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## **2017 UTAH INTERNATIONAL AUTO EXPO INDUCTS LOCAL INDUSTRY LEGENDS INTO HALL OF FAME**

**SANDY, Utah** – (January 5, 2017) – The New Car Dealers of Utah will induct two local industry legends into the Hall of Fame, at the 2017 Utah International Auto Expo, taking place Friday, January 13 through Monday, January 16 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day). Mike Spence and Craig Christensen are the 2017 inductees for their years of service and dedication to the auto industry and community, in Utah.

**Michael William Spence** was born August 7, 1956 in Salt Lake City to Carol Jean Spence and Charles Olmstead Spence. Mike grew up in the Sugarhouse area and attended Highland High School. He married his sweetheart and "soulmate", Michelle Sprunt, in the Salt Lake LDS Temple on March 14, 1980. He loved spending quiet evenings with her talking or watching their favorite shows. They have three children, and three grandchildren.

Mike served in numerous capacities for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served a mission to the Southern States in Georgia, and served in several bishoprics, including as Bishop of the Willowcreek 6th Ward. Mike loved the people he served.

Mike served on the board of directors and the executive committee of Friends for Sight, was a member of the Utah chapter of Certified Commercial Investment Members and a finalist for the CCIM Real Estate Attorney of the Year.

He earned a B.S. degree in Business Finance from the University of Utah in 1982 and a law degree, from the University of Utah in 1985. Mike began his legal career with the law firm of Scalley & Reading where he served as the firm's managing partner. Mike fulfilled the pinnacle of his legal career with the law firm of Ray Quinney & Nebeker P.C. Serving as Chairman of the firm's Automobile Dealer Law Practice Group.

Mike was known as a leading expert throughout the intermountain west and across the country as an "Automobile Dealer Lawyer." A colleague in the legal profession described Mike as "a skilled, honorable and aggressive counselor and advocate who served his clients and our profession very well."

He was named as one of *The Best Lawyers in America* in Corporate Law, and was repeatedly voted by his peers throughout the State of Utah as one of Utah's "Legal Elite," as published in *Utah Business Magazine*. Mike changed the lives of others for the better.

Mike passed away too soon on May 22, 2016, at the age of 59, from complications due to Acute Interstitial Pneumonia. A Mark Twain quote exemplifies Mike's style - "Life is short, break the rules. Forgive quickly, kiss slowly. Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably and never regret anything that makes you smile."

The New Car Dealers of Utah will also induct **Craig C. Christensen**. Craig began his work career at age 10 as a paperboy for the Contra Costa Times in California. By age 14, he started his own cleaning business, enlisting the help of his older brother to drive him to his clients after business hours. Craig attended Brigham Young University on a football scholarship and graduated with a degree in accounting and received his MBA degree from the University of Washington.

Craig always wanted to own his own business so he and his wife, Debbie, committed to live on one half of his take home pay for the first ten years of marriage. After several business consulting and operational successes, Craig was hired by Rick Warner to work in his family-owned automobile business. Craig served as president of R. L. Warner Enterprises for several years.

In 1990, eight years into his savings plan, Craig purchased the Chevrolet-Buick dealership in Provo, Utah. Over the next several years, he acquired six additional dealerships in Utah and Nevada. He also developed several large real estate projects and invested in various other business ventures.

Besides being very active in the community and in his church, Craig served on the National Dealer Council for Chevrolet Division as well as on several industries related committees and boards. He has received several honors and awards, including the 2000 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award, the 2001 Provo-Orem Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year, and the 2003 Time Magazine Quality Dealer of the Year Award for Utah. Over the years, he has been a visiting instructor of business and religion courses at several universities, including Brigham Young University.

In 1995, Craig was called to serve as a mission president for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mexico City, and in 2002 as one of the Church's general authorities. In 2007 he decided to sell his business interests and concentrate his full-time efforts on his service in the Church.

Craig is married to the former Debbie Bliss Jones and together they have four children and ten grandchildren. Given their Church service, they have traveled extensively and continue to enjoy meeting and serving people throughout the world.

Both Mike and Craig will be honored at the 2017 Hall of Fame ceremony set to take place Friday, January 13, at 9 a.m. The

Utah International Auto Expo will be open to the public Friday, January 13 through Monday, January 16, at the South Towne Expo Center, located at 9575 South State Street, in Sandy. Expo hours are Friday, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Monday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens (62 and older), military (w/any DOD ID) and children 7-12. Attendees can sign up for a FREE one-year subscription to *Motor Trend*, courtesy of the New Car Dealers of Utah. Advance sale discount E-tickets can be purchased online at [www.AutoExpoUtah.com](http://www.AutoExpoUtah.com).



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