

2025 Application for the Inspiration Award for Principals, Coaches, ADs, and Community Supporters

Name

Kandice P. Mitchell

Email address

kandice.mitchell@drewcharterschool.org

Cell number

678-749-6552

High School with which you are associated.

Drew Charter School

What do you do for this school?

Senior Director of Athletics

Nominated by Mario Allen

As an educator, coach, and fiancé, I've had the honor of watching Kandice Mitchell live out what it truly means to be an inspiration, not just in title, but in action, perseverance, and purpose.

Kandice's journey is one that defies every obstacle placed before her. She is a stroke, heart attack, and breast cancer survivor, yet she has never allowed those challenges to define her. What most people see is the strong, polished Athletic Director leading Drew Charter School's athletic programs with excellence, innovation, and grace. What I see behind the scenes is the relentless drive of a woman who wakes up each day determined to pour into others, even when her own tank is running low.

I've watched her juggle the demands of being an adult athlete, leading multiple sports programs, mentoring coaches, supporting student-athletes, and shaping the next generation of leaders. I've seen the quiet moments, the late nights preparing presentations, responding to parents, encouraging athletes, or advocating for equity and opportunity in youth sports. She doesn't do it for recognition. She does it because she genuinely believes in the power of education-based athletics to transform lives.

Her impact reaches far beyond Drew Charter. Kandice took a bold leap into uncharted territory to help change the trajectory of flag football on a global scale, contributing to the sport's pathway to collegiate play and its inclusion in the Olympic Games. She has been a voice, a visionary, and a bridge-builder for women and girls in sports worldwide. Yet, despite the global accolades and national recognition, she returned to education where her light shines brightest, to continue inspiring the next generation right here in Georgia.

Dear GHSA Inspiration Award Selection Committee,

My life's work has always been rooted in purpose and people. I have been blessed with many accomplishments throughout my journey, but what I value most is how each chapter has allowed me to serve, to lead, and to inspire others to believe in what is possible.

Sports have been the foundation of my life since childhood. As a young girl, I discovered that athletics had the power to open doors and build confidence in ways that few other experiences could. That discovery became my calling. Over the years, I have been a youth, collegiate, and professional athlete who also represented the United States and won gold medals in both track and football. I have stood on championship podiums, won a title in my first national pageant, and coached youth and adult athletes to victories of their own. But none of those moments compare to the joy I feel when I see others succeed because they saw something in my story that gave them hope.

I have faced some of life's greatest challenges, and I have learned that true inspiration often comes from the moments that try to break you. As a breast cancer, stroke, and heart attack survivor, I have endured multiple surgeries, hospital stays, and battles with my own body. I have also faced the quiet pain of adult bullying, something I now see mirrored in the young people I work with every day. But none of those experiences will ever define me. I do not know why I was chosen to keep bouncing back, but I do know that I was chosen for a reason. Each time, I found the strength to rise, to smile through the pain, and to return to what I love, helping others find their own courage. Those moments reshaped how I view life, leadership, and purpose. They remind me that every day is a gift, and that showing up for others with kindness and grace matters far more than any title or trophy.

There was also a season when I lost nearly everything. After taking a leap of faith and pursuing what I thought was my dream job, I suddenly found myself unemployed, without a home, and unsure of what would come next. I moved back to my parents' home, filled with disappointment but determined to rediscover my purpose. I prayed not for another opportunity but for a workplace where I could find peace and make a difference. That prayer was answered in the most beautiful way.

Today, I serve as the Senior Director of Athletics at Drew Charter School, where I lead with the heart of a servant and the mindset of an educator. Every decision I make is guided by the belief that athletics is an extension of the classroom and a vital part of a young person's development. I have the privilege of helping student athletes learn teamwork, accountability, resilience, and character, skills that will carry them far beyond the field or court.

A few years ago, I was honored to be recognized by the Georgia Athletic Directors' Association (GADA) as Athletic Director of the Year for the entire state of Georgia. That acknowledgment was more than an award. It was a reflection of the incredible students, coaches, and community that I serve. I have often been the first to accomplish things in my field. The first woman. The first person of color. The first to lead a new initiative. I never do it for the sake of being first. I do it to make sure I am not the last. My hope is to leave every space I enter better than I found it and to clear a path for those who will come after me.

While I know there are many deserving and inspirational leaders in athletics, I also humbly recognize that my story is unlike any other. People often tell me that I should write a book because of the unique layers and the inspirational twists and turns that have shaped my life. If nothing else, this award would be symbolic of that journey, one that represents faith, perseverance, and purpose. My path stands as a reminder that inspiration is not reserved for those in leadership positions, but for anyone who continues to rise, rebuild, and reach for better days. It would be an honor to have this recognition serve not only as a reflection of my journey, but as a beacon for others in athletics and in all walks of life who see themselves somewhere within my story.

As a mother, educator, coach, and mentor, I strive to live a life that models perseverance and purpose. I am incredibly proud of my three children, each of whom were college athletes and continue to make me proud in their own unique ways. My daughter has followed in my footsteps as an educator and coach, pouring into young lives the same way I have poured into hers. My oldest son is pursuing his personal and professional dreams in Ohio, carving out a path that reflects his courage and determination. And my youngest son is living out the dream he has had since he was a child, playing in the NFL with the same heart, humility, and passion that have guided him since the beginning. I see pieces of myself in all of them, and they remind me daily of why I lead with love, faith, and resilience. I want young girls and boys to see that they can be powerful and graceful, strong and kind, athletic and intelligent, all at once.

I have learned that leadership is not about control, but about connection. It is about standing in the gap, creating opportunities, and giving others the courage to rise. I have learned that inspiration is not found in the spotlight, but in the quiet moments when someone tells you that your story gave them the strength to keep going.

If there is one thing I hope people take from my journey, it is that purpose and perseverance can transform pain into power. My life is not perfect, but it is full of meaning. I wake up each day grateful to be living in my purpose as an education-based servant leader in athletics. And through every challenge and every victory, I continue to thrive, not for recognition, but to inspire others to do the same.

With gratitude and sincerity,

Kandice P Mitchell



Penny Mitchell <ghsaspirit@gmail.com>

GHSA Inspiration Award Nomination Letter of Recommendation for Kandice P. Mitchell

1 message

Cheryl Glover <liit217@gmail.com>
To: ghsaspirit@gmail.com

Wed, Nov 12, 2025 at 11:53 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pride and admiration that I write this letter in support of Kandice P. Mitchell's nomination for the GHSA Inspiration Award. As both a friend and colleague as a Lay Coach at Drew Charter School, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the unwavering strength, resilience, and leadership that Kandice brings to her role as Athletic Director at Drew Charter School.

Kandice is a three-time recipient of the Athletic Director of the Year award, an achievement that speaks volumes about her dedication, excellence, and impact within the athletic community. However, what truly sets Kandice apart is not just her professional accolades, but the incredible personal journey she has navigated with grace and determination.

Despite facing life-altering health challenges, including a battle with breast cancer and surviving a heart attack, Kandice has remained a pillar of strength and inspiration. Her courage in the face of adversity is nothing short of remarkable. She continues to lead with passion, cultivating an environment where student-athletes are empowered to grow not only in their sport but also as individuals. Her influence extends far beyond the courts or fields, she is a mentor, motivator, and role model to every student as well as those who have the honor of working with her.

Kandice's story is one of perseverance, hope, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of education and Athletics. She embodies the very spirit of the GHSA Inspiration Award, and I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition.

Thank you for considering this nomination. Kandice Mitchell is a true inspiration, and her legacy continues to uplift and transform lives every single day.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Glover