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HALL OF FAME, USA TODAY, PAYTON PRODUCTIONS ANNOUNCE SECOND 'AWARDS OF CHARACTER' RECIPIENT

'IKE' MCKINNON'S LIFE OF SERVICE SPANS NEARLY FIVE DECADES IN DETROIT

CANTON, OHIO – Dr. Isaiah "Ike" McKinnon, who served the city of Detroit as a police officer, chief of police, deputy mayor, professor and coach, has been recognized for his bravery and grace as a **Pro Football Hall of Fame Awards of Character** recipient.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame, in partnership with USA TODAY and Payton Productions, launched the national Pro Football Hall of Fame Awards of Character program to applaud "everyday Hall of Famers" who embody the Hall's core values of commitment, integrity, courage, respect and honesty.

McKinnon learned of his award with a surprise visit to his home that was modeled after the iconic "Knock on the Door" moment when new members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame learn of their election to Canton. Class of 2013 enshrinee [DAVE ROBINSON](#) participated in the surprise along with **Jarrett Payton**, the son of Hall of Famer [WALTER PAYTON](#).



Hall of Famer Dave Robinson congratulates Dr. Isaiah "Ike" McKinnon, this month's Pro Football Hall of Fame Awards of Character recipient, in his home.

In 1957, when McKinnon was 14 years old, he was beaten by Detroit police officers. Instead of choosing bitterness, McKinnon decided to become a police officer himself and become a steward for his community.

"He fought against all the odds to make the world better — not just for himself, but for everyone," one of McKinnon's colleagues said. "That's an incredible leap of human dignity."

"You have to stand up for what's right," McKinnon said. "And stand against what's wrong. If you don't, who's going to make that difference?"

McKinnon's commitment to sincerity and stewardship was tested multiple times through his career. In 1967, while driving home in uniform, he was pulled over by fellow officers, guns

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drawn, who threatened his life. Older officers, both black and white, encouraged McKinnon not to quit.

“There was no way I was going to leave,” McKinnon said.

Early in his career, McKinnon chased a suspect into a building, where he was met by men armed with assault rifles. Members of the community he protected intervened, prompting the assailants to “let officer ‘Ike’ go. He treats us fairly,” McKinnon recounted to Payton.

“That reaffirmed everything I believed,” McKinnon said. “Being a good person matters.”

USA TODAY, the national publication in the Gannett | USA TODAY Network portfolio, assists in administering the program and publicizing the monthly winners. A feature story about McKinnon will publish today, in the USA TODAY newspaper and online, and it also will appear in USA TODAY-affiliated publications across the country.

Payton Productions, the media company led by the **Payton Family**, will capture the moments when the honorees learn of their selection and, in partnership with USA TODAY, will share the award-winners’ inspiring stories of character in action nationally.

“When the Pro Football Hall of Fame first considered the Awards of Character, it was to honor someone like Dr. McKinnon,” said **Jim Porter**, president & CEO of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. “And yet, you can hardly believe his life’s story and its incredible path. What he has given to the city of Detroit and its citizens – of all races and backgrounds – truly is incredible and inspiring. He is a living example of why this award was created.”

The USA TODAY article, and the video featuring McKinnon with Jarrett Payton explaining the Awards of Character, can be [found here](#). Additional honorees will be chosen throughout 2026, from these professions: police officer, military veteran, firefighter/EMT, nurse, teacher and coach. For more information or to nominate someone for the award, [see this online form](#).

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CONTACTS:

Rich Desrosiers, Chief Communications & Content Officer
Rich.Desrosiers@ProFootballHOF.com; 330-588-3622

Jacob Ray, Communications & Content Manager
Jacob.Ray@ProFootballHOF.com; 330-588-3558

Nick Licata, Communications Coordinator
Nick.Licata@ProFootballHOF.com; 330-588-3614

ABOUT THE PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

Located in Canton, Ohio, the birthplace of the National Football League, the Pro Football Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit institution with the Mission to Honor the Greatest of the Game, Preserve its History, Promote its Values & Celebrate Excellence Together.

The Pro Football Hall of Fame is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. AAM accreditation is national recognition for the museum's commitment to excellence and the highest professional standards of museum operation and public service.

Hundreds of thousands of fans from across the globe travel to Canton annually to experience an inspirational, interactive museum that chronicles America's most popular sport. Fans can also enjoy the Hall of Fame Store at the Hall, and online at shop.profootballhof.com, for merchandise from all 32 NFL clubs plus the Hall of Fame. Proceeds from the Store support the Hall's Mission.