



**Independent
Insurance**
Agents of Texas

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Pete Hamel of Houston Receives 2022 Drex Foreman Award

AUSTIN, TX – The Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) is proud to announce that Pete Hamel, founder of Hamel Insurance Agency in Houston, was named the 2022 Drex Foreman Award winner at IIAT's annual awards ceremony and business meeting. The ceremony took place on June 24, during IIAT's INSURCON, at the JW Marriot Hill Country San Antonio. Named after Drex Foreman, who served as the chief executive director of IIAT for more than 30 years, the Drex Foreman Award is the highest honor IIAT bestows annually to an individual who has contributed greatly to the independent agency system.

Hamel started in the insurance business more than 60 years ago as a second-generation insurance professional selling life insurance during the summers in college. After graduating, he began a full-time insurance career and started his own boutique agency in the early eighties.

Hamel has been an active member in the Independent Insurance Agents of Houston and IIAT. As a member of IIAH, he served on several committees and was also on the board for several years as the treasurer. For the past 30 years, Hamel served on the board of the Texas Automobile Insurance Plan Association, filling one of the two agent seats. During his tenure, TAIPA was depopulated from hundreds of thousands of policies down to a few thousand.

As a child, Pete's daughter, Mary Ellen Hamel, Senior VP of Sales at AMERISAFE, remembers going with her dad on weekends and holidays to help insureds protect their homes and businesses when tragedy hit. "We boarded up buildings, set up barrel fires to keep nursery plants from freezing - you name it. He was an agent 24/7. He didn't just sell insurance, he was their advisor and their support system in their time of need," she said.

In 2000, Hamel merged his agency, which gave him more time to do what he does best: counsel insureds on how to protect their personal and business assets. "My father has been dedicated to the industry for over 60 years. It was not until his cancer diagnosis, and the unexpected sale of his book of business this past winter, that he had to retire," said Mary Ellen Hamel. "I am glad he is now getting to spend more time at our property driving his tractor and mule. But he misses not having the day-to-day interaction, counseling his insureds and talking with his industry peers. It is who he was and will always be. It's in his blood as it is in mine," she said.

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About IIAT

The Independent Insurance Agents of Texas (IIAT) expands the value and influence of independent insurance agencies via advocacy, training, business solutions, professional networking, and market resources.

As the largest association of independent agencies in the country—representing more than 1,500 agencies that employ approximately 20,000 Texans—IIAT provides a wide range of products and resources to the insurance industry. Each year, IIAT delivers more than 250 days of education, ongoing legislative and regulatory advocacy, access to new insurance markets, customized business solutions, and answers to thousands of specific questions from across the state (and country).

Learn more online at www.iiat.org. IIAT is affiliated with the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA, the "Big I") and TrustedChoice. There are 14 local, standalone associations in Texas.

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