

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Inaugural Bevo Francis Award Announced**

**BALDWIN CITY, Kan.** – With much excitement, Small College Basketball is pleased to announce the inaugural winner of the coveted Bevo Francis Award.

This year's winner is Davenport's senior guard **Dominez Burnett**.

A press conference to present Burnett with the award will be held on Wednesday, Apr. 27 at 8:30 a.m. EST on the campus of Davenport University.

The Flint, Michigan native led the Panthers in scoring (24.9), rebounding (7.5), assists (3.0) and steals (2.1), while shooting 54% from the field. Burnett led the Panthers to the regular season and tournament championships in the Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference, and led the team to the NAIA Division II National Semi-Finals for the second consecutive year, finishing with a 32-5 record. Burnett was named First Team All WHAC for the fourth straight year, First Team All American for the third straight year, and NAIA Division II National Player of the Year for the second straight season.

"First off I want to thank God, because if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be in the position I am in today," said Burnett. "Second, I want to thank my family and friends for the love and support throughout this journey. Mr. Francis paved the way for small college basketball players like myself, and I am extremely humbled to receive the inaugural Bevo Francis Award. It is truly an honor and a blessing to be nominated and chosen as the winner for this award."

During his senior campaign, Burnett broke the scoring record for the WHAC and became the all-time collegiate scorer in the history of the state of Michigan, finishing with 2,858 career points. During his four-year career, Burnett led Davenport to an impressive overall record of 118-26.

"Dominez has been a pillar for our program for the last four years," said Davenport head coach Burt Paddock. "He has been a sensational player but a terrific student-athlete as well. During his time here at DU he has set many records and taken our program to new heights. However, some of his greatest achievements (along with his teammates) have been done off the court through many acts of community service. In speaking for Dominez, our program and myself we are incredibly humbled by his winning this incredible award.

"There were many worthy student-athletes around the country and him winning is a testament to a lot of hard work and determination over not just the last year but his four years here at DU. We are grateful to the committee that selected him as the inaugural winner and want to thank the great people at Small College Basketball and the

University of Rio Grande for putting this award together in honor of the legendary Bevo Francis."

The defending National Player of the Year scored in double figures in 35-of-36 games this year. He had a streak of 70 straight games in double figures snapped in the NAIA Semifinals. His season-high in points came on Nov. 18, 2015, where he poured in 40 points on 14-of-21 shooting against Michigan-Dearborn. Burnett led the nation in total steals (77) and total scoring (895). Burnett was No. 8 nationally in steals per game averaging 2.1 thefts per contest. The Panthers had their season end in the national semifinals – for the second-straight year – on March 14 in a 66-65 loss to Indiana Wesleyan.

"Bevo Francis left Rio Grande College (now the University of Rio Grande) with memories of unequaled success that will always be with us," said Jeff Lanham, Director of Athletics at University of Rio Grande. "Bevo stated many times that his success could not have occurred without his special teammates.

"Bevo was a phenomenon, averaging over 50 points per game during the 1952-1953 basketball season. This individual and team made college basketball history from this tiny village in southeast Ohio. Today we celebrate the inaugural Bevo Francis Award and begin new memories and continue a new legend in Small College Basketball. Rio is honored and excited to be a part of this award presented to Dominez Burnett. Dominez has exhibited character, athletic skill and enthusiasm that set him apart from all other players. He represents what the Bevo Francis Award is about. The standard has now been set high!"

To read more on the legend that was Bevo Francis, please see the SCB website, [by clicking here.](#)

Burnett has been a pillar of servant leadership in his hometown of Flint, Michigan as well, as he organized a bottled water drive that raised over 5,000 bottles of water for the community after the city's water contamination crisis.

"On behalf of Small College Basketball and the Bevo Francis Award Committee, I sincerely congratulate Dominez Burnett on becoming the winner of the inaugural Bevo Francis Award," said John McCarthy, Founder of Small College Basketball. "We have done a tremendous amount of research on Dominez, and I can tell you that he has truly earned this award, on and off the court. We were looking for someone special, as a player and as a person, and we found that person in Dominez Burnett. As the first winner of the Bevo Francis Award, Dominez will carry forward the legacy of Bevo Francis, while his own legacy has just been cemented in history by winning the most prestigious award in all of small college basketball in America."

The committee chose this elite player from over 1,100 colleges and universities and took into consideration individual statistics, awards, milestones and team success.

Small College Basketball is grateful to the University of Rio Grande and Sheward-Fulks Insurance for their sponsorship and support of the Bevo Francis Award.

Members of the Bevo Francis Award committee include the following coaches and SID: Tobin Anderson - St. Thomas Aquinas (N.Y.), Drew Diener - Rockhurst (Mo.), Gerald

Holmes - Bloomfield (N.J.), Gary Stewart - Stevenson (Md.), Ken Ammann - Concordia (Calif.), J.J. Nekoloff - ODAC/NCAA DIII National Championship, Scott McClary - Muhlenberg, Dannton Jackson - Xavier (La.), Arlen Galloway - Wentworth (Mass.), Tony Dominguez- Western Washington, Chris Briggs - Georgetown (Ky.), Bill Dreikosen - Rocky Mountain (Mont.), Pat Cunningham - Trinity (Texas), Clint Pleasant - Rochester (Mich.), Ryan Kane - Ripon (Wisc.), Mike McGrath - University of Chicago.

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