

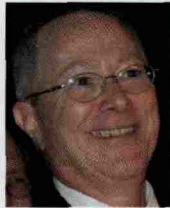
# Fishels and Williams All Seasons win top honors in 50th annual Apollo Awards

By Kristine Ellis

THE CASUAL furnishings industry honored its leading retailers at the 50th annual Apollo Awards, held at Chicago's Union Station during the International Casual Furniture & Accessories Market.

Portland, Ore.-based Fishels won the multi-store category award. Owner and President Larry Talbot accepted the award and turned attention to fellow casual furniture retailers who may have never been nominated.

"I am truly honored to be up here," Talbot said, acknowledging the support of the other nominees as well as "the vast sea of other retailers out there who all contribute so much to the industry."



Talbot

Mark Gorr gave a brief history of Fishels, describing why the retailer ranks among the industry leaders. "They are selling fun," Gorr said. "The fun begins when customers walk in the door and then continues for years."

Williams All Seasons in Highland Park, Ill., was named winner of the single store category – 50 years after winning the very first Apollo Award.

The strength of the Chicagoland retailer through the years has been its willingness to change, Paul Geiseman said in his overview. "Williams All Seasons is a model of the changes that have to take place for retailers to survive," he said.

This year, selection for the Apollo Awards began with nominations from International Casual Furnishings Association members. Winners are selected from hundreds of retailers throughout the country. The top five finalists in the two



William's All Seasons staff accept award from Dudley Flanders.

categories – single store and multi-store – were then selected by a vote of ICFA manufacturer/importer members. After the top five stores in each category had been selected, the ICFA Board of Directors submitted votes online to name an Apollo Award winner in each category.

In addition to the Apollo Awards, designer Richard Frinier and retired Laneventure President Art Thompson were honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Presented by the ICFA, the awards are reserved for individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the casual furnishings industry and to their communities.

The accolades flowed freely in honor of Frinier, the visionary, perfectionist yet humble designer, who has become the quintessential ambassador of the casual living industry. As he thanked the crowd, Frinier expressed his belief that although the industry is in the midst of major changes, the best is yet to come.

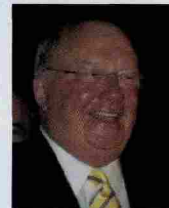


Frinier

"When I decided to design outdoor furniture for a living, I didn't know it would become my life and that you would

become my extended family," he said.

Thompson was also honored for his years of leadership in the outdoor furniture industry. Known for his love of storytelling and "Art-isms," Thompson mentored many of today's leading retailers.



Thompson

"The greatest lesson he taught me was that your business is your stage and presentation is everything," said Gary Ecoff, president of Carls Patio. "This isn't about selling a commodity. It is about getting people to participate in your show."

Thompson said, "Two of the things I've been consumed with since retiring are how impeccable my timing was and how much our industry has changed during this period." He thanked the industry from the bottom of his heart and said he felt particularly thrilled to receive his award in the midst of a market with "a pumped up attitude."

The next Casual Market is set for Sept. 21-24, 2010 at The Merchandise Mart.

For more information about the Market, call 800-677-6278 (MART) or visit [www.casualmarket.com](http://www.casualmarket.com).

