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MONICA YEATES RECEIVES WGCA DIVISION I KIM MOORE SPIRIT AWARD

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida (May 18, 2017) – Utah Valley University senior Monica Yeates has received the 2017 Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA) Division I Kim Moore Spirit Award. The recognition was announced today on Golf Channel as part of the NCAA Women's Golf Championship coverage.

This award is dedicated to Kim Moore, who played golf for the University of Indianapolis (1999-2003). Kim was an inspiration to all as she persevered through many physical challenges while playing collegiate golf. Her positive outlook and dedication toward the game was only out done by her sense of humor and passion for the game.

The purpose of the award is to recognize and honor a student-athlete or coach who exemplifies a great spirit toward the game of golf, a positive attitude on and off the golf course, a role model for her team and mental toughness in facing challenges.

"I am honored to know Monica Yeates and the entire Yeates family," said Utah Valley University Head Coach Sue Nyhus. "Monica has handled many challenges with honor, dignity, and great poise. She remains positive about herself and others and for that I am so very proud of her. She is a bright light of hope in a world that includes many examples of entitlement. Monica relies on hard work, faith, and prayer. Her strength, enthusiasm, and positive attitude is an example for all on how to live life."

In May of 2015, Yeates had just completed her sophomore season, earning WGCA All-American Scholar honors for the second straight year, when she began experiencing fatigue and weakness in her legs. Within a few weeks, she was admitted to the hospital and suffered complete paralysis, unable to walk or stand without assistance. After spending three days in the hospital, Yeates began physical therapy in the hopes of rejoining the Utah Valley University golf team for the fall season. However, during her recovery Yeates suffered a pair of emotional setbacks; a month after her hospital stay her father suffered a stroke, followed by the sudden passing of a childhood friend later that summer.

Despite these emotional setbacks, as well as the partial numbness in her hands, feet and torso, Yeates' continued to improve and by September managed to complete her first 18 holes of golf in four months. However, shortly after, she was once again admitted to the hospital with 90% vision loss in her left eye. Determined to find the cause of these symptoms, Yeates and her family traveled to Scottsdale, Ariz. to see a Neurologist at the Mayo Clinic. It was there that she received her diagnosis of Neuro-Myelitis Optica (NMO), a rare autoimmune disease that can leave victims blind and wheelchair bound within three to five years.

With the help of her family, friends, teammates and therapists, Yeates' strength and vision improved and she continued to excel in the classroom while also competing in two golf tournaments in the spring of 2016. Just as she felt she was regaining control of her life, she was hit with the news that her father's cancer had returned after nearly ten years, and that this time there was no cure. While Yeates

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and her family were dealing with the painful news about her father, her aunt was involved in a tragic zip lining accident and passed away.

Through all the challenges she faced, both physical and emotional, Yeates persevered with a positive attitude. She rejoined the golf team for her senior season and was able to compete in six tournaments during the 2016-17 campaign. In addition, she will graduate Utah Valley University in May 2017 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management.

About the Women's Golf Coaches Association

The Women's Golf Coaches Association, founded in 1983, is a non-profit organization representing women's collegiate golf coaches. The WGCA was formed to encourage the playing of college golf for women in correlation with a general objective of education and in accordance with the highest tradition of intercollegiate competition. Today, the WGCA represents over 600 coaches throughout the U.S. and is dedicated to educating, promoting and recognizing both its members and the student-athletes they represent.

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