**W. Dalton Dietrich, Tom Sage 2015 RCI Award Winners**

TAMPA, FL – The Association of Racing Commissioners International (RCI) is pleased to announce that noted spinal cord injury researcher W. Dalton Dietrich, Ph.D. and racing regulator Tom Sage were the recipients of the organization’s top awards that were bestowed at the 81st Annual RCI Conference on Racing and Wagering Integrity, held last week at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Tampa, Florida.

Dr. Dietrich was named the winner of the 2015 William H. May Award, which is given annually to an individual or group that has provided “meritorious service” to the racing industry, to honor his work with The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, a Center of Excellence at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. The program is dedicated to developing and testing new treatments for people living with paralysis, and has worked very closely with several Thoroughbred racing jockeys who have suffered catastrophic spinal cord injuries while competing. Among those jockeys include Michael Straight, Rene Douglas, Gary Donahue, and exercise rider and assistant trainer Robin Cleary, who since her injury has raised over $1 million for The Miami Project.

“The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis was established in 1985 to promote a new type of research today called regenerative medicine. Currently, over 200 dedicated individuals are helping to obtain the knowledge required to achieve the goals of the mission. We thank our supporters for helping us move our programs across the finish line,” said Dr. Dietrich, who was unable to attend the ceremony. Receiving the award in his place was Terry Meyocks, National Manager for The Jockeys’ Guild.

The 2015 Len Foote Award was given to Tom Sage, Executive Director of the Nebraska State Racing Commission. The award is named in honor of the late Len Foote, longtime Executive Director of the California Horse Racing Board, and is considered the highest distinction for racing officials in North America.

The award was presented by John F. Wayne, the Executive Director of the Delaware Thoroughbred Racing Commission, who spoke highly of the work that Sage has done over the years with RCI as well as the Organization of Racing Investigators (ORI).

In Sage’s remarks, he noted that while he is considered one of the younger Executive Directors to be named the Len Foote Award recipient, he is very proud of the work that he has done in Nebraska as well as nationally through RCI and the ORI.

RCI President Ed Martin also issued Certificates of Exemplary Service to Charles Gardiner, Executive Director of the Louisiana State Racing Commission, to Ralph “Chip” Kemnitz, Chairman of the South Dakota Commission on Gaming, and to the late Kirk Breed, Executive Director of the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB). Accepting on behalf of Breed’s family was current CHRB Executive Director Rick Baedeker.

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