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**For Immediate Release**

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## **ESPN's Jay Williams to speak at Variety Black Tie Gala**

Variety- the Children's Charity is hosting its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Black Tie gala, "Fire & Ice" January 13, 2017 featuring guest speaker Jay Williams. Williams is a former NBA player, ESPN analyst and author.

After just one season with the Chicago Bulls, Williams destroyed his career when he suffered a motorcycle accident leaving him unable to walk.

In "Life Is Not an Accident," Williams shares his story -- both heartbreaking and uplifting -- of being a young man trying to wrest control of his life from his overinvolved parents, from the pleasures and perils of fame and money, and from the near-fatal mistake that threatened to define him.

Williams will recount, with a rare honesty, his hard-fought path to college basketball stardom and the painful lessons he has learned while reconstructing his life after his accident.

"We are thrilled to bring a guest speaker of Jay's stature to Variety's Black Tie Gala," said George Milligan, Variety's 2016/2017 Honorary Chair. "I am personally looking forward to hearing Jay speak about his life experiences and how he persevered through the many challenges that were brought about by his tragic accident."

In addition to being an author, Williams is the CEO and National Director of Special Events for Rising Stars Youth Foundation based in Long Island, N.J., using basketball as the vehicle to promote education and provide academic and financial assistance to students within the program.

Black Tie will be held at The Ron Pearson Center in West Des Moines. Tickets are \$300 per person or \$3,000 per table of 10 and can be purchased online at [varietyiowa.com/events](http://varietyiowa.com/events). For questions please contact [margie@varietyiowa.com](mailto:margie@varietyiowa.com) or call 515.243.4660.

**variety the children's charity of iowa**

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Variety is dedicated to improving the lives of underprivileged, at-risk and special needs children throughout Iowa. Funding is provided to programs and initiatives that directly impact the well-being of children in our community. For more information on how you can be a part of our work, please visit [varietyiowa.com](http://varietyiowa.com).

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