For Immediate Release

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National School Transportation Association
Announces 2019 Industry Award Winners

Austin, Texas - The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) recognized excellence in the private school transportation industry on Tuesday, July 23, 2019 at the organization’s annual Awards Reception and Banquet. The banquet was held as part of the NTSA Annual Meeting and Convention at the Hyatt Regency Austin. The honorees represent all facets of the private school transportation industry and were lauded for their continued excellence in supporting industry efforts.

"I want to personally commend all the award winners on their contributions to the field of student transportation. Each year, as an organization, we come together to honor our friends and colleagues at this event. This program not only gives us an opportunity to reward service and volunteerism, it also serves as an industry-wide celebration of our collective achievements," said NSTA President Blake Krapf.

The 2019 National School Transportation Association awards and recipients included:

Golden Merit Award: The Golden Merit Award recognizes excellence in the industry in service, safety and community responsibility. The award recipients include: Rick Klaus - National Express (Warrenville, IL), Jessica McMillion - Wilson’s Bus Service, Inc. (Millersville, MD), Rhonda McKown - National Express (Warrenville, IL), and Michael Pipenhagen - Kotkes' Bus Service, Inc. (Andover, MN).

Outstanding Driver Service Award: This award is given to school bus drivers who have demonstrated exemplary safety performance and a commitment to excellence. The 2019 recipients of this award were: Olga Quezada and Sonia Campos - Suffolk Transportation (Bay Shore, NY); and Raychole Brown - Krapf School Bus Newark, DE).

Hall of Fame Award: The Hall of Fame Award recognizes excellence in long-term efforts on behalf of the student transportation industry. The 2019 Hall of Fame inductee was Kellie Dean of Dean Transportation (Lansing, MI).

Meritorious Service Award: This award was established to recognize individuals who have displayed unparalleled vision, support, and leadership toward improving school transportation, the promotion of NSTA and the school bus industry. For 2019, NSTA honored Jennifer Hickey Bruce - CCI Consulting (Latham, NY).

Contractor of the Year Award: The Contractor of the Year Award is presented to a contractor who has demonstrated an outstanding ability in improving the operations and management of their companies. This contractor has made significant contributions to promote contracting at the national or state level. The 2019 recipient was Michael Wagner of Polar Express (Palos Heights, IL).

The Contractor of the Year Award was presented by School Bus Fleet Magazine.

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Distinguished Service Award: The Distinguished Service Award recognizes special contributions made to pupil transportation contracting. The 2019 winner for this award was Bree Allen – formerly of The Trans Group (Kingston, NY).

Thomas Built Buses, Inc. Continuing Education and Professional Growth Grant: The Thomas Built Buses - Continuing Education and Professional Growth Grant is given to a member contractor or staff member to support continuing education initiatives. The 2019 award recipient was Peggy Nieuwenhuis - Dousman Transport Co. (Dousman, WI).

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About NSTA: The National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers and suppliers for over 50 years. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.