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## SONIC Presents Awards to Top Franchisees at 2017 National Convention

*Gary Kinslow, SONIC Franchisee, wins the restaurant chain's most prestigious award*

OKLAHOMA CITY--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [SONIC® Drive-In](http://www.sonics.com) (NASDAQ: SONC), the nation's largest chain of drive-in restaurants, presented ten awards to franchisees and operators at the 2017 SONIC National Convention in Denver, Colo. Every year, SONIC recognizes exemplary individuals and franchise groups to honor those who have a proven track record of strong leadership skills and led the brand.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:  
<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171006005648/en/>



### Troy Smith Hall of Fame: Gary Kinslow

Named after SONIC's founder, induction into the Troy Smith Hall of Fame is SONIC's most prestigious award, given to a franchisee who has worked with SONIC for a notable amount of time while making a significant contribution to the brand in terms of leadership, growth and positive influence. This year, SONIC presented the Troy Smith Hall of Fame Award to Gary Kinslow, second generation SONIC franchisee and leader of Kinslow SONIC Group. Based in Prague, Okla., Kinslow SONIC Group owns and operates 40 SONIC Drive-Ins in Oklahoma, Texas and Mississippi. In 1969, Kinslow started his career at SONIC as a cook for his father when he was just 14 years old. Now, Kinslow leads his team to provide guests with a remarkable SONIC experience every day.

Gary Kinslow accepting Troy Smith Award at 2017 SONIC National Convention  
(Photo: Business Wire)

entire life and has vast knowledge of the brand," said Clifford Hudson, Sonic Corp. CEO. "He truly captures the spirit of Troy Smith and the inspiring entrepreneurial spirit of SONIC's founder."

"Gary has lived and breathed SONIC his

### Chain Leader Award: Steve Gonzalez

The SONIC Chain Leader Award was presented to Steve Gonzalez, director of the Warren Group in recognition of his success in exerting both leadership skills and a positive influence on his organization and the SONIC brand. Based in Lubbock, Texas, and operating 24 drive-ins, Gonzalez focuses on retaining good people and building a solid infrastructure through his strong leadership.

### Turnaround Operator Award: Norm Kaufman

Norm Kaufman, SONIC franchisee and leader of Brand Ventures, LLC was presented with the SONIC Turnaround Operator Award. This award honors an individual or group responsible for turning around operations, sales and profit performance of one or more SONIC Drive-Ins. Based in St. Louis, Mo., Kaufman focused on two areas: guest service and people development. The group has built strong, long-lasting relationships with their employees, demonstrating Kaufman's belief that developing great people can help turnaround any aspect of business.

## **Great People Award: Buddy McClain**

SONIC presented Buddy McClain, franchisee and leader of McClain, Vaughn and Partners franchise group, with the SONIC Great People Award. This award is given to an individual or group who has made the recruitment, training, development and retention of people a top priority and strategy for growth. Based in Jackson, Miss., McClain developed an innovative management program and is reaping rewards in his 100 drive-in locations across Mississippi, Texas and Florida.

## **Operational Excellence Awards: Eddie Frey and Jeff Simmons**

The SONIC Operational Excellence Award was presented to Eddie Frey, operating partner for the D.L. Rogers Group, and to Jeff Simmons, general manager for the Jimmy Hodges franchise group. This honor is awarded to individuals responsible for supervision of less than five drive-ins with a proven track record of upgrading talent and growing sales and profits. Based in Elizabeth City, N.C., Frey started his career with SONIC as a manager trainee in 2003, and worked his way up to operating partner at three drive-ins located in Hartsville, S.C., Fayetteville, N.C., and Elizabeth City, N.C. Simmons, based in Mandeville, La., started his career with SONIC in 2011 in the kitchen and is now a general manager. Both Frey and Simmons make it a priority to attract guests, build loyalty and make a positive difference in their local communities.

## **Multi-Unit Leader Awards: Justin Chandler and Dora Simonds**

Justin Chandler, director of operations for MHR Group, and Dora Simonds, director of operations for the Rubyhill Group are recipients of the Multi-Unit Leader Award. This honor is awarded to individuals responsible for supervising more than five drive-ins with a proven track record of upgrading talent, delivering outstanding guest service and growing financial performance of their drive-ins. Based in Dallas, Texas, Chandler oversees 16 drive-ins in the MHR Group and is known for his leadership and drive to constantly look for ways to improve in every aspect of the business, from people development to achieving great results. Simonds is the director of operations for 11 drive-ins in the Rubyhill Group across Denver, Colo. In 2000, Simonds started her career at SONIC as a cook and has grown to become a strong leader with a proven track record of developing talent while growing sales and profits.

## **Newcomer Award: Cinos, LLC**

The Newcomer Award was presented to Cinos, LLC located on Long Island, N.Y. Cinos, LLC owns and operates three SONIC Drive-Ins in the state of New York. This award is given to an individual or franchise group new to the SONIC brand who delivers the SONIC promise to guests every day while achieving strong sales and profits.

## **Mason Development Award: Mason, Harrison, Ratliff, LLC (MHR)**

The Mason Development Award was presented to MHR, a SONIC franchise group led by partners Ralph Mason, Chuck Harrison and Reeder Ratliff, who own and operate 288 drive-ins across 13 states with their partners. MHR has made outstanding contributions to the development of new drive-ins as we remodeled, rebuilt and relocated existing drive-ins. Based in Oklahoma City, Okla., and founded in 1974, MHR is one of SONIC's largest franchise groups and credits its longtime success to their partners and operators, some of whom have been with the group for more than 30 years.

## **About SONIC<sup>®</sup>, America's Drive-In<sup>®</sup>**

SONIC, America's Drive-In is the nation's largest drive-in restaurant chain serving approximately 3 million customers every day. Nearly 94 percent of SONIC's 3,500 drive-in locations are owned and operated by local business men and women. For 64 years, SONIC has delighted guests with signature menu items, 1.3 million drink combinations and friendly service by iconic Carhops. Since the 2009 launch of SONIC's Limeades for Learning philanthropic campaign in partnership with DonorsChoose.org, SONIC has donated \$8.5 million to public school teachers nationwide to fund essential learning materials and innovative teaching resources to inspire creativity and learning in today's youth. To learn more about Sonic Corp. (NASDAQ/NM: SONC), please visit [sonicdrivein.com](http://sonicdrivein.com) and please visit or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). To learn more about SONIC's Limeades for Learning initiative, please visit [LimeadesforLearning.com](http://LimeadesforLearning.com).

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