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MADIEU WILLIAMS NAMED 2010 WALTER PAYTON NFL MAN OF THE YEAR

Eden Prairie, MN (February 6, 2011) – Announced during today's Super Bowl pre-game festivities, Minnesota Vikings S **Madieu Williams** has been named the 2010 **Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year**. One of three finalists for the award that recognizes a player's off-the-field community service as well as his playing excellence, Williams is only the second Viking to win the award since its inception in 1970 and the first since WR Cris Carter earned the honor in 1999. Williams, currently in the Persian Gulf visiting U.S. service members, will receive \$20,000 toward his favorite charity.

"It is a tremendous honor to win this award named after Walter Payton, one of the greatest men to ever play in the National Football League," said **Williams**. "I'm sorry I couldn't be there to accept the award, but it's an even greater honor to be here in Iraq with Task Force Iron Horse on a goodwill tour watching the Super Bowl with our troops."

A seven-year NFL veteran and Sierra Leone native, Williams has extended his helping hand to those near and far since moving to the United States. The Vikings' free safety made global headlines when he made a generous donation to create The Madieu Williams Center for Global Health that is affiliated with the University of Maryland. The center was built to focus on the public health issues in Prince George's County and Sierra Leone, his birthplace. Williams has already funded the construction of one school in his homeland and currently a second school is in the process of being built. Madieu's foundation sponsored a mission to Sierra Leone that flew American teachers, dentists and surgeons to help educate the teachers at his school, give free dental cleanings to all of the students and provide free surgeries.

"It is a tremendous honor that Madieu has been named the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year," said Vikings Head Coach **Leslie Frazier**. "It is quite an accomplishment and one that is well deserved. Madieu is a person that cares about people. He is not your prototypical pro athlete by any means. The fact that he is still taking trips and helping others that are less fortunate says a lot about Madieu. He has no other motivation other than to see someone else's life become better than what it currently is. He is a rare person."

Since joining the Vikings in 2008, Williams has left his mark on the Twin Cities community. He is involved with the North Community YMCA, the United Way and Harvest Prep/Seed Academy. He also provides season tickets for kids in his "Dieu's Crew" program. **During the 2010 season, Madieu was named the [Vikings Community Man of the Year](#).**

"When Madieu signed here as a free-agent, before he caught his plane home, he asked to visit the University of Minnesota Children's Hospital," said Vikings Executive Director of Community Relations **Brad Madson**. "Right then I knew he was a special man. It's been a privilege to see Madieu embrace our local community through his work with the North Community YMCA and Harvest Preparatory/Seed Academy, but globally, the great works he has done and is doing in Sierra Leone will leave a legacy long after Madieu is done playing football."

Williams' charitable efforts have followed him since his college days at Maryland. He still hosts a free football camp and fundraiser weekend in Maryland, where he was raised after leaving Sierra

Leone at the age of nine. Originally drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals in the second round of the 2004 NFL Draft, Williams also continues to give back to the Cincinnati community.

“From the day I first met Madiou I could tell there was a fire inside of him. He is a quiet and humble young man that is not attention seeking,” said **Gloria Friedgen**, Coordinator of Alumni Affairs and Outreach at the University of Maryland. “I am so proud to see Madiou receive the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year award. He is truly leaving his mark on the world.”

On the field, Williams’ stabilizing ability in the Vikings defensive backfield has helped the club rank in the top 10 in NFL defenses each of his three seasons in Minnesota. The 2010 season marked a career-high for Williams as he notched 96 tackles, fifth-best on the team. He also helped the Vikings win back-to-back NFC North titles in 2008 and 2009. During the Vikings run to the NFC Championship game in 2009, Williams started every game. A full-time starter since he arrived in Minnesota, Williams has opened 38 of the 39 games he has played for the Vikings and all three playoff games he has been part of. For his career, he has played in 88 games with 83 starts.

For more information about the Madiou Williams Foundation, visit www.madiouwilliams.org.

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