

INSURANCE COUNCIL OF TEXAS

service, information, and representation for the property and casualty insurance industry

Contact

Mark Hanna
(512) 326-7616

For Immediate Release

July 9, 2015

Sparks Honored with Raymond Mauk Award

Craig Sparks, non-executive Chairman of Union Standard, was presented the Raymond Mauk Leadership Award Thursday, July 9, in Austin, at the 23rd Annual Insurance Council of Texas Mid-Year Property and Casualty Symposium. Sparks becomes the eighteenth recipient of the prestigious award.

The Insurance Council of Texas (ICT) presents the Raymond Mauk Leadership Award each year at its Mid-Year Property and Casualty Insurance Symposium. It is the Council's highest honor and is intended to bestow recognition on those whose labor has made a significant difference in the business of insurance.

Sparks was recognized for his meteoric rise in the insurance industry, his many contributions to various industry organizations, as well as his success at Union Standard, a part of the W.R. Berkley Corporation, which is one of the nation's premier commercial lines and property and casualty providers.

Sparks' education and career have alternated between Arkansas and Texas. He was originally a native of Roby, Texas, but attended college in Arkansas. Upon graduation from the University of Central Arkansas, Sparks joined Floyd West & Company, a firm that specialized in wholesale insurance products for insurance agencies. He later moved to Crum and Forster, where he quickly rose through the ranks becoming Branch Manager.

Returning to Arkansas, Sparks joined Wausau as an agent where he wrote large commercial accounts. In Little Rock in 1993, Sparks landed a job at Union Standard. He started off as Branch Manager and within seven years, Sparks became President.

During Sparks' tenure as President of Union Standard, the company's commercial property casualty premium writings grew nearly 300 percent. In 2014, Sparks resigned as President but has stayed with Union Standard as the Non-Executive Chairman.

Sparks is a past chairman of the Insurance Council of Texas and former president of the Association of Fire and Casualty Companies in Texas (AFACT). He has also served on the National Alliance's CIC Board of Governors and was founding chairman of the Texas Committee on Insurance Fraud. He currently serves on ICT's Education Foundation.

Albert Betts, Executive Director of ICT, commented, "I have worked closely with Craig during his time with ICT, ICT Education Foundation, and AFACT boards. He has always been someone who is



willing to lend his time and knowledge to help others and to promote the property and casualty industry. We are happy to recognize Craig with this award.”

About the Award

The Raymond Mauk Award honors former Texas Fire Commissioner Raymond Mauk and annually recognizes someone who has made a notable contribution to the Texas property and casualty insurance industry.

Mauk enjoyed a long and distinguished career and held many positions of leadership within his company and industry organizations.

More than 70 years ago, Commissioner Mauk was convinced that fundamental change was needed to protect the insurance buying public and the integrity of the marketplace from the misapplication of rates and forms.

To accomplish his goal, Mauk envisioned the creation of a central checking office that would enforce good business practices and audit the insurance industry’s paperwork for errors and competitive greed. Faced with opposition and a resistance to change, Mauk labored for two years to build support from both agents and companies.

By February 1935, Mauk’s leadership had led to the successful establishment of the Texas Insurance Checking Office, an institution, which continues to serve the Texas industry today.

The Insurance Council of Texas is the largest state insurance trade association in the country consisting of approximately 500 property and casualty insurers writing business in Texas.

###