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**Nebraskan Michael Gray, Californian John Word III Receive NAHU's Highest Honor**  
*Gordon Memorial Award Recognizes Industry's Person of the Year*

AUSTIN, Texas (June 28) -- The National Association of Health Underwriters honored Michael D. Gray and John M. Word III as recipients of the Harold R. Gordon Memorial Award at the organization's 92nd Annual Convention this week in Austin, Texas.

Awarded annually to the industry's "Person of the Year," the Harold R. Gordon Memorial Award is NAHU's highest honor. Winners are selected by a committee of past recipients based on the contributions they have made to the health insurance industry.

"After the pandemic prevented us from presenting this prestigious award for the past two years, I feel particularly grateful to honor two recipients who embody visionary leadership and steadfast commitment to bettering the health insurance industry," said Janet Trautwein, CEO of NAHU.

"For more than 25 years, Michael Gray has worked relentlessly to grow the association," Trautwein said. "His hard work and passion have inspired countless members to step up and become leaders within the industry. Though he never seeks recognition for his accomplishments, he is incredibly deserving of this award."

Gray has held leadership positions in his local chapter, in the Nebraska state chapter and as the Region 4 vice president on NAHU's Board of Trustees. He has recruited no fewer than 70 new members into the association.

Gray is perhaps best-known as the driving force behind NAHU's political action committee. Under his leadership, HUPAC has grown and fundraised to new levels.

Gray's selflessness, people-centered leadership and dedication aren't limited to the NAHU community. He serves on the board of the Community Health Partners Initiative, which aims to improve the health of people in Lincoln and Lancaster Counties in Nebraska. At CHPI, he championed an effort to secure a grant for a health center that now helps thousands of individuals each year.

Gray is a friend to all and a committed leader who always puts others before himself. His dedication to improving his association and his community has served as an inspiration to everyone who knows him.

John Word III is this year's second deserving recipient.

"John is a visionary and a transformative leader. He has spearheaded countless positive changes within the industry that have benefited agents and brokers and the consumers they serve," Trautwein said. "John is never complacent – he has an unrelenting drive to better his community and his industry. His efforts have left us all better off."

Word has looked for ways to improve the insurance industry from the beginning of his career. After co-founding the Word & Brown General Agency in 1985, he developed software that allowed brokers to quickly assemble information about multiple plans and find quality health insurance at the best price for their clients. Word's invention revolutionized the role of brokers in California and across the country.

Time and again, Word has demonstrated creativity and perseverance in the face of inefficiencies and complex problems. Word & Brown created the first COBRA division in the nation, a Flexible Benefits Plans division and the "defined contribution" concept that is now used in group health plans across the country.

Word's innovative spirit and skilled problem-solving have made him an effective leader. He has served as president of the Orange County Association of Health Underwriters and the California Association of Health Underwriters. During his tenure with CAHU, he was responsible for organizing the association's first trade show. Word has also served as budget chairman of NAHU's Leading Producers Round Table.

Word has played a transformational role in his community as well. He has served on the Board of Directors at Providence Speech and Hearing for 43 years and has supported United Way of Orange County for more than two decades. Word & Brown has donated millions of dollars to these organizations and created in-house fundraising projects to help community members in need.

"As a role model for leaders in the industry and community, John could not be more deserving of this award," Trautwein said. "He has taught us to never settle for less than the best and never be afraid to think outside the box. The insurance industry would not be the same without his vision and forward thinking."

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*The National Association of Health Underwriters represents 100,000 professional health insurance agents and brokers who provide insurance for millions of Americans. NAHU is headquartered in Washington, D.C. For more information, please call Kelly Loussedes at 202-595-3074 or email [kloussedes@nahu.org](mailto:kloussedes@nahu.org).*