

## Archive

---

**From:** Sandy C Gholston  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 08, 2014 4:34 PM  
**To:** Archive  
**Subject:** PRESS RELEASE: Abdul-Jabbar Announced as 2014 Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit Speaker  
**Attachments:** KAJ Headshot.JPG

Included below is a press release announcing that professional basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a six-time National Basketball Association champion and Most Valuable Player, will be the keynote speaker at The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit on Friday, Oct. 24 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. Any media requests regarding this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager.

To read the online version of this story, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2014/april/kareem.htm>

Attached is an image provided by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for the purposes of this release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2014

Sandy Gholston  
Ferris State University  
News Services and Social Media Manager  
[sandygholston@ferris.edu](mailto:sandygholston@ferris.edu), (231) 591-2021

### **Abdul-Jabbar Announced as 2014 Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit Speaker**

BIG RAPIDS – Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a six-time National Basketball Association champion and league Most Valuable Player, will deliver the keynote address at The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids on Friday, Oct. 24.

Abdul-Jabbar, a college and professional basketball legend before he became a celebrated author, education ambassador and filmmaker, will speak at the Benefit about the role education has played in his life and how it can positively impact the lives of others. Named one of the NBA's 50 greatest players, Abdul-Jabbar was a 1995 inductee into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. A dominating professional basketball player for 20 years, the 7-foot-2 Abdul-Jabbar still ranks as the NBA's all-time career scoring leader with 38,387 points. He is also recognized as one of college basketball's all-time greats based on his playing career for the UCLA Bruins. At UCLA, Abdul-Jabbar was a key component of three consecutive NCAA championship teams.

Abdul-Jabbar hopes that his story will inspire others to strengthen access to higher education for young men and women.

"I'm truly excited for this opportunity to participate in The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Benefit in Grand Rapids," said Abdul-Jabbar, who earned a degree in History from UCLA. "I am a strong advocate for education and The Ferris Foundation's commitment to access to a college education is a passion that is near and dear to

me. I look forward to sharing this evening with a motivated group of men and women who understand that a strong foundation of education is essential in the pursuit of the American dream.”

This year marks the 16th anniversary of the Benefit, which supports The Ferris Foundation for Excellence Scholarship Program and Exceptional Merit Grant awards for faculty and staff. The event showcases ways that the university is impacting lives and strengthening Michigan’s future through education and outreach.

“It’s important that, as a society, we champion the intellectual development of our young people,” said Abdul Jabbar, who is known for acting roles early in his career in films such as “Airplane!” and “Game of Death,” and more recently in “New Girl” and in “The Crazy Ones,” with Robin Williams. “By bringing together like-minded people, who believe strongly in the value of education, we can collectively open doors to higher education for our young people.”

In 2012, Abdul-Jabbar was appointed as U.S. Cultural Ambassador by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. That same year, he was named California’s STEM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Afterschool Ambassador. Additionally, Abdul-Jabbar is a passionate advocate for cancer research and a healthy-living style after being diagnosed with Philadelphia chromosome-positive chronic myeloid leukemia in 2008.

Currently, Abdul-Jabbar is writing a series of children’s books for Hyperion/Disney that chronicle his basketball childhood. He is also a contributing pop-culture columnist for Huffington Post and Esquire Magazine. On the screen, he is starring in a series of commercials, spoofs of the film “Airplane!,” for the state of Wisconsin. The commercials promote travel and tourism.

The black-tie-optional Benefit begins with cocktails and a keynote reception for sponsors with Abdul-Jabbar at 5:30 p.m. The program begins with dinner being served at 7 p.m. and runs until 8:30 p.m. when they keynote address will be delivered.

“The Ferris Foundation is doing great work to advance Ferris State University’s commitment to a high-quality education at a cost that remains affordable to families,” Abdul-Jabbar, named the No. 1 collegiate athlete of the century, by Sports Illustrated, and “history’s greatest player by Time Magazine. “The Foundation’s work to generate and manage private support for Ferris State University will help ensure that an increased number of students will have the opportunity to become a college graduate.”

Individual tickets are \$250 per person, and several sponsorship levels also are available. To purchase tickets, reserve a sponsorship or for additional information, please contact Kim Erickson at (231) 591-2365 or [fsufdn@ferris.edu](mailto:fsufdn@ferris.edu), or visit: <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/foundation/benefit.htm>.

The Foundation is in its 16th year of providing scholarship assistance to many students who might not otherwise have access to a Ferris education in addition to providing financial support for faculty study, exploration and service.

-30-

**Sandy Gholston**

News Services and Social Media Manager  
University Advancement and Marketing  
Ferris State University  
(231) 591-2021  
[ferris.edu](http://ferris.edu)

*This message may contain confidential and/or proprietary information and is intended for the person/entity to which it was originally addressed. Any use by others is strictly prohibited.*