



Independent Insurance Agents of Texas

News

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Don Morriss

IIAT names Texarkana independent insurance agent Don Morriss 2008 Drex Foreman Award winner

AUSTIN — Texarkana life-long independent insurance agent Don Morriss, AAI, CPCU, was named winner of the Drex Foreman Award, the highest award given by the Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) at the 111th Annual Conference & Trade Show. Morriss is president of Offenhauser & Co., a Trusted Choice[®] independent insurance agency that has operated continuously under the same name for 126 years.

“The Drex G. Foreman Award recognizes exceptional contributions to IIAT, the independent insurance agency system, the Texas insurance industry and local community,” said Frank Swingle, IIAT president. “No one deserves it more than Don,” he

added. The award is named for Drex Foreman, who served as executive director of IIAT for 30 years.

Immediate past president Robert Hemphins told attendees at the Wade F. Spilman Political Action Luncheon that Morriss' unswerving dedication to service and his commitment to excellence not only reflect the long-standing philosophy of his agency, but have become the cornerstones of his own life.

Morriss joined Offenhauser in 1976 following graduation with a degree in business from Southern Methodist University. He became a partner in 1978 and was named president in 1991. As president he follows his father, Josh Morriss, Jr.; grandfather, Josh Morriss, Sr.; and great-grandfather, Fred W. Offenhauser, who founded the agency in 1882.

Don Morriss is also a fourth-generation president of the state association and Offenhauser was also president of the national association. Furthermore, Don joins his father and grandfather as a winner of the Drex Foreman award.

"For more than 30 years Morriss has lived the agency's 'Golden Rule' philosophy of volunteer participation which states that excellence begins with service to others and to the community," Hemphins said.

In addition to a long history of professional leadership positions with IIAT and the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America, the national association, during those years, Morriss has also served on no fewer than 12 boards of civic and community organizations in Texarkana.

Hemphins highlighted a few of the accomplishments that have characterized Morriss' professional life.

Among his most cherished volunteer accomplishments is a \$4 million fund-raising campaign that resulted in the establishment of the Bunch-Woodview Center for Alzheimer's and Dementia Care where he sits on the board of directors. It is part of the Cornerstone Retirement Community which is affiliated with the Methodist Retirement Communities board of directors where he served on the board directors for nearly 10 years including vice chair on 2006-7.

His association with Williams Memorial United Methodist Church is extensive including having been a member of the Chancel Choir since 1976. He also has served

as chair of various church committees and is currently a delegate to the Texas Annual Conference.

He is currently secretary of the board of directors of the Texarkana Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and most recently was named to the board of the Texas Association of Business. He is on the board of the Red River Redevelopment Authority and has served in leadership capacities on United Way, the area historical society and museums, chamber of commerce and Kiwanis Club among others. He is the local alumni student recruiter for his alma mater:

Morriss is an Eagle Scout and received the IIAT Young Agent of the Year Award in 1987. He is married to Patsy. He has one daughter, Whitney Morriss, and a stepson, Brad McCutcheon.

Hempkins said, "Today's winner embraces the challenge in Fred Offenhauser's philosophy of service to improve the conditions under which we work and live. That sentiment defines not only success, but also the life of this man and this year's winner of the Drex Foreman Award."

About IIAT

The Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) is the nation's largest state association of Trusted Choice[®] agencies. IIAT represents some 1,800 agencies and more than 15,000 agents and insurance professionals. Trusted Choice independent agents represent multiple insurance companies. Since they are not employees of any single insurance company, they are often advocates for insurance consumers. With an independent agent, consumers can comparison shop for cost-effective customized coverage, with someone who understands their insurance needs. IIAT is also affiliated with the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America and works with legislative, regulatory and judicial bodies in Texas on behalf of independent insurance agents across the state. More information on IIAT can be found online at iiat.org.