

# Community Service Award gets well-deserved Hand

By **MIKE KERN**

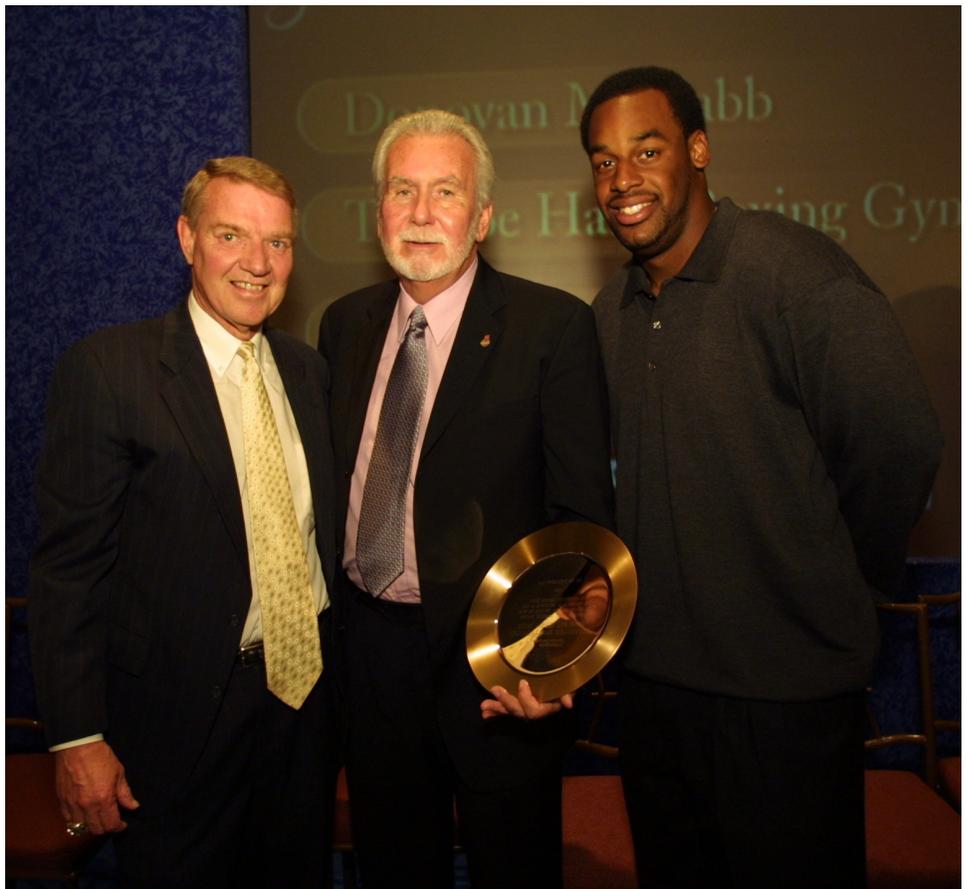
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Early on in his life, Joe Hand Sr. says he was made to understand that there were two kinds of people in this world — givers and takers. Yesterday, on what he called one of the greatest days in his life, an emotional Hand said he was “proud to be here with the givers.”

Since 1995, he and his son, Joe Hand Jr., have had an impact on more than 600 area youths at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym, in the city’s Fishtown section. Since April, the nonprofit organization has had an impact on youths outside the ring as well, via a 20-station computer lab. For those efforts, the Hands became the seventh recipient of the Philadelphia Sports Congress Community Service Award.

At one point, Hand Sr. broke down during his acceptance speech. He apologized. There was no need.

“I think you get the enjoyment out of the enjoyment you see from the kids,” said Hand, a retired Philadelphia police officer. “I thrive off hearing them laugh, seeing kids who are now at Marquette University who would never have had a chance to be in college or anything like that, if it



Harry Kalas (from left), Joe Hand Sr. and Donovan McNabb won awards from the Philadelphia Sports Congress. Photo: ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ/Daily News

wasn't for this. Maybe it'll make more kids think about what's out there for them, if they want it enough. That's what makes this a super moment for a lot of people ."

Right now, two of Hand's boxers are competing in the Junior Olympics in Detroit, and two more are in Denver for the National Golden Gloves. Still, he gets just as much from helping to build healthy minds.

"They come in here, from all parts of the city, with a gym bag over one shoulder and a school bag over the other," Hand said. "That's the way life should be. It's an opportunity for them to realize their full potential as a person.

"We offer something maybe they don't get anywhere else. When you see what's going on, you know you're doing something right."