

October Research announces industry award winners

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By: **Andrea Golby**

October Research, LLC, publisher of *The Title Report*, *The Legal Description*, *Valuation Review*, *RESPA News* and *Dodd Frank Update*, today announced the winners in its annual awards program, launched to honor men and women in the mortgage and settlement services industries for exemplary accomplishment in the areas of leadership, innovation and philanthropy.

Announced during the 10th Annual National Settlement Services Summit in New Orleans, the leadership award was given to **John Hollenbeck**, executive vice president and business director of First American Title Insurance Co. The award for innovation went to **Tim Armbruster**, chief technology officer and senior vice president of Products and Product Strategy of Woodfinn. The award for philanthropy went to **Kent Stewart**, founder and chief executive officer of Reli Settlement Solutions.

The awards were presented by **Erica Meyer**, chief executive officer and publisher of October Research, LLC.

"It was an honor to present the awards to such accomplished and dedicated individuals," Meyer said. "This awards program provides us with a valuable reminder of the tremendous character and dedication of the people in our industry."

2014 Leadership Award

John Hollenbeck has worked in the title insurance industry for 34 years. He has become an expert in a variety of title-related areas and has used this expertise to give back to the industry. His most recent and greatly substantive contribution has been his tireless work as one of the key contributors in the group that helped to develop the American Land Title Association's Best Practices, a program designed to help title professionals best meet the needs of the end consumer.

"Thank you very much for the award and recognition," Hollenbeck said. "I appreciate October Research, and its contributions to our industry. It's through effective communication that settlement agents everywhere will acquire the information they need to thrive in a rapidly changing environment."

Hollenbeck has been a title searcher, relief title officer, assistant production supervisor, searching supervisor, advising title officer, underwriter, chief information officer and executive vice president of

corporate technology, among other roles. This experience, both hands on and managerial, has given him a base of knowledge of which he shares with First American employees through formal training sessions and through his blog postings. He has committed untold hours in volunteer positions with national and regional industry groups and travels frequently throughout the United States to speak with title agents about topics that greatly impact their business practices.

He has been quoted as "one of the most important voices in the title industry."

2014 Innovation Award

Tim Armbruster serves as chief technology officer and senior vice president of products and product strategy of Woodfinn. He is responsible for the strategic direction and implementation of Woodfinn's products and technology, which include appraisal management systems.

"I'm very honored to receive this award, considering the many innovative leaders we have in the mortgage technology space," Armbruster said. "Closing Corp. had a huge hand in this award, in providing an innovative culture, as well as being a great implementation team."

Armbruster has delivered strategic technology initiatives within the real estate and mortgage industries for more than a decade, as well as managed technology infrastructure and large software development teams at several prominent companies.

For eight years, he worked for ClosingCorp, a provider of closing cost data. While there, he was instrumental in developing the SmartGFE service. This innovative service instantaneously provides reliable cost data lenders need for any loan type, eliminating arduous manual processes and reducing the time it takes to compile Good Faith Estimates from hours down to seconds. It is also backed by a RESPA-compliance guarantee and is configured to each lender's unique rules and preferred service providers. Armbruster has also served as the director of software development for First American Corp., where he built and managed large software development teams, both on and offshore, and was responsible for the architecture of the company's strategic web services and websites.

2014 Philanthropy Award

Kent Stewart is the founder and chief executive officer of Reli Settlement Solutions, a title insurance and real estate closing firm headquartered in Birmingham, Ala. He is also the founder and managing partner of the law firm of Stewart & Associates.

Stewart was recognized for his community volunteerism, support of dozens of worthy causes and determination to offer relief anywhere it's needed.

"I would like to thank October Research for naming me the recipient of the 2014 Philanthropy Award," Stewart said. "I share this tremendous honor with my wife, Julie, who co-founded the Seven Summits Foundation with me along with my entire team at Reli Settlement Solutions."

Stewart is the founder of The Birmingham Golf Foundation, which for seven years has raised more than

\$1 million for a local home for abused boys and girls. He is also the founder of The Seven Summits Foundation. This non-profit organization supports a primary school in Marangu, Tanzania. Stewart and his wife met a teacher at the school in 2006 and saw a tremendous need there. In addition to helping with school supplies, the Foundation recently built a library at the school. Stewart is currently in the process of completing his climb of the Seven Summits, which includes the highest mountain on all seven continents. After climbing Mount Everest this year, he plans to publish a book, in which all the proceeds will go to the Seven Summits Foundation.

Stewart and his wife have supported dozens of other worthy charities both locally and internationally and are contributing members of the United Way in Alabama. Stewart and his staff at Reli have contributed to their local community as well by providing and serving meals at homeless shelters and spearheading coat drives.

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