



Launching The Gary McCraw Excellence Award

The 2026 #NADACONNECT Conference was a landmark event, not only for its record-breaking attendance but also for a deeply significant moment of industry recognition. Amidst discussions on AI and market evolution, the conference dedicated a special moment to honour one of the cornerstones of automotive retail sector by presenting the inaugural Excellence Award to retired NADA National Director, Gary McCraw.

In a moving tribute to his decades of service, it was announced that this accolade will officially be named The Gary McCraw Excellence Award. This decision ensures that Gary's name remains a permanent benchmark and inspiration for the next generation of automotive leaders.

Four Decades of Dedication

McCraw's career in the automotive retail and aftermarket sectors has spanned more than 40 years. He held the position of NADA National Director for 38 years, providing strategic vision through decades of industry transformation before handing the baton to his successor.

This latest honour follows a collection of accolades McCraw has received, including a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Automotive Remanufacturers' Association (ARA) and the South African Vehicle and Bodybuilders' Association (SAVABA) in 2024, and similar recognition by NADA in 2019.

A Standing Ovation for an Industry Icon

"The standing ovation Gary received at #NADACONNECT was a testament to his unwavering commitment and unmatched passion for our industry," said NADA Chairperson Brandon Cohen. *"His work has profoundly shaped the landscape of the sector, establishing a legacy of professionalism and leadership that we are privileged to carry forward."*

Cohen added: *"It is only fitting that the very first NADA Excellence Award is presented to Gary. Naming the award in his honour is a permanent ode to his institutional knowledge, expertise, and the countless hours he spent mentoring those around him. He is a true captain of industry."*



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