

**PRESS RELEASE**

May 1, 2015

**ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS  
HONOR THE MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM  
FOR ITS OUTSTANDING SEASON**

(Newark, NJ) – The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored the Montclair State University Women's Basketball Team for its outstanding 2014-15 season, which culminated in the school's first-ever appearance in the NCAA Division 3 Championship Final Four held in March in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Board's commendation was co-sponsored by Freeholder Vice President Brendan Gill of Montclair and District 5 Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro of Bloomfield, who made the presentation to the team during an April 30<sup>th</sup> ceremony at the Panzer Athletic Center on the Montclair State campus in Upper Montclair.



Essex County District 5 Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro of Bloomfield (front row, 4<sup>th</sup> from right) honored members of the Montclair State University Women's Basketball Team during a Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, presentation at the Panzer Athletic Center on the MSU campus in Upper Montclair. Also pictured above is the team's Head Coach, Karin Harvey (front row, 4<sup>th</sup> from left). Photo by Glen Frieson

"Once a Red Hawk, *always* a Red Hawk!" said proud MSU alumna Freeholder Cynthia Toro, as she congratulated the team for its outstanding season. "I have wonderful memories of being here on campus as a student, and returning today to recognize you for your great season will be yet another fond memory I'll carry with me forever... *Go Red Hawks!*" said Toro. "I'm so proud of all you've accomplished, can't wait to see what you'll accomplish as you move forward with your lives, and let's hope I can be back with you again next year to celebrate a national championship!"

"We really appreciate you taking the time to be here today and for explaining county government and what it is you do as a freeholder; we really appreciate it", said Head Coach Karin Harvey, who also presented Freeholder Toro with a framed Final Four poster, team picture, and Final Four t-shirts.

The 2014-15 Montclair State University Women's Basketball Team enjoyed the finest season in Montclair State University history by reaching the NCAA Division 3 Women's Final Four for the first time, where it was crowned the #3 team in the nation. The Red Hawks finished their outstanding season with a record of 31-2 after defeating Tufts University (56-48) in the March 21<sup>st</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Place game at the Van Noord Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan, setting the school's single-season record for victories.

To reach the Final Four, the Red Hawks claimed both the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) regular season and tournament championship titles (their 3<sup>rd</sup> straight regular season title and 4<sup>th</sup> tournament title overall) to earn NJAC's automatic bid to the NCAA Division 3 Tournament. They went on to host the first and second rounds for the first time ever, defeating Regis College (78-45) and Stevenson University (53-48), advancing to defeat Bowdoin College (61-48) and then Salisbury University (53-48) in the Sectional Final, their 16<sup>th</sup> straight victory, which earned them their first-ever trip to the Final Four.

The team's accomplishments were further acknowledged by the naming of senior forward Melissa Tobie (who also surpassed 2,000 career points) as the Atlantic Region "Player of the Year", as well as to the All-Region First Team along with her senior guard teammate, Janitza Aquino. Tobie and Aquino were also named to the Women's Basketball Coaches Association All-America Team. Additionally, Tobie was selected as a finalist for the NCAA Division 3 "Player of the Year".

Head Coach Karin Harvey, who has built a 174-56 record during her eight seasons at Montclair State, became the all-time winningest coach in school history, was named the NJAC, Metropolitan Basketball Writers Association and WBCA Atlantic Region "Coach of the Year", and was a finalist for the NCAA Division III "Coach of the Year".

The team is comprised of: Seniors Janitza Aquino and Melissa Tobie; Juniors Kayla Ceballos and Jasmine Brandon; Sophomores Rachael Krauss, Rayven Lucas, Zoe Curtis and Sage Bennett; and Freshmen Yazmine Lacey, Katie Sire, Kate Tobie, Erica Snow and Taylor Harmon. It was coached by Head Coach Karin Harvey, Associate Head Coach Courtney Cunningham, Assistant Coach Brian Sansom, Student Assistant Coach Victoria Beneventine, Strength & Conditioning Coach Frank Spinelli, and Team Manager Stephanie Gesse.

Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro of Bloomfield was elected to her first term on the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders in November 2014 to represent District 5, which is comprised of Belleville, Bloomfield, Glen Ridge, Montclair and Nutley.

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