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## **Brian Williams Honored as 2019 Bo Johnson Spirit Award for Lifetime Achievement Winner**

**WASHINGTON** (Nov. 18, 2019) — NAFA, the National Association for Fixed Annuities, announced Brian Williams, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Financial Independence Group, as the winner of its 2019 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.

Addi Johnson, the daughter of Bo Johnson who is memorialized by the award, made the announcement during NAFA's Annuity Distribution Summit at the Chateau Elan outside Atlanta where Brian's colleagues and friends shared this honor with him.

"Brian is a visionary in the financial services business. He was instrumental in providing solutions during the regulatory changes happening during DOL and is constantly pushing the envelope when it comes to incorporating technology solutions for the advisor, the IMO and the carrier," said Eric Thomes, past Chair of the NAFA Board of Directors and Chief Distribution Officer at Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America. "As an advocate in our business, Brian has been very active with NAFA and lobbying efforts in Washington, DC. He is a voice of the annuity market and takes an approach that furthers the industry first and his firm second. If you ask anyone in our business who is one of the best at collaborating across constituents, Brian will almost always be at the top of this list."

Williams began his career in the public sector where he implemented and led a nationally-recognized economic development initiative that was born out of the State of North Carolina

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legislature. After a decade of public service, Williams entered the private sector by joining Financial Independence Group in 2007 as the Chief Operating Officer. Two years later he was named partner of FIG, and, in November of 2019, Brian was named Co-Chief Executive Officer.

In addition to his annuity leadership and innovative strategies, Williams has long been committed to educating agents and financial professionals about the value proposition of FIAs and how to position them to help consumers retire well. He played a vital role in helping overturn SEC Rule 151a and showed the same drive, commitment and dedication to the industry in the recent fight against the Department of Labor's burdensome fiduciary rule. As Co-CEO, Williams works with his partners to drive vision and strategy and works with his colleagues on the executive team to provide direction for FIG with a goal of providing opportunities for advisors while progressively integrating internal efficiencies for greater effectiveness. With a strong background in technology, regulation, and compliance, he brings an essential viewpoint to the table as it influences the direction of the organization. In addition to William's role as Co-CEO of FIG, he is the managing partner of Alphastar Capital Management, an SEC-registered investment advisory firm, and a partner in Barnabas Capital, a wholesale broker-dealer, as well as a partner at Life Innovators, a product development company.

In a volunteer capacity, Williams has served on various industry committees and advisory boards, such as the Board of Directors for NAFA, the NAFA IMAC Committee, and the Leadership Council for Great American Insurance Group.

"Williams exemplifies what the Bo Johnson award is about: bringing passion to our industry in a way that inspires everyone around him," said Chris Conroy, Vice Chair of NAFA's Board of Directors. Chuck DiVencenzo, NAFA President and CEO stated, "As an organization, we not only thank him for improving the future of retirement for millions of Americans, but also for his longstanding leadership within NAFA and our industry."

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### **About NAFA**

NAFA, the National Association for Fixed Annuities, is the premier trade association exclusively dedicated to fixed annuities. Our mission is to promote the awareness and understanding of fixed annuities. We educate annuity salespeople, regulators, legislators, journalists, and industry personnel about the value of fixed annuities and their benefits to consumers. NAFA's

membership represents every aspect of the fixed annuity marketplace. NAFA was founded in 1998. For more information, visit [www.nafa.com](http://www.nafa.com).

### **About the Bo Johnson Spirit Award for Lifetime Achievement**

NAFA's Insurance Marketing Advisory Council (IMAC) established the award in honor of Bo Johnson. Bo was well known for his energy, enthusiasm and love of the fixed annuity industry. As a proud member of NAFA, Bo served on the board for several years and was the original IMAC chair. His life was cut much too short when he died in 2009 after a courageous fight with cancer. He exhibited the attributes outlined in the award created in his name and left a very positive and lasting imprint on the annuity industry.

**Former recipients include:** Wendy Waugaman, the late president & CEO of American Equity Investment Life Holding Company (2012); Bill Cain, chief executive officer of Financial Independence Group (2013); Samuel R. Lane, founder of Fairlane Financial Corporation (2014); Eric Thomes, Chief Distribution Officer for Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America (2015); Dr. Jack Marrion, president of Advantage Compendium and Director of Research for NAFA (2016); David Noble, the late founder of American Equity Investment Life Holding Company (2017) and Mike Tripses, Partner at Creative One (2018)