



**For Immediate Release**

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**National School Transportation Association Announces 2021 Industry Award Winners**

**Milwaukee, WI** - The National School Transportation Association (NSTA) recognized excellence in the private school transportation industry on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at the organization’s Awards and Installation Dinner. The dinner was held as part of the NTSA Annual Meeting and Convention at The Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee. The honorees represent all facets of private school transportation, and they were honored for their continued excellence in supporting industry efforts.

"I want to express my appreciation for the fine work done by these award winners. As you know, each of them has made great contributions in the field of student transportation. Unfortunately, last year we did not have the opportunity to come together as an industry to celebrate our achievements, so I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to meet in person and distribute these awards this year," said outgoing NSTA President John Benish, Jr.

The 2021 National School Transportation Association awards and recipients include:

**Golden Merit Awards:** The Golden Merit Award recognizes excellence in the industry in service, safety and community responsibility, and the organization gave out a record number of Golden Merit Awards at this year’s Awards and Installation Dinner. The award recipients include Christopher Angell (Kobussen Buses), Fred Doelker (Dean Transportation), Ray Fattore (First Student), Janine (Jan) Hilliard (National Express), Robert Krueger (Dousman Transport), Sean McCabe (First Student), Connie Miller (First Student), DeAnne Montella (Cook-Illinois Corp.), Denise Quezada (Diaz) (Cook-Illinois Corp.), Bill Roche (First Student), Michelle Simon (National Express), and Tony Vidrine (First Student).

**Outstanding Driver Service Award:** This honor is awarded to school bus driver(s) who have demonstrated exemplary safety performance and a commitment to excellence. The 2021 recipient of this award was Tami Rice of First Student.

**NSTA Hall of Fame:** Induction into the NSTA Hall of Fame recognizes excellence in long-term efforts on behalf of the student transportation industry. The 2021 NSTA Hall of Fame inductee was Blake Krapf of Krapf School Bus (West Chester, PA).

**Distinguished Service Award:** The Distinguished Service Award recognizes special contributions made to pupil transportation contracting. The 2021 winner for this award is Rob Nelson – formerly of Dousman Transport (Dousman, WI).

**Thomas Built Buses, Inc. Continuing Education and Professional Growth Grant:** The Thomas Built Buses - Continuing Education and Professional Growth Grant is given to a member contractor or staff member to support continuing education initiatives. The 2021 grant recipient is Technician-in-Charge Shane Lally of First Student.

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**About NSTA:** The National School Transportation Association has been the voice of private school bus contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers since 1964. The association provides school transportation professionals with the tools and resources they need to make school buses safe, affordable, and efficient nationwide.