



News Release



National Independent Automobile Dealers Association

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For Immediate Release

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Otto Hahne Named 2019 NIADA National Quality Dealer

Michigan Dealer's Journey From a Troubled Youth Leads to Association's Highest Honor

Arlington, Texas (June 25, 2019) – Otto Hahne, president of City of Cars in Troy, Mich., was named the 2019 National Quality Dealer of the Year by the National Independent Automobile Dealers Association to close NIADA's 73rd annual Convention and Expo in Las Vegas.

In a ceremony webcast live Thursday night from the Venetian Resort on NIADA.TV, Hahne was chosen from the 13 State Quality Dealers nominated for highest honor awarded among NIADA's dealer members.

The National Quality Dealer is chosen by a selection committee comprised of some of the most distinguished names in the used vehicle industry based on a variety of factors, including contributions to the automotive industry and the association, and community involvement.

This year's committee included AFC chief operating officer Joe Keadle, NADA Used Car Guide vice president and general manager Mike Stanton, Black Book Automotive vice president and North American auction director Tim West, NIADA senior vice president and 2013 National Quality Dealer Joe McCloskey of McCloskey Motors, NIADA Region III vice president and 2011 NQD Scott Allen, and Elgie Bright, chairman of the Automotive Marketing Department at Northwood University.

"I am so, so humbled. I love this industry and I can't thank everyone enough," Hahne said in accepting the award. "I never expected to be here."

Hahne's remarkable journey began with a troubled childhood that eventually led to Boyssville of Michigan, a youth crisis rehabilitation center run by the Brothers of the Holy Cross. That, he said, was exactly what he needed to help him get his life on the right track and build the foundation for his career.

From there he enrolled at the Michigan Career Institute and graduated at the top of his class as a master mechanic. After working as a service technician for auto dealers, he opened his own independent shop, repairing and restoring Jaguars and other exotic cars.

Soon the owners of those cars began to ask him for advice about buying other high-end vehicles, a spark that ignited his passion for buying and selling cars. Eventually that led him to become a buyer for auto dealerships, and in 1994 he took the leap of opening his own dealership, Factory Executive Motor Cars, with \$20,000 and an inventory of just three vehicles.

That dealership, which was renamed City of Cars when Hahne moved it from Pontiac, Mich., to Troy in 2011, now has two locations with a combined inventory of 250 vehicles and \$28 million in sales last year.

The family business – Hahne’s wife Jerrienne and children Lauren, Leah and Evan are all involved – has grown from two employees to 17.

That success is a result of Hahne’s dedication to providing the best possible customer experience, including everything from giving his staff “carte blanche” to take care of any customer issues that come up to giving dealership visitors what Jerrienne calls “the famous Otto hug.”

“We don’t really ‘sell’ cars,” he said. “We connect our customers with the right car for them.

“We can come in each morning with a smile, leave each day able to look ourselves in the mirror – and even have a little fun in between.”

Hahne is happy to pass along that business philosophy and the operational aspects of his dealership – including his favorite quote, “Every minute a car is not online is a minute of lost opportunity” – to others.

He has served as a mentor not only to his team members – six of whom have gone on to own their own independent dealerships – but to employees of other dealerships, many of whom have been sent to Hahne by the dealerships’ owners to be trained in his methods.

Hahne said his commitment to teaching others began with coaching his children and their teams in youth sports.

“I realized my job as coach was to put my team in the best possible position to win,” he explained. “That is my mission today. I’ve trained so many dealers, many of whom have sent their team members to me. I’ve trained them and helped them. I always want to be transparent and give back.”

Hahne’s mission extends to himself – he continues to constantly educate himself on the industry’s latest trends and techniques. He is an active member of an NIADA Dealer 20 Group and in 2018 he completed the course to become a Certified Master Dealer.

He also gives back to his national and state independent dealers associations, the used vehicle industry and his community.

Hahne is currently serving his second term as president of the Michigan IADA, having previously served as vice president and on every MIADA committee.

In those roles, he was instrumental in MIADA’s successful campaign to enact legislation requiring pre-licensing and continuing education for the state’s used vehicle dealers and in setting up an internship program with Northwood University. He has been involved in NIADA lobbying efforts at the federal level at the National Policy Conference in Washington D.C.

Hahne has given his money and time to community and charitable organizations including youth sports, Boy Scouts, Care House, St. Jude Children’s Hospital, the Lions Club and, of course, Boysville. He has also helped numerous individuals, donating money, vehicles and Christmas gifts to families in need. For the past 10 years, he has given each patient at Detroit’s Qualicare Nursing Home a Christmas gift bag.



Otto Hahne (second from right) accepts the 2019 National Quality Dealer award from (from left) PassTime CEO and co-founder Jake Frank, NIADA CEO Steve Jordan and NextGear Capital senior vice president of operations Randy Dohse.