

Graham Eubank Named South Carolina's 2019 TIME Dealer of the Year



Graham Eubank is one of a select group of 51 Dealer nominees from across the country who will be honored at the 102nd annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Show in San Francisco on January 25, 2019. The announcement of this year's 50th annual award was made by Jorg Stratmann, publisher, TIME, and Doug Timmerman, president of Auto Finance for Ally Financial.

The TIME Dealer of the Year award is one of the automobile industry's most prestigious and highly coveted honors. Recipients are among the nation's most successful auto Dealers who also demonstrate a long-standing commitment to community service.

Eubank, 51, was chosen to represent the South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association in the national competition – one of only 51 auto Dealers nominated for the 50th annual award from more than 16,000 nationwide.

“One of the most rewarding aspects of my retail automotive career – and where I feel I have made an impact – is being able to offer an opportunity to our 120 employees at Palmetto Ford and providing them with a great place to work and to learn this great business,” nominee Eubank said of the Dealership founded by his father, G. Manly Eubank, in 1969.

A 1986 graduate of the Asheville School in Asheville, North Carolina, Eubank earned a B.S. in business management from Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, in 1990, where he was a member of Kappa Alpha Order. After graduation, he started full-time in the family business.

“After college many of my friends were headed out west to ‘find themselves’ and try and figure out their next step in the real world,” he remembered. “When I suggested that scenario to my dad, he laughed and said, ‘I’ll see you at the Dealership this Monday. Be ready to start selling.’”

Eubank credits his father, Manly, who passed away last year, with setting the stage for his success. “My dad set a high standard in our business and had a tremendous work ethic,” he said. “We carry on his legacy every day, and we always want to do right by him and treat our employees and customers with the utmost respect.”

He also values the training he experienced at the NADA Academy in 1993. “This gave me a great foundation for how each one of the departments in a car Dealership operates and works with the other departments,” Eubank said. “From washing cars as a lot attendant to now Dealer, I have held every position in our Dealership.” Today, his sister, Burnam Eubank, is part owner with him and is active in the store.

He added, “I think our main focus has always been to create a culture that distinguishes Palmetto Ford as a great place to work, but we are also committed to our many philanthropic endeavors in the Charleston community.”

One such group is Star Gospel Mission, for which Eubank serves on the board. The mission has served the homeless and needy in the community since 1904 by providing transitional housing for homeless men and other services to those in need. “The Star Gospel Mission offers a second chance, a new lease on life, a fresh beginning – in a wonderful, safe, clean environment in which homeless men can effectively assimilate back into society in a productive way,” he said. “It’s very rewarding to see these men get back on their feet.”

Eubank also partners with the Disabilities Board of Charleston County to provide work at Palmetto Ford for individuals in their programs. “We have participated in this important initiative for 20 years and find it very worthwhile,” he said.

In addition, Eubank has lent his time and talent to Leadership Charleston (cultivates local leaders for tomorrow); Rotary Club of Charleston (Paul Harris Fellow); Barrier Islands Free Medical Clinic (Johns Island, South Carolina); South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series; and the Boy Scouts of America. Eubank also has enjoyed coaching youth sports.

“For 50 years, Palmetto Ford has been a mainstay and symbol of trust in our community,” he said. “Hundreds of people have come through our Dealership as employees – many have worked here for more than 25 years. It is very rewarding that we have been able to make an impact in their lives.”

Dealers are nominated by the executives of state and metro Dealer associations around the country. The award is sponsored by TIME in association with Ally Financial, and in cooperation with NADA. A panel of faculty members from the Tauber Institute for Global Operations at the University of Michigan will select one finalist from each of the four NADA regions and one

national Dealer of the Year. Three finalists will receive an additional \$5,000 for their favorite charities and the winner will receive an additional \$10,000 to give to charity.

In its eighth year as exclusive sponsor, Ally will recognize Dealer nominees and their community efforts by contributing \$1,000 to each nominee's 501(c)3 charity of choice. Nominees will also be recognized on **AllyDealerHeroes.com**, which highlights the philanthropic contributions and achievements of TIME Dealer of the Year nominees.

"It's an incredible honor to recognize these Dealers for their business accomplishments and their unwavering commitment to 'Do It Right' by helping others in their communities," Timmerman said. "They are extraordinary auto leaders who care and go the extra mile to give of themselves to make their communities stronger. Ally is proud to support and celebrate their achievements."

Eubank and his wife, Becky, have two children, Terrill (21), and Gray (19). Eubank was nominated for the TIME Dealer of the Year award by E. Sims Floyd Jr., Executive Vice President of the South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association.