

Broker Words

By Stephen P. Howard, Editor & Publisher



It is my distinct pleasure to congratulate dear *Broker World* friend Steve Katz, chief optimist of Premier Brokerage Services, Jenkintown, PA, recipient of the 2014 NAILBA Chairman's Award. The award was created in 2009 to honor an individual within the NAILBA community who has made a special impact on the association and on the industry over the past year.

Barbara Crowley, 2014 NAILBA chairman, in announcing her selection, praised Katz for his tireless work with the NAILBA Charitable Foundation, not only volunteering his time during the annual meeting, at which he serves as auctioneer extraordinaire, raising many thousands of dollars during the live auction, but for his behind-the-scenes work throughout the year on the auction committee, strong-arming carriers, vendors and members alike to donate items for both the silent and live auctions.



In her address to the membership, Crowley outlined Katz's extensive charitable endeavors, stating, "This year's recipient is so dedicated to philanthropy that he and his family operate a family charity trust to support and enhance the formal and informal education of people everywhere, and his agency has a policy allowing staff to take time off twice yearly to do volunteer work in their communities. In addition to his community service, he routinely sponsors the charities he serves for NAILBA Charitable Foundation grants. And to top it off, this year he was instrumental in working with his colleagues in BRAMCO to coordinate their matching donation program for the foundation. He really exemplifies the mission of our foundation, doesn't he?"

Presenting the award to Katz, Crowley added, "We are so very grateful to have your support and enthusiasm, year after year." I can only add that he's a very stylish fellow as well. [SPH]

It is also my privilege to congratulate (belatedly, I regret) Samuel R. Lane, founder of Fairlane Financial Corporation, for his selection as the 2014 recipient of NAFA's Insurance Marketing Advisory Council's Bo Johnson Spirit Award for Lifetime Achievement. The award recognizes courage, spirit and determination that challenges the status quo, inspires others to achieve, contributes unselfishly to others, and works ethically

and conscientiously to improve the fixed annuity marketplace.

In announcing Lane's selection, Kim O'Brien, president and CEO of NAFA, explained, "Sam is a true original in the insurance industry. Dating back to 1955, Sam helped pioneer the distribution of fixed annuities through independently licensed brokers. He is responsible for setting the stage for life companies to manufacture insurance products and then delegate their distribution to marketing specialists." O'Brien continued, "Without Sam, the phrase 'national marketing company' and this 'new' concept of distribution might never have been born."

Having founded Fairlane Financial in 1955, Lane remains the CEO and chairman of the company—which will celebrate its 60th anniversary this year. A family business, Ron Lane, Sam's son, serves the company as president, and the third generation, Ron Lane, Jr., serves as senior vice president. By Sam's side throughout this ride has been his wonderful wife of 72 years, Lucille.

My first exposure to Sam Lane was in 1985. Working at the magazine originally in several "relatively harmless" roles, it was determined that I should try my hand at sales, come what may, to see if there might be a productive future for me in the family business. Profoundly clueless and yet eager to prove myself, I dialed the provided number, got Sam, and was delicately scolded for calling in on their 800 number when I didn't have a toll-free line for him to use.



Despite the awkward start, Fairlane Financial somehow became my first sale, proving beyond a doubt Sam's marketing savvy, and forging what would become a strong bond of friendship between the Lane family and me.

Fairlane Financial's loyalty is on exhibition monthly on page two of this magazine, a commitment uninterrupted for 30 years and counting.

And to this day I continue to call their local number, despite having added our own 800 number very shortly after our initial conversation! Congratulations to Sam Lane for this award, but much more for six decades of strong family values and spotless integrity in serving our industry and helping fulfill the needs of independent agents and their clients throughout the country. [SPH]