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John Fithian, NATO President & CEO, to receive Inter-Society's Ken Mason Award

Award Recognizes Contribution to Overall Motion Picture Experience

(Los Angeles, CA, January 14, 2019) - Cinema-industry veteran John Fithian, President and CEO, National Association of Theatre Owners, has been selected as the 2020 recipient of the Ken Mason Inter-Society Award. The Ken Mason Award honors an individual who has made outstanding long-term contributions leading to the overall improvement of the motion picture experience. The announcement was made today by Paul Holliman, President, The Inter-Society for the Enhancement of Cinema Presentation, Inc. Fithian will receive the award at a ceremony held on Tuesday, January 21 at the ICTA Seminar Series LA at the Universal Hilton.

“John is one of the most respected and trusted individuals in this business,” said Holliman. “For 20 years, John has taken a leadership position in cinema technology. His steadfast guidance and proactive approach have resulted in amazing stability for an industry that has completely reinvented itself since 2005 from the standpoint of technology.”

Previous recipients include: Susie Beiersdorf, Ken Mason, Barry Reardon, Al Shapiro, Bud Stone, Ioan Allen, Curt Behlmer, Wendy Aylsworth, Mark Christiansen, Sid Ganis, and Jack Kline.

As President and CEO of NATO, Fithian has played an integral role in ushering in new technological developments in cinemas. During the early 2000s, Fithian worked with stakeholders from across the industry in support of an orderly transition to digital cinema, which included establishing technical standards, the creation of virtual print fees to pay for new equipment, and the Cinema Buying Group’s efforts to ensure independent cinemas could accomplish the transition.

The transition to digital ensured a uniform, higher standard of projection, and enabled more flexible programming abilities, live events, and alternative content.

During Fithian's tenure, NATO created its own convention. CinemaCon, now in its 10th year, is the preeminent exhibition convention in the world, dedicated to celebrating the moviegoing experience with the latest Hollywood movies, cutting edge cinema technologies, and educational seminars. CinemaCon's 10th annual edition is at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, March 30 – April 2.

In his role at NATO, Fithian facilitates biannual meetings between exhibitors, distributors and manufacturers in order to find common ground on important tech issues.

In the last year, Fithian oversaw an initiative at NATO that is focused on the development of next generation digital equipment that includes theater owners, technology manufactures and suppliers, distributors, and filmmakers.

Fithian assumed the post of President and CEO of the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) in January 2000. During his twenty years in office, Fithian has helped guide movie theater owners through recent challenges facing the exhibition industry, including movie theft, theater security, government oversight of the movie rating system, preservation of the theatrical release window, and relationships with the creative, production and distribution communities. He serves as the chief public spokesperson for theater owners before public officials and the press. Recognizing the rapid globalization of the exhibition industry, Fithian has worked to improve coordination and communication between domestic theater owners and international cinema operators. NATO represents members in 103 countries around the world.

“John has been a huge supporter of the Inter-Society and has been instrumental in moving technology and digital cinema forward, encouraging exhibitors to deliver the best moviegoing experience,” said Don Tannenbaum, chairman of the Inter-Society. “John's leadership has helped the industry successfully evolve in a fast-changing landscape. I truly admire all he has accomplished—he is so deserving of this award.”

About Inter-Society

The Inter-Society for the Enhancement of Cinema Presentation, Inc. promotes interactive dialogue and information exchange between cinema-related entities with the goal of resolving issues affecting the overall cinema presentation. Founded in 1978 by Eastman Kodak VP Ken Mason, membership is composed of its four charter trade organizations - International Cinema Technology Association (ICTA), the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) - along with over 40 member companies, made up of trade organizations, motion picture studios, exhibition companies, manufacturers, technical consultants and other industry stakeholders.