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## Elaine Chase, Wizards Brand Manager, Level 3 Judge/Former DCI Policy Manager, Former Wizards R&D, Former Pro Tour Player

*Editor's note: Over the course of the voting, we will occasionally be posting ballots of voters who wish to make their choices public, along with any additional analysis they used to come to their decisions. If other Selection Committee members wish to provide analysis and explanation of their votes for publication, click [here](#).*

After the given vote for **Magic's** legend, I've divided up my votes into four categories:

- Good at **Magic**
- Good to **Magic**
- Good for **Magic**
- All-around Nice Guy



### 1. The Legend: Jon Finkel

I've spent a lot of time watching Jon play throughout his career, from the early days before there was such a thing as the Pro Tour all the way through his staggering accomplishments. He is truly in a class by himself. He constantly makes plays that you just can't figure out, but five or 10 turns later end up paying off in the most amazing ways.

My favorite Jon-watching moments are when he hasn't practiced – the speed and accuracy he displays in understating the environment are astounding, often making leaps that good players who've spent months preparing haven't grasped. He's at his best in a new Limited format when no one else has quite figured out what to do; his draft choices and plays inevitably end up defining the format.

I don't think Jon really understood the level of his own innate skill until after Wandering Eye was released. After playing with the card for awhile, Jon was truly baffled. He simply said, "I never realized before how badly people play." It's not that everyone else plays that badly; it's that Jon is just that much better. He has more natural talent for the game than everyone else who's ever touched a **Magic** card put together.

On top of his skills, Jon's also a top-notch spokesman for the game. He's always willing to do an interview or give an autograph and an encouraging word to a young fan. He tailors the message he delivers based on who he's talking to, and always gets the level of intricacy just right. He's persistently modest, but talks about all the benefits the game has to offer and how it's enriched not only his life but also the lives of others.

Jon's kind of the child actor of the **Magic** scene. Those who have been around since the beginning have literally watched him grow up. And the entire way, from his awkward adolescence days through college and to the man he has become, he's never really changed the core of himself. And at the core

is a good man who also happens to be the most talented **Magic** player who ever was. He will always be Jonny Magic.

## **2. Good at Magic: Darwin Kastle**

After removing Jon from the picture, Darwin is by far the most accomplished player on the ballot. No matter if you're counting Pro Points, winnings, Top 8 appearances, record, formats – whatever it is, Darwin is at the top. Combine with that his longevity, and I think he's pretty much a shoe-in for the first batch of inductees. There's not much more for me to say – Darwin's record speaks for itself.

## **3. Good to Magic: Robert Dougherty**

While Rob is clearly proved himself as a player, it's not how he's preformed on the tour that snags him my vote. Rob has done more than anyone else on the list to promote the game of **Magic** and just make it better for everyone. He runs one of the top stores in the world and is a highly respected tournament organizer. Many top Pro Tour players owe their accomplishments to Rob, for without him, they would never have gotten a chance to shine. More importantly, an enormous number of casual players have the chance to enjoy the game all because of him. He could have easily turned his back on the public and focused on honing his play skill, but instead he puts countless hours into building the community. And to anyone who thinks he's in it for the money, I can assure you that there are many other things he could be doing where he'd make a lot more for a fraction of the effort.

## **4. Good for Magic: Chris Pikula**

There's no one I'm happier to see (or more correctly, hear) at an event than Chris Pikula. **Magic** is just more fun when he's around. For those who've never had the pleasure, I don't really know how to describe it. He's funny, insightful, playful, and genuine. He can make a reading of tax law engaging, but luckily he plays **Magic**. Watching him play is a pleasure – playing against him even more so. His lack of real stellar performances gives him only a slim chance to get in, but if more people vote with their hearts, there's a glimmer of hope. He did win an Invitational, so it's not that far-fetched. My ulterior motive for him to get voted in is that he'll show up at a Pro Tour, not make Top 8, and then we can use him to do commentary. Heck, I think we should just fly him around to do commentary anyway, but I'm on the wrong brand team to make that decision. Maybe one day, Chris....

## **5. All-around Nice Guy: Michael Pustilnik**

You will not meet a nicer guy than Mikey P. You'd be hard-pressed to find someone as brilliant, or as humble. One of my favorite Pro Tour moments occurred during the Top 8 of Pro Tour-Los Angeles 2001 – turn after turn, Mike picks away at his opponent's life with a Stormscape Apprentice, each time very politely saying, "lose a life, please." And then the Stormscape Master hits the table, and his quiet mantra changes to, "lose two life, please."

In Mike's player profile for that Pro Tour (which he did go on to win), Adrian Sullivan wrote, "...humble self-evaluation is typical of Mikey P. Innocently charming, it's not just the New York players that are excited about his chances. Many of the pros were very happy to hear that he was doing well, and it seemed only his opponents weren't smiling when he won. He seemed surprised to hear that people were so excited for his success."

"I'm glad to hear it if it's true - I didn't know people were noticing." "

Well, Mike, I noticed. Thank you for making **Magic** a nicer place for all of us.

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