



Annual IIAN Awards Presented October 12

Outgoing IIAN president **Krae Dutoit**, presented IIAN’s annual agent and company awards – along with the prestigious “Spirit of Nebraska” award - at the Big “I” Awards Dinner on October 12 in Lincoln. IIAN staff members were also recognized for achieving IIABA National awards in 2017, by **Carol McClelland, CAE**, IIAN CEO; and McClelland was recognized for 30 years of service to the association.

Member agents honored were:



Distinguished Service Award – Phil Winkelmann, Omaha - for over 10 years’ dedicated service to IIAN and its members as a persistent advocate for independent insurance agents in the Unicameral and on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and a personal ambassador for membership and involvement in the association;



Committee Chairperson of the Year – Zak Morken, Ogallala – for his leadership as chairman of IIAN’s Member Engagement Task Force, for successfully reinventing and rejuvenating IIAN’s young agents program – now re-branded as “nextgen” – and recruiting regional leaders who held three new successful “nextgen” events in 2017; and



Young Agent of the Year – Dustin Kowalewski, CIC, AIP, Omaha, for his involvement on IIA of Omaha’s Board since 2012, now serving as president for 2017-18, along with his professional dedication and community leadership.

Elite Force Sales School “Top of Class” - Jon Hongersmeier, AIP, North Platte, was recognized as the top performer in the 2016-2017 class as voted by his peers.



Zimmer Insurance Group, Lincoln, was recognized as “**Trusted Choice® Agency of the Year**”, in recognition of the agency’s use of the national consumer brand in all of its customer communications, accepted by **Greg Zimmer**.



Member company representatives honored were:



Company Representative of the Year – Nate Spurling, Auto-Owners Insurance, in recognition of exemplary service to member agents, and helping agencies grow; and

Five Star Company of the Year – Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, accepted by **Andy Kraus, CPCU, CIC**, Vice President of Agencies, along with **Tim Valleau, CPCU**, Regional Director of Agencies. Both company awards were determined by nominations from IIAN members.



IIAN staff members honored were:



Jeremiah Gudding, CIC, and **Brenda Kaiser, CIC, AAI** – for conducting a new member campaign in 2016 which resulted in a 13% increase in IIAN membership, and earned IIAN the national Big “I” Membership Champion award presented in Washington, D.C. in May; and

Nancy Robeson – for helping IIAN achieve IIBA’s Diamond Level Excellence in Insurance Education award for the fifth year in a row, presented in Chicago in September.

Carol McClelland, CAE – for 30 years of dedicated service to IIAN and its members.

"Spirit of Nebraska"



Hannah Huston of Lincoln accepted IIAN's "Spirit of Nebraska" award, which is presented to a living individual who has achieved national prominence and made a major contribution to the prosperity and well-being of the citizens of Nebraska. While competing as a contestant in Season 10 of NBC's *The Voice* in 2016, Huston won the hearts of America – and contributed greatly to the positive perception and reputation of the state of Nebraska on the national stage. Huston is now partnering with "Team Jack" to raise money for pediatric brain cancer, and is involved with the Make A Wish® Foundation. Proud parents Jay and Candy Huston were on hand – along with grandmother De Troxel and friend Grant Peterson. Jay Huston, CIC is with Ryder Rosacker McCue & Huston in Grand Island, and received IIAN's Young Agent of the Year award in 1989.