Kelsey Whaley, Showcased By Influential Women, Shapes St. Thomas Athletics With Bold Strategic Communications Today

ST. PAUL, MN, UNITED STATES, September 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leading Athletic Communications During a Defining Era of Division I Competition



St. Paul, Minnesota – As the University of St. Thomas continues establishing its identity within NCAA Division I athletics, effective storytelling has become an increasingly important part of the institution's competitive landscape. At the center of that effort is Kelsey Whaley, Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Communications, who leads the department's communications strategy while helping define how St. Thomas is represented to media, fans, alumni, students, and the broader Twin Cities community.

Kelsey oversees media relations, storytelling, and brand development at a particularly significant moment for the university. Following its transition from NCAA Division III to Division I, St. Thomas has entered a new era of competition and reached its first year of NCAA postseason eligibility. The transition has created opportunities to introduce the university's athletics program to new audiences while establishing a recognizable identity in one of the country's most competitive sports media markets.

That environment presents a distinctive communications challenge. The Twin Cities is home to the Minnesota Vikings, Minnesota Twins, Minnesota Wild, Minnesota Timberwolves, Minnesota Lynx, and the University of Minnesota, creating an exceptionally crowded field for media attention. Kelsey describes St. Thomas as competing for attention alongside virtually every major professional and collegiate sports organization in the area.

For an athletic communications department, simply generating coverage is not enough. The larger question is how St. Thomas can consistently communicate what makes its athletics program distinctive.

Kelsey is excited to be part of answering that question.

After the highly newsworthy early years of the Division I transition, she and her staff are now entering a different phase. The university has already accomplished many of the milestones that naturally generated headlines during its transition. With postseason eligibility established, the focus is shifting toward the future: determining what St. Thomas represents as a Division I program, what its brand should become, and what stories will continue to resonate with its audiences.

For Kelsey, that challenge is both daunting and exciting. It provides an opportunity to think strategically about storytelling rather than simply responding to the latest development. Her work involves identifying the narratives that can distinguish St. Thomas, communicating them across multiple platforms, and creating connections between the university's athletic programs and the people who follow them.

Kelsey's approach to the profession has been shaped by a career spanning multiple collegiate athletic environments. Before joining St. Thomas, she served as Athletics Communications Director at Luther College, Assistant Director of Athletic Communications at St. Cloud State University, and Sports Information Director at St. Catherine University. Earlier in her career, she worked with the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, supporting championship operations, communications initiatives, and digital content development.

Across those positions, she developed broad experience in media relations, statistical reporting, sports journalism, branding, and multi-platform storytelling. Her work has involved communicating through radio, television, digital, and print while engaging a range of stakeholders within higher education athletics.

That diverse background informs her current responsibilities. Athletic communications requires both detailed knowledge of sports and an understanding of how information can be transformed into compelling stories. It also requires the ability to work with coaches, student-athletes, administrators, media members, and other stakeholders while maintaining accuracy, professionalism, and consistency.

Kelsey's academic background provided an additional foundation for that work. She earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in Communication and Media Studies and Music from St. Norbert College, graduating Magna Cum Laude with a 3.89 GPA. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society.

While professional knowledge and education have played important roles in her development,

Kelsey attributes her success first and foremost to her passion for her work and the people around her. She credits the mentors and individuals who supported her throughout her career, recognizing that reaching a leadership position within Division I athletics would not have been possible without those relationships.

Hard work, dedication, goal-setting, and a willingness to continue growing have also remained central to her philosophy. Kelsey strives to lead by example, remain receptive to new opportunities and challenges, and continually push herself beyond what she already knows.

Kindness and respect are equally important to her. She believes professional success should not come at the expense of how people are treated and finds fulfillment in making a positive difference in the environments and individuals with whom she works.

Perseverance is another principle that has guided her career. The best advice Kelsey has received is that success requires continuing forward when challenges arise and refusing to give up. She also believes people in positions of influence have a responsibility to advocate for those who need support and use their voices to help others.

Continuous learning remains part of that philosophy. Kelsey recognizes that professional development does not end when someone reaches a particular position. The more a person learns, she believes, the more opportunities there are to grow personally and professionally.

That mindset is particularly meaningful to Kelsey as a woman working in a traditionally male-dominated industry. Her advice to young women entering athletic communications is direct: they should never make themselves smaller to make other people comfortable.

Rather than changing themselves to fit expectations, Kelsey encourages women to recognize that individuality can be a professional strength. A unique perspective can provide value precisely because it offers something different. She believes young women should embrace that perspective, remain focused on their goals, and refuse to allow other people to define the limits of their careers.

Consistency, resilience, and self-belief, in her view, can carry aspiring professionals a long way.

These values also shape how Kelsey approaches her own work and personal life. She places importance on making sure her voice is heard and confidently expressing her opinions because she believes those perspectives matter. At the same time, she remains committed to education and personal growth, understanding that continued learning is essential for staying effective and adaptable.

Teamwork is another cornerstone of her philosophy. Athletic communications is inherently collaborative, requiring professionals to work across departments and alongside numerous individuals with different responsibilities and perspectives. Kelsey values being a strong team

player while remaining goal-driven and focused on meaningful results.

At St. Thomas, those principles are being applied during a consequential stage in the university's athletic evolution. The transition to Division I has already created a significant chapter in the institution's history. The next challenge is establishing what comes after it.

For Kelsey, that means helping St. Thomas discover and communicate the stories that will define its next era. In a crowded Twin Cities sports landscape, the work requires creativity, persistence, collaboration, and a clear understanding of identity.

As St. Thomas continues writing its Division I story, Kelsey Whaley is helping determine how that story is told — and how the university's athletics brand can continue developing for the future.

Learn More about Kelsey Whaley:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/kelsey-whaley

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