The 34th Annual
GREAT SPORTS LEGENDS DINNER
Presented by
Tudor Group and The Mack Family
to benefit
The Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis
the fundraising arm of
The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2019

New York Hilton Midtown Grand Ballroom
1335 6th Avenue, New York City

Master of Ceremonies - Cris Collinsworth

5:30pm – Cocktails and Silent Auction
7:30pm – Dinner and Program

Dinner Chairman – Mark Dalton
Business Attire

SPORTS LEGEND

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

SPORTS LEGEND

CHASE UTLEY
A LEGACY OF GREATNESS

My family has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and admiration for my father, Nick Buoniconti. He was more than a hero to us, he was loved and admired by many. Sports legend, business leader, agent and attorney; by any measure his list of achievements is long and impressive. Ultimately, however, he would want his legacy to reflect that he was the founder of The Miami Project and The Buoniconti Fund. He knew instinctively that he had to lead the charge in finding a cure for paralysis. Thirty-four years and $500 million later, we are still here, bringing dignity to thousands of wheelchair bound individuals all over the world. This all came to fruition because of a promise he made to me in 1985 in a hospital room in Johnson City, Tennessee.

My dad approached this task the way he did everything—with the same dogged determination he brought everywhere, from the football field to the boardroom. The Miami Project, a Center of Excellence at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, is now internationally recognized as the preeminent research center for spinal cord and brain injuries. This achievement would have been thought impossible when I was first injured.

During his NFL Hall of Fame career, my father always represented what I have aspired to be; a leader, a mentor and a champion. He selflessly gave all to football, to his family and to those who are less fortunate. His promise to me turned into a revolution in paralysis research. His vision is being fulfilled everyday as the important work in the laboratories of The Miami Project continues. Many have asked me what we can do to make sure my dad’s legacy continues. My answer is always the same. We best honor his dedication and commitment by continuing to work until that promise is fulfilled.

Throughout his entire life, my dad always put others before his desires and aspirations. His never-ending efforts to better humanity has earned him the well-deserved title of HERO to all.

Everything I am, everything I have, and everything I will ever be is because of him.

Marc A. Buoniconti, President
The Buoniconti Fund and The Miami Project
Celebrating the life and legacy of
Nicholas A. Buoniconti
1940-2019

SPORTS LEGEND
CHRISTIAN VIERI

SPORTS LEGEND
MEGHAN DUGGAN
The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, a Center of Excellence at the University of Miami, is dedicated to developing new treatments for improving outcomes after spinal cord and brain injury. This year has been an exceptional one in terms of scientific progress and discovery. Cellular therapy trials continue to move forward by testing the benefits of Schwann cell transplantation in chronic spinal cord injured (SCI) subjects. An innovative approach combining cell transplantation with periods of exercise and rehabilitation to improve whole body health and function is being tested for the first time. An FDA approved clinical trial for testing a new peripheral nerve bridging strategy to promote successful axonal regeneration and functional motor recovery has been initiated. An innovative Brain/Computer interface strategy has recently demonstrated efficacy in improving hand function in a SCI subject. This coming year we plan to combine these various approaches and utilize extensive upper and lower extremity rehabilitation combined with robotic motor training, neuromodulation and pharmacological therapies to augment recovery mechanisms.

A critical Miami Project mission is to conduct basic and translational research to support future clinical advancements. Our scientists are utilizing state-of-the-art imaging and drug discovery approaches to identify and test compounds that protect neurons from dying after neurological injuries and to stimulate successful axonal regeneration and tissue repair. Recently, a single molecule that simultaneously targets two of the most important mechanisms for successful regeneration has been identified and tested in a SCI injury model. The importance of inflammatory cells and mediators of tissue destruction are also being explored to identify new therapeutic strategies for drug discovery testing in our preclinical models. In addition to improving motor function, several quality of life issues important to individuals living with SCI including non-treatable neuropathic pain, cardiovascular and autonomic dysfunction and muscle spasticity are being examined in our clinical laboratories. Exciting new collaborative efforts with the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Physical Therapy and Biomedical Engineering are providing new opportunities for improving the health and function of our constituents. Finally, an exciting noninvasive neuromodulation approach using electromagnetic fields is being tested to improve function after SCI. Based on these preclinical findings, a first-in-man multi-center clinical trial is being proposed using this technology targeting upper and lower extremities in chronically injured SCI subjects.

Randomized multicenter clinical trials for therapeutic hypothermia are assessing this experimental therapy on the acute and more progressive consequences of brain and spinal cord injury. Miami Project Educational and Outreach Programs are reaching out to thousands of individuals and providing current information on research studies and helping to recruit volunteers who participate in our clinical studies and trials. The construction of the Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Hospital is rapidly progressing and we anticipate expanding our clinical investigations in this state-of-the-art facility in early 2020. We are excited about the future as we continue to build new collaborations with research and industry partners and develop new treatments and technologies for improving functional recovery. We greatly appreciate the critical support of our friends, volunteers and the spinal cord injury community for their important contributions for the continued success of our multidisciplinary research programs.

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