

Wisconsin Broadcasters Association

The Wisconsin Broadcasters Association fosters and promotes the development of the arts of aural and visual broadcastings in all its forms...



News Release

Thompson awarded first WBA Distinguished Service Award

Former governor to be honored Jan. 30

Nov. 27, 2018
For Immediate Release

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Madison, Wis. – Former Wisconsin Governor and U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson will receive the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association's first Distinguished Service Award.

The award was established to recognize those who “reflect the values embodied in the Wisconsin broadcast industry of promoting economic vitality, engagement in civic affairs, advocacy for the First Amendment and dissemination of community information and community service, and support of diversity and a better Wisconsin.”

Thompson was nominated by Nicolet Broadcasting President and CEO and former WBA Board Chair Roger Utnehmer who praised Thompson for his accessibility.

“His media-friendly persona is reflected in his openness, directly answering questions from the media, his respect for open records and open meetings, understanding and respect for the role of the media in what can often become an antagonistic relationship and always doing so with good humor and kindness,” Utnehmer wrote.

Former WBA President John Laabs was head of the organization during Thompson's tenure as governor. Laabs credits Thompson with being an instrumental figure in the creation of the WBA's Non-Commercial Sustaining Announcement/Public Education Program (NCSA/PEP) which promotes public education campaigns while supporting the WBA financially.

“Thompson recognized the statewide nature of our association and played an important role in making NCSA/PEP possible,” Laabs said. “For that, I am grateful.”

Laabs said Thompson was also willing to speak to WBA members and did so on numerous occasions. He describes Thompson as “always a friend.”

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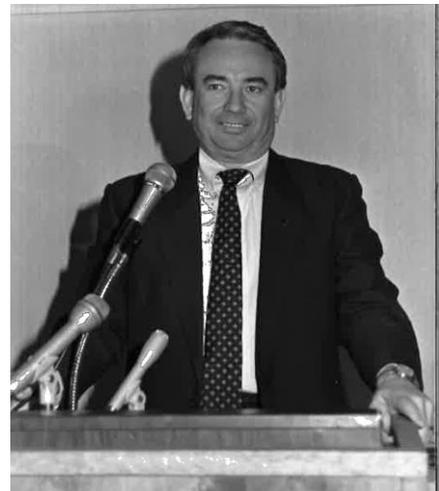
Laabs said Thompson comes from a broken mold and both Laabs and Utneher credit the former governor for his ability to bring the parties together.

“Thompson left a legacy of leadership that governors of both parties would be wise to emulate,” Utneher said. “He led by educating people on the importance and value of government. His bi-partisan cabinet appointments brought people together.”

Thompson will be recognized with the award at a luncheon on Jan. 30 at the Madison Concourse Hotel during the WBA Winter Conference.

“I’ve always been a proud supporter of Wisconsin’s radio and TV stations for the work they do in their local communities, doing their part in making Wisconsin a great place to live,” Thompson said. “I’m humbled to receive this award and I’m grateful to all the broadcasters who I’ve worked with over the years.”

Any members of the media interested in attending the event should contact Kyle Geissler at kgeissler@wi-broadcasters.org or 608-255-2600.



Thompson speaking to WBA members
as Governor in 1989

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