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**2009 NATIONAL ARA SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD GOES TO . . .
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY'S JERON MASTRUD**

**Wildcat tight end known for hard work, leadership and respect
on and off the field**

GLENVIEW, Ill., (Dec. 21, 2009) –Kansas State University Wildcats were walking tall today with the announcement of their senior tight end, Jeron Mastrud, as recipient of this year's ARA Sportsmanship Award, presented by the Awards and Recognition Association (ARA) www.arasportsmanshipaward.com.

"The ARA Sportsmanship Award is the only national award that recognizes an athlete's character as it relates to sportsmanship," said Glenn Beckworth, president of the ARA.

"Our blue ribbon panel of retired coaches and sports experts had a daunting task this year with so many outstanding Bowl Division candidates. In this, our fifth year, it was a very tight race and we're encouraged by the caliber of athletes that live and breathe good sportsmanship," said former Brigham Young University football coach and selection committee chairman, LaVell Edwards.

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“It was Mastrud’s unselfish, classy and service-oriented approach to the game and to life that made him stand out. He’s an extremely hard worker with a positive can-do attitude. I’m deeply honored to name him the 2009 recipient of the ARA Sportsmanship Award.”

With a strong work ethic for academics and football, 22-year old senior, Mastrud has been a team leader since his freshman year. Known for his humble approach toward coaches, teammates, opponents and the media, Mastrud was a 2009 First Team All-Big 12 selection who caught 21 passes for 233 yards and one touchdown during 2009. A team captain, Mastrud appeared in 48 of a possible 49 games during his Wildcat career, while he started a team-best 26 straight games to conclude his tenure in Manhattan. He averaged 11.4 yards a catch and 36.2 yards a game. Mastrud caught 106 passes for 1,219 yards and three touchdowns during his four-year career. His 106 receptions are tied for the 10th-most in K-State history, but tops among tight ends, while his 1,219 receiving yards rank second among tight ends in the school’s history. He also caught at least one pass in 26 straight games, the second-longest streak since 1990.

Earning a 3.81 GPA in business administration, Mastrud has earned high praises for his academic achievements as Second Team Academic All-American and one of 10 players nationally to earn Academic All-America honors in consecutive seasons. He also became the seventh player in school history to garner multiple Academic All-America accolades. A three-time First Team Academic All-Big 12 and All-District honoree, Mastrud was named to the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Good Works Team prior to his senior campaign and was a semifinalist for the 2009 William V. Campbell Trophy (formerly known as the Draddy Trophy).

In addition to his academic achievements and football records, the Beaverton, Oregon native and son of a high school football coach, has shown his steadfast commitment to community service. He’s been heavily involved with:

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Cats for Cans food drive benefiting hunger relief in the greater Manhattan, Kansas area; Read to Achieve student-athlete partnership with a local elementary school; tornado clean up from a 2008 devastating storm; Walkin' with a Wildcat mentoring program pairing middle school kids with K-State student athletes and, the Adopt-A-Family holiday program benefiting those in need during the holiday season.

The ARA Sportsmanship Award is presented to the NCAA Bowl Division collegiate football player who most exemplifies sportsmanship on and off the field. Mastrud was selected from 10 finalists representing schools across the country.

Previous winners are Northwestern University receiver Eric Peterman (2008); Washington State quarterback Alex Brink (2007); Cincinnati Bengals fullback Brian Leonard (2006); and Carolina Panthers running back, DeAngelo Williams (2005).

To qualify for the award, an athlete must be a starting player or significant contributor on his team; be a senior in good academic standing; demonstrate great respect for competitors, school, teammates and coaches; show an ability to accept victory and defeat graciously; convey a high degree of humility and integrity; and demonstrate commitment in the classroom and to the community.

All NCAA Bowl Division schools were eligible to submit nominations for the ARA Sportsmanship Award. The finalists were selected in a blinded process by representatives from ARA; the winner was selected by a blue-ribbon panel comprised of famous retired college coaches, members of the sports media and representatives from other complementary organizations.

The Awards and Recognition Association is the official sponsor of the ARA Sportsmanship Award. ARA is a membership organization of 4,000 companies dedicated to increasing the professionalism of recognition specialists and advancing the awards and engraving industry. The ARA is headquartered in Glenview, Ill. For more information about the award, visit www.arasportsmanshipaward.com. For more information about ARA, visit www.ara.org.