

NEWS RELEASE

Minnesota native takes home financial services lifetime achievement award

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MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Charles "Chuck" Lucius was awarded the 2023 Bo Johnson Spirit Award for Lifetime Achievement by the National Association for Fixed Annuities (NAFA). This exceptional honor recognizes individuals for the positive and lasting imprint they have made on the fixed annuity industry.

The announcement came at NAFA's 15th annual Annuity Distribution Summit in Nashville, Tenn., where Lucius was joined by a large audience of attendees and guests, many of whom have directly benefited from his innovation, leadership, and friendship throughout his tenure in the financial services industry.

Lucius, along with his wife Tami own Gradient Financial Group in Arden Hills, Minn., one of the largest financial services organizations that provides marketing, technology, and back-office support for independent financial services professionals across the country.

"The innovation and progressive ideas that Chuck has championed throughout his career are now the business model on which we all stand. He created the foundation that our business, and thousands of successful financial services professionals, have benefited from," said Nate Lucius, son of Chuck Lucius and President of Gradient Financial Group. "I couldn't be happier that my father's hard work and vision were recognized by NAFA with the 2023 Bo Johnson Spirit Award."

Lucius helped pioneer the idea of aligning the investment advisory world to the independent insurance agent business model. Lucius challenged an age-old business structure and influenced perhaps the largest change the insurance industry has ever seen. He hedged it all on a single idea that independent insurance producers can be captivating – not captive. This landmark decision set off a whirlwind of change over the course of the next 15 years

to finally create the modern financial advisor and industry norm.

Lucius' jump into the fixed annuity industry began with his first financial services job in 1975 and after a 25-year tenure he retired. In 2005, he co-founded Independent Brokerage, and later changed the name to Gradient Insurance Brokerage and formed Gradient Financial Group. Along his storied journey, he has attained the following designations: Series 7, 24, 63, 65 as well as CLU®, ChFC®, CFP® and a master's degree in financial sciences (MSFS).

In addition to his foresight for the future of the industry and his passion for building businesses, Lucius knew to have a successful business he must build the people around it. He has long been committed to training financial services professionals on the importance of a regimented process, trademarking the New Generation Retirement® system, a transformative, five-step process that incorporates fiduciary/stewardship, transparency, and technology between the financial services professional and their client. He has trained tens of thousands of financial services professionals across the country.

Former insurance industry colleague and friend Pat Foley regards Lucius as an innovator and someone he could always rely on to shake up the financial services industry. "When I needed someone to shake up the [IMO/FMO] world and do some new things, you were the first call I made." Foley went on to say, "You've done many things in your career. You've built great businesses; you've built great relationships and more importantly, you've done things for people...and so many people are beholding to you and sight you as someone who has had major impact on their career."

About Gradient Financial Group

The spirit of our operation is driven by a simple mission: Connecting you to a confident financial future. For everyone, that means something different — our business is designed to be agile enough to help you get there, no matter what your goals are. Gradient Financial Group boasts a plethora of marketing, technology and back-office support and multiple financial services companies including annuities, life insurance, investments, securities, advisory and Medicare for a wholistic view of retirement. For more information, visit www.gradientfinancialgroup.com

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