

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Boom Media and Image Consulting  
Tamara Washington | Executive Consultant  
[tamara@boommediaandimage.com](mailto:tamara@boommediaandimage.com)  
832.455.0078 | cell

**NFL VETERAN WHITNEY MERCILUS AND THE WITHMERCİ FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE  
THE 2022 SPOTLIGHT DISABILITY  
-Grant applications are now open-**

HOUSTON, TX – NFL veteran and founder of the WithMerci Foundation, Whitney Mercilus, announces the new disability that will be the foundation’s focus for 2022. This year’s spotlight disability is Bipolar Disorder. Each year WithMerci chooses a new disability to spotlight by bringing awareness, educating the public and creating new partnerships through their grant program. Since its inception in 2016, WithMerci has spotlighted Autism, Down Syndrome, Aphasia, Apraxia, Hearing loss and Prader-Willi Syndrome.

*“Mental illness has effected more and more people since the pandemic and it’s something that can’t go unspoken. It was even more important for me to discuss this because of the experience that several of my former teammates have gone through,”* Whitney Mercilus said.

According to the Mental Illness Policy Organization, Bipolar Disorder is a neurobiological brain disorder that affects approximately 2.3 million Americans today, or almost 1 percent of the population. Although Bipolar Disorder usually begins in adolescence or early adulthood, it can sometimes start in early childhood or as late as age 40 or 50.

One case that hits close to Mercilus is the death of his friend and former NFL player Glenn Foster. According to his father, Foster was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and died in police custody last year. His family’s concern is that he never received any medical attention.

Each year, the WithMerci Foundation gives grants to organizations working in the area of the spotlight disability. To date, WithMerci has awarded nearly \$300,000 to local organizations in the City of Houston. Organizations targeting Bipolar Disorder who wish to apply for support from the WithMerci Foundation may do so at [www.withmerci.org](http://www.withmerci.org). The deadline for applications is May 31, 2022.

The WithMerci Foundation was founded in 2016 by Houston Texans Outside-Linebacker Whitney Mercilus. To date the foundation has raised over \$600,000. The vision of the WithMerci Foundation is to **Start WithMerci** by believing in and advocating for children around the world with disabilities and special needs; **Live WithMerci** through services and support that ensure children with disabilities feel included through all aspects of life; **Work WithMerci** through special sporting events and by providing education to individuals; **Give WithMerci** through financial support.

**###**