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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WSWA Celebrates the Life of Industry Leader Ed Callison Jr.

*Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America announces Ed Callison Jr.
as the 2023 Lifetime Leadership Award (Posthumous)*

WASHINGTON, D.C., 02/23/2023 – Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) today announced that Ed Callison, Jr. will posthumously receive the 2023 Lifetime Leadership Award at Access LIVE in April. The WSWA Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes industry professionals who, during their lifetime, have made significant and lasting industry contributions that have led to the most successful alcohol marketplace the world has ever seen.

“Ed was one-of-a-kind and always placed service to his family and community above all else, kind to those of us who were fortunate enough to call him a friend,” said WSWA Chairman Tom Cole. “This award honors his contributions to the industry and the generation of new leaders he has inspired.”

“Ed Callison was a consummate professional, an inspirational leader, a gentleman, and a very good friend. You cannot put into words the positive impact Ed Callison had on the wine and spirits industry, an impact that spanned multiple generations. While Ed will be missed, his legacy will always be with us.” said W. Rockwell “Rocky” Wirtz, Co-Chairman, Breakthru Beverage Group.

The Callison Family was an original WSWA member dating back to the association’s founding in 1943 with Ed’s Grandfather, Olin Callison, serving as the association’s Treasurer during its initial years of operation in the mid and late 1940s.

Ed joined the family business as Vice President of Sales at Callison Wholesale Liquor Company, after receiving his MBA from Washington University in St. Louis in 1982. He served in that role for 15 years, helping to grow the company’s footprint to cover the lower 40% of Illinois before partnering with the Wirtz family to form Callison Distributing, LLC (now Breakthru Belleville) in 1997 in his hometown of Belleville, Illinois. While continuing to serve as the managing partner of the joint venture, Ed also served as the Executive Vice President of Mergers and Acquisitions for Wirtz Beverage and Breakthru Beverage in Chicago until his death.

In 2018, Ed, along with the rest of the Callison Family, was honored with the Belleville Commitment to Community Award for the outstanding service and dedication their family showed the Belleville community including work with the Women’s Crisis Center, Memorial Hospital, First United Presbyterian Church, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Signal Hill Grade School.

Callison served an active role at WSWA, serving on the Board of Directors from 2009-2011 and held other executive advisory roles that helped the Association better serve its members, including:

- Finance & Audit Committee 2006 - 2022
- Finance & Audit Committee Chairman 2009 – 2011
- Government Affairs Committee 2013 - 2021
- Strategic Investments Task Force 2021 - 2022

“Working for and with my father was one of the greatest joys in my life. Dad truly loved the wine and spirits industry and he put a great deal of passion and dedication towards any endeavor he undertook,” said Hamilton Callison, Ed’s son. “He taught me the value of long-term relationships built on trust and the importance of leading by example. I am truly honored that WSWA has selected Dad for the 2023 Lifetime Leadership Award. I know he would have been humbled and grateful to receive this recognition given how much he cared about this association and how much he believed in the good work that WSWA achieves on a daily basis.”

About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

To learn more, please visit www.wswa.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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