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Former North Conway man recognized for 'success in the face of hardship'

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A former North Conway man has been chosen to receive the 2011 Horatio Alger Award in recognition of his personal and professional success "despite humble and challenging beginnings."

Harry Patten, founder, chairman and CEO of National Land Partners LLC and Inland Management, will be inducted into the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans on April 8 in Washington D.C. He is one of 12 recipients.

"We are pleased to induct Harry S. Patten into the Horatio Alger Association and pay tribute to his success in the face of hardship," said Tony Novelly, president and CEO of Horatio Alger Association. "The 2011 members are extraordinary role models of strength, resolve and achievement and will help to continue our mission of helping young people achieve similar success."

Patten was born in 1936 in North Conway, where his father was a salesman and a great mentor and his mother was a public health nurse. When Patten was 3, his father suffered a crippling back injury that left the family in a tight financial situation. During his teen years, Patten worked at a local farm, as a hotel bellhop, in construction, shoveling snow and selling various products.

Patten attended the University of New Hampshire, where he majored in psychology. He married while in college, and sold Kirby vacuum cleaners door-to-door to support his family while he continued with his studies.

After college, at the age of 24, Patten was offered a distributorship and had 50 salespeople working in six offices. By 1964, Patten was ready to start his own company, and Patten Realty Corporation was formed. The business grew through a series of partnerships, which culminated with the Patten Corporation going public in 1985. Eighteen months later, the company was listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

In 1995, Patten sold his stock and launched private property family ventures, including National Land Partners LLC, National Timber Partners LLC, and Inland Management. During his career, Patten has become the leading buyer and seller of rural, recreational and timber land in America; and today's family company, which includes his son and two grandsons, has become one of the largest owners of land in the country.

The Patten Family Foundation's philanthropic interests center primarily in the areas of health, education and financial literacy. A particular passion has been supporting Junior Achievement, to educate children about the free-enterprise system. The foundation has generously funded the naming of Finance Park at the Junior Achievement World Huizenga Center, which educates more than 40,000 students per year. Patten has also given significantly to educational institutions and has been a long-term supporter of Massachusetts General Hospital.

Together with his eldest daughter, Andrea, they have written a book called "What Kids Need to Succeed," which outlines four foundations of adult achievement: perseverance, hard work, discipline, and giving back to one's community. The book has been translated in four languages.

Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans continues to fulfill its mission of honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals in society who have succeeded in spite of adversity and of encouraging young people to pursue their dreams through higher education. For more information, visit www.horatioalger.org