

TIME

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TIME MAGAZINE AND GOODYEAR HONOR ANOKA DEALER

Lee Carlson Wins National Recognition for Community Service and Industry Accomplishments at NADA Convention

(Orlando, FL, February 13, 2010) – Lee Carlson, Owner of Main Motor Sales Co. Inc., a Chevrolet and Cadillac dealership in Anoka, Minnesota, was honored today for his nomination for the 2010 TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award.

Carlson was one of a select group of dealers from across the country honored at the 93rd annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Convention & Exposition in Orlando today. The announcement of this year's Dealer of the Year and finalists was made by Mark Ford, President and Group Publisher of TIME Magazine, and Johann Finkelmeier, Vice President & General Manager - Original Equipment N.A. Consumer Tire, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, at the formal opening of the convention, which is attended by more than 25,000 individuals involved in the automobile industry.

The TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award is one of the automobile industry's most prestigious and highly coveted awards for new-car dealers. Recipients are among the nation's most successful auto dealers, but they must also demonstrate a long-standing commitment to effective community service.

Carlson, 75, was chosen to represent the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association in the national competition--one of only 45 automobile dealers, from 17,000 nationwide, nominated for the 41st annual award. The award is sponsored by TIME Magazine in association with Goodyear, and in cooperation with NADA. A panel of faculty members from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan selects one finalist from each of the four NADA regions and one national Dealer of the Year.

The roots of Anoka's family-run Main Motors are deep; so are Lee Carlson's. "I started pumping gas and sweeping floors at Main Motors when I was 12," says Carlson. "My dad, like most in his generation, came up the hard way. He expected the same from me."

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In 1952, Carlson graduated from Anoka High School, and then earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economics from Gustavus Adolphus College, class of 1956. “After graduating from college, I served two years in the United States Army. On Saturday, September 12, 1958, I came home,” recalls Carlson. “My dad wondered when I was coming to work. I told him in a week or so. In his typical gruff manner, he said, ‘You'd better start Monday.’” Carlson started that Monday, and has never looked back.

“In those days, we sold everything ourselves, not only the car and accessories, but the financing, collision insurance and life insurance. We also did all the paperwork,” explains Carlson who truly learned the hard way in those early days. “Anoka was a small town then...and being the owner's son, all the unhappy customers came to see me.” Learn he did, as 51 years later Lee Carlson is still doing the hard work to make customers happy: “As a working dealer, I am in the store every day. Instead of delegating all the problems to my managers, I handle many customers' questions and concerns myself.”

The Carlson family opened Main Motors in 1919 as a Chevrolet dealership when Lee's father, LeRoy Carlson, and uncle, Bert Swanson, bought a Dodge dealership in Anoka. Eventually, Lee and his brother bought out their father. And, since 1980, when he bought out his brother, Lee has been the owner/operator of this award-winning dealership that today boasts a staff with 724 years of combined service at Main Motors.

Carlson's record of distinguished community and charitable service runs as long and deep as his career in automobile sales. For decades, and in myriad capacities, he's served the Kiwanis Club of Anoka, the Anoka Chamber of Commerce, Mercy Hospital, First National Bank, United Way, the Boy Scouts, youth football, baseball and hockey, the Minneapolis Swedish Institute, Gustavus Adolphus College, the University of Minnesota, the Guthrie Theater, the Zion Lutheran Church of Anoka, and many more organizations and charities. Between 1958 and 2005, Carlson donated approximately 250 cars to four area high schools. He hosted the local auto show and swap meet for 10 years. Forty years ago, Carlson's service earned him the Jaycees' Distinguished Service Award for his contributions of time, effort and achievement to business and community.

Nominated for the TIME Magazine Dealer of the Year award by Scott Lambert, Executive Vice President of the Minnesota Automobile Dealers Association, Lee Carlson lives in Anoka with his wife, Karen. Their two sons, William and Mark, own Carlson Toyota in Coon Rapids, MN, while their elder daughter, Kristen, is raising three young children, and younger daughter Gretchen, who won the Miss America title in 1989, co-anchors the morning show, “FOX & Friends,” and is raising two small children.

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