



## **BILL SMITH RECEIVES CLIA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

### **Virtuoso® Vice President Recognized for His Significant Contribution to the Cruise Industry**

**NEW YORK (June 3, 2016)** – Virtuoso’s vice president of cruise sales is one of the newest inductees into the Cruise Lines International Association’s (CLIA) Cruise Industry Hall of Fame. Bill Smith, a 44-year industry veteran, was presented with the CLIA Lifetime Achievement Award on June 2 during the organization’s Cruise360 conference in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual from the cruise industry who advocates for cruise travel and has made remarkable positive contributions to the industry. CLIA members and committee leaders nominated and voted on winners earlier this year.

“Bill has been an invaluable part of our community and CLIA is honored to present him with the Lifetime Achievement Award,” said Cindy D’Aoust, president and CEO, CLIA. “He now sits among a list of distinguished leaders and represents the best of the best of CLIA cruise industry leaders.”

“I am tremendously excited to join the incredible community of outstanding colleagues who have won this award in the past,” Smith said. “I’m deeply appreciative and humbled to receive this recognition from the industry I truly love. It has been so rewarding to see cruising’s immense popularity continue to grow during my years in the business, with increasing numbers of people choosing to cruise, be it ocean, river or expedition, and having them return again and again because of the enjoyment they get from the experience.”

In his more than four decades in travel, Smith has also held executive roles at some of the industry’s most prominent companies: Crystal Cruises, Silversea Cruises, Costa Cruise Line, Princess Cruises and Eastern Airlines.

During his five years at Virtuoso, Smith has helped drive growth in Virtuoso’s cruise division, a key segment of the organization’s product portfolio. He has been instrumental in Virtuoso’s significant increase in cruise production, and added six new suppliers to the program. Most recently, Smith was involved in the rebranding and expansion of Virtuoso Voyages, the company’s flagship cruise enhancement program.

“It is extremely fitting that Bill has been inducted into CLIA’s Hall of Fame,” says Matthew D. Upchurch, Chairman and CEO of Virtuoso. “A Lifetime Achievement Award means you’ve dedicated your life to furthering an industry or cause, and have done so in a way that has truly impacted those you serve. In his 44-year history in this business, Bill Smith has done just that. I’m proud to say he has been a supplier partner, colleague and friend for more than 25 years, and I feel so fortunate that the last five years of his career were at Virtuoso.”

Virtuoso had previously announced Smith’s retirement, which will become effective July 1. Smith will be succeeded by Beth Butzlaff, who has been promoted to Vice President, Cruise Sales for Virtuoso.

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**Virtuoso®** is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 390 agency members with more than 11,400 elite travel advisors in nearly 40 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with 1,700 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. More than (U.S.) \$15.5 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit [virtuoso.com](http://virtuoso.com).

**Media Contacts:**

Misty Ewing Belles  
Managing Director, Global Public Relations  
Virtuoso  
202.553.8817  
[mewing@virtuoso.com](mailto:mewing@virtuoso.com)

Lauren Wintemberg  
Account Manager  
Alice Marshall Public Relations  
212.861.4031  
[lauren@alicemarshall.com](mailto:lauren@alicemarshall.com)