earned an at-large berth into the NCAA Tournament and upset Hope College in the first round.