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NAFA Honors Passionate Industry Champion Rod Mims with 2024 Bo Johnson Spirit Award

WASHINGTON (Nov. 7, 2024) — NAFA, the National Association for Fixed Annuities, presented revered distribution leader Rod Mims with the 2024 Bo Johnson Spirit Award for Lifetime Achievement for his unwavering commitment to the financial services industry. The announcement was made at NAFA's 16th annual Annuity Distribution Summit in Dallas, Texas, in front of NAFA's largest audience in conference history, many of whom have had the pleasure of calling Mims a colleague, a competitor and a friend.

This prestigious award honors an individual who epitomizes the legacy of Bo Johnson, one of NAFA's founding supporters who tirelessly pursued a brighter future for fixed annuities and the professionals who design, distribute and sell them. Each year, NAFA membership at large nominates ethical, conscientious and inspirational leaders deserving of the recognition, and the NAFA board of directors votes to select the honoree from those nominated.

NAFA opened its award ceremony on the main stage with a video tribute from Dennis Brown, CEO of M&O Marketing; Steve Kerns, EVP of business development at Simplicity; Eric Taylor, SVP, distribution – independent annuities at Corebridge Financial; Chris Grady, EVP, head of retail at Athene; and Grant Kvalheim, CEO and president at Athene. They each detailed their years of knowing and working with Mims, his integrity and honor as both a fixed annuity leader and a family man, and his relentless drive to make the industry and its outcomes better.

Mims has more than 30 years of insurance and investment experience in a broad spectrum of roles ranging from personal production to senior sales leadership and large account acquisition at the national level. Prior to joining Athene Annuity, he spent 17 years with GE Financial Services and another seven years with Genworth Financial (a GE spin-out) as national sales manager of the annuity business with responsibility for multiple channels of distribution. In 2011, Mims took a chance on industry newcomer Athene and has since led sales strategy for an enterprise that became the leader of U.S. individual annuity sales in 2023 according to LIMRA sales estimates.

"If you've worked with him, you know that Rod is always pushing people to think outside the box, to become a pro in the industry and to be better. Over the course of the last 16 years of knowing him, he's made me a better person professionally and personally," said Ryan Lex, head of retail

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distribution at Talcott Financial Group and former Athene sales manager who worked under Mims' leadership. "Throughout the last 14 years, we've seen Athene grow from \$35 million of annuity sales in its first year to \$35 billion last year. A lot of that is a direct result of Rod's passion and leadership not only in the IMO space but in other channels."

In addition to his incredible sales acumen, Mims has been integral in developing and nurturing valuable partnerships with IMOs, banks, independent broker-dealers and wirehouses throughout his career. He's also had the opportunity to mentor colleagues and develop the next generation of professional talent in the fixed annuity space. Mims previously served on the Society of Annuity Facts and Education (S.A.F.E.) board of directors as well as on NAFA's board of directors, sharing his talents with groups committed to the promotion and protection of fixed annuity products.

"The task of selecting an individual for this award is one our board takes very seriously, and this year Rod's nomination made the choice easy," said Chuck DiVencenzo, NAFA president and CEO. "A pillar in the industry and a man full of integrity and honor, Rod has spent more than 30 years championing the value of fixed annuities and their role in helping every Americans secure their retirement. More importantly, he's done so with conviction for putting people first and elevating the reputation of our industry. Our organization is stronger for having benefitted from his leadership, and our industry is thriving because of individuals like Rod who are more than just great sales professionals, they are great humans. I congratulate him for all that he's accomplished thus far on his career journey and can't wait to see what he'll continue to do in the future."

Mims took the stage to accept the award in person and summarized his thoughts about the honor with these gracious words: "I've been so privileged to work for an industry that has an incredibly admirable mission. In addition to that, it's an industry that just has some wonderful, great people, and I never take that for granted. I reflect on it every day, and every day is not a day of work."

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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 was founded in 1998. For more information, visit www.nafa.com.