

Outstanding Contribution to the Profession Award

Chairman's Introduction

Good evening Ladies and gentlemen, and a warm welcome to our guests, sponsors and media in addition to today's leading advisory professionals.

It is my honour to announce this years recipient of the most prestigious award that the professional body for financial advice in New Zealand has. I am referring of course to the Outstanding Contribution to the Profession award.

With your permission I would like to spend a minute explaining what this award is for, and why it is so significant.

This Institute, and its predecessor organisations, have led the development of professional standards in financial services in New Zealand for the last 2 decades.

You members here continue to carry the responsibility of leading the development of the profession further still – but we should must never lose sight of the great effort and commitment shown by those who came before us. I continue to believe, as I am sure you will too, that we owe a debt of gratitude and acknowledgement to those who had the courage and foresight to imagine a profession in the first place.

On that note I would like to thank particularly all of our former Presidents, our Life Members and the Fellows of the Institute.

But even leaders need a leader.

The Outstanding Contribution To the Profession award is recognition provided by the Institute, on behalf of the entire industry, to a single individual each year. You will recall of course that last year the Institute chose Graham Rich as the recipient, for his outstanding contribution and foresight to the development of the profession.

It is worth remembering that the recipient does not have to be, or have ever been, an Institute member, and they may be selected from any area of the industry. Every corner of the industry has had outstanding leaders at various times over the years who have provided vision, leadership, courage of conviction and innovative thinking.

We set the standards fairly high here at the Institute though.

Whether that is the standards of professionalism, or the standards by which we judge an outstanding contributor, we set high standards.

To select the candidate for this award the assessment begins with reviewing the personal attributes and character of nominees, and the degree of respect and esteem in which they are held.

Their contributions to the industry over more than a decade, and the degree of difficulty - or breaking of new ground and thinking - is given strong consideration.

Of particular importance is the voluntary and non-commercial nature of their efforts for the greater good, as is the level of entrepreneurialism and innovation that they have demonstrated.

Finally, and possibly most importantly, is the style and

continuity of leadership. Demonstrating vision, inspirational thought and attaining excellence in putting the vision and thinking into practical results is a significant factor.

Selecting a single individual against this criteria ensures that we are truly recognizing a person of outstanding character, vision, selflessness and strength.

So it is with this years recipient.

An exceptional character who qualified as a Chartered Accountant – and with an incredible sense of humour and great personal charm, which is awards material in itself.

Switching to the wider financial services industry in 1987 and commencing as an adviser. Joining the IAFP in 1989 and committing to financial planning as a profession, he completed his CFP qualification in 1996.

Actively involved in the administration of club rugby and provincial rugby, involved as a director and Trustee for YMCA and educational charitable trusts, and somehow finding the time to be a committed member of Rotary and involved for many years in leadership positions with all of these community activities.

His contribution to the development of this profession though has been extraordinary.

Serving in multiple roles for the FPIA, and the IFA, chairing the College of Financial Planners, Audit Committee, and serving as our President.

In that capacity he represented New Zealand internationally on the FPSB Council. He subsequently became Chair of that Council, and was then appointed to

the international FPSB Board. His leadership qualities, intelligence, commercial acumen and personality led to him being appointed as the Chairman of the FPSB Board. The first, and only, New Zealander to have done so.

As far as leading the development of global professional financial advice standards go , there is no position higher, or more responsible.

The respect and esteem he carries internationally is immense, and he has been a positive, thoughtful and compassionate ambassador for New Zealand.

In New Zealand he has been recognized for his outstanding service and commitment to this profession, the wider business community and his own local community.

A Fellow of the Rotary Club, an Associate Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Management, a Fellow of the IFA

And he's a damned good southern man.

It is my pleasure to announce Stephen O'Connor as the 2013 recipient of the Outstanding Contribution to the Profession Award.