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Saginaw Valley State's Neil Baumgartner Named 2004 Recipient of the Jack H. McAvoy Award

BAY CITY, Mich. -- Saginaw Valley State University defensive end **Neil Baumgartner** has been named recipient of the 2004 Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) Jack H. McAvoy Award as announced by Commissioner Tom Brown. The award is presented annually to the GLIAC football player who best combines outstanding character and leadership on the field, in the classroom, and in the community.

An Iron River, Michigan (West Iron County) native, Baumgartner has earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average (4.0 scale) while majoring in secondary education. He is the reigning GLIAC and D-II Commissioner's Association Great Lakes Region Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year (2003-04) and has been named to the GLIAC All-Academic football team in each of the three years he was eligible. Baumgartner has earned SVSU Dean's List honors eight times and was named a first team College Division Academic All-American this season. He has earned an SVSU Presidential Scholarship and the SVSU Alumni Endowed Scholarship for academic excellence and character.

Off the field, Baumgartner has been a strong influence in the Saginaw (Mich.) community. He has served as a volunteer for many community projects, including the SVSU Athletic Department annual blood drive, Habitat for Humanity, the Saginaw East Side Soup Kitchen, Battle of the Valleys fund-raising event for Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and the Heritage Harvest food drive. Baumgartner helped to organize a fund-raiser for the purchase of fuel for the Good Neighbors Mission in Saginaw, as well as reading to children at local elementary schools.

A three-year starter for the Cardinals defense, Baumgartner was also a force on the field. He played in 46 games in four seasons, earning All-GLIAC honors three times, first-team defense the last two seasons. His 21 sacks rank second on the SVSU career chart and his nine sacks in 2003 is the fifth-best single-season total in team history. Baumgartner tallied 258 career tackles and 40.5 tackles-for-loss (minus 181 yards). This past season he recorded 65 tackles, broke up four passes, forced two fumbles and intercepted one pass.

Baumgartner becomes the second Saginaw Valley State student-athlete honored with the McAvoy Award, joining former teammate Jason Battershell who received the award in 2002. The Award is named for former Hillsdale College director of athletics and head football coach, Jack McAvoy, who was instrumental in the founding the Midwest Intercollegiate Football Conference (MIFC), now known as the GLIAC.

<u>Jack H. McAvoy Award Winners</u>	
2004	Neil Baumgartner, Saginaw Valley St.
2003	Josh Sherko, Northern Michigan Scott Stuible, Northwood
2002	Jason Battershell, Saginaw Valley St.
2001	Chris Volz, Indianapolis
2000	Alex Kowalski, Michigan Tech
1999	Mo Harris, Ferris State
1998	Jeff Fox, Grand Valley State
1997	Matt Fishburn, Wayne State Eric Tree, Michigan Tech
1996	Chris Pulliams, Ferris State