



CHARLES LENO, JR. NAMED WASHINGTON COMMANDERS' NOMINEE FOR WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Winner to be Announced at NFL Honors During the Week of Super Bowl LVII

ASHBURN, Va., December 6, 2022 – The Washington Commanders announced offensive tackle Charles Leno, Jr. as the team's nominee for the 2022 Walter Payton NFL Man of The Year Award. Considered one of the league's most prestigious honors, the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, recognizes an NFL player for outstanding community service activities off the field, as well as excellence on the field. Each of the league's 32 nominees were announced today. The winner will be announced at NFL Honors during the week of Super Bowl LVII.

With his selection, Charles Leno, Jr. becomes the inaugural Washington Commanders' player to be nominated for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award. Charles has continuously demonstrated a commitment to community efforts and has modeled a lifestyle of giving back ever since he arrived in Washington in 2021. In 2020, together with his wife Jennifer, he founded Beyond the Entertainer, a foundation focused on mentoring, empowering, and inspiring community members of all ages to pay it forward.

In 2020, after the birth of their first child, Charles and Jennifer created Leno Claus. Watching previews for the 25-day countdown to Christmas on television, the Lenos were inspired to create their own version of a Christmas Countdown. Each year for the first 20 days of December, Beyond the Entertainer works with 20 different nonprofits throughout the DMV community, donating holiday gifts, stocking stores, and giving monetary donations to ensure the organizations can provide the greatest holiday experience for their members. Charles and Jennifer will continue this tradition this season.

Throughout his time in Washington, Charles has participated in a number of team charitable events hosted by The Washington Commanders Charitable Foundation. In October, Charles and Jennifer made a surprise appearance at the team's 14th annual All-Star Survivors Celebration at Firefly Cellars, in partnership with the American Cancer Society. There, they met the 30 local cancer survivors who were honored as part of the team's THINK PINK® initiative, took pictures with them, and gifted them swag bags on behalf of the team.

This Thanksgiving, Charles and Jennifer delivered Thanksgiving meals to seniors in need and volunteered at Medium Rare DC deep frying and giving out turkeys. Through Beyond the Entertainer, Charles and Jennifer made a gracious donation of \$5,000 to Feed the Fridge. Another large component of Charles' foundation's work includes school visits at local DMV schools. Most recently, Charles visited Rose Hill Elementary School in Washington, D.C, where he read to first graders and spoke about the importance of reading and education.

“In life I believe you are not defined by what you accomplish, but by what you do for others,” said Charles. “Sometimes I try to think, ‘Charles, are you a football player or are you just someone who plays football?’ I just play football. Because one day I won’t be a football player anymore. I’ll just be someone who played football. So, what do I want people to remember me for other than being a football player?”

“The Walter Payton Man of the Year honor holds a special place in my heart. As a former teammate and friend of Walter Payton, I know how big of an honor being the team nominee is. From the moment that Charles arrived in the DMV he immediately made his presence known in the community by helping those less fortunate,” said Head Coach Ron Rivera. “Having played for the Bears, I know how much Charles understands the impact that Walter had on all those around him and most importantly out in the community. Charles understands that giving back in your free time and paying it forward are two of the most important things you can do in life. Because of these characteristics he is a perfect selection for the honor of being our nominee for the Walter Payton Man of the Year.”

As a nominee, Charles will wear a Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year helmet decal through the end of the season in recognition of his accomplishments on and off the field.

All 32 team winners will be highlighted as nominees and recognized for their important work during the weekend leading up to Super Bowl LVII. The 2022 Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year will be announced during NFL Honors, a primetime awards special to air the Thursday before Super Bowl LVII, on NBC.

All 32 nominees will receive up to a \$40,000 donation in their name to their charity of choice. The winner of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award will receive up to a \$250,000 donation to the charity of his choice.

– Washington Commanders est. 1932 –