



AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR



**Table of Contents**

2 - 6

EXTRAORDINARY  
**Advocacy**

7 - 11

EXTRAORDINARY  
**Pursuits**

12 - 15

EXTRAORDINARY  
**Achievements**

16 - 17

**Planning an  
EXTRAORDINARY  
Future**

20

AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

21

**2021** was uniquely disruptive for many AHFA members, with unprecedented supply chain challenges that forced companies to pivot operations over and over again in real time. It was a year that began in political turmoil. It unfolded in the midst of a pandemic that seemed to never end, against a backdrop of worsening labor, transportation and logistics challenges with no foreseeable solutions.

Meanwhile, consumer demand for our industry's products continued to soar. As they plodded through another year of restructured work and school schedules and deferred travel and entertainment plans, Americans sustained their online spending spree in every category of home and décor.

While individual companies struggled to meet the challenges of day-to-day operations, AHFA remained "at the table" on key legislative and regulatory issues. Our extraordinary **advocacy** in 2021 included representing our industry on far-reaching issues like port congestion, container costs and Section 301 tariffs. On issues unique to residential furniture, like tip-over prevention and regulation of laminated wood products, we provided powerful leadership. Our 2021 efforts proved as noteworthy for what they prevented as for what they advanced.

The Alliance filled the year with extraordinary **pursuits**, launching new efforts, like hybrid educational forums, while exceeding our own best efforts on annual events like the Solution Partners Education Golf Tournament.

The Alliance and all its affiliates continued to elevate their leaders and visionaries, recognizing extraordinary **achievements** in many areas – and, gratefully, doing so at in-person events when we could.

And, at the end of the year, AHFA took stock of its prospects and forged plans to carry the Alliance into 2022, helping members navigate the post-pandemic landscape by providing essential connections, insights and guidance to advance their businesses.



# EXTRAORDINARY *Advocacy*

**A**ccurate and timely updates on regulatory and legislative issues remains among the most valuable benefits of AHFA membership. In addition to monthly reports in the Furniture Executive newsletter, the Alliance delivered 20 Member Bulletins and held five webinars on regulatory topics in 2021. As key issues advanced at both the state and federal levels, AHFA provided the expertise, education and resources members needed to plan for possible changes ahead, particularly on issues of product stability and chemical regulation.



Amy Vernon, La-Z-Boy, at the 2021 Regulatory Summit.



Bill Perdue, AHFA, begins a tip-over test demonstration at the Regulatory Summit.



Regulatory Summit attendees Lao Holmes and Glenn Felterman, Riverside, with Jay Johnson, Avalon Furniture.



Demonstrating the CPSC's proposed tip-over tests at the 2021 Regulatory Summit are (from left) Kyle Richards, Sauder; Mark Suddreth, La-Z-Boy; Tom Wise, Sauder; and Gary Boccock and Mike Lazorchick, both with Universal.

## ***Furniture Stability.***

As the calendar turned to 2021, momentum was building behind the STURDY Act, proposed legislation designed to reduce the number of furniture tip-over accidents involving children and clothing storage units. In February, STURDY – the Stop Tip-overs of Unstable Risky Dressers on Youth Act – was reintroduced in both the House and Senate with bipartisan support in both chambers.

In public statements in March, AHFA emphasized its support for a mandatory stability standard that would hold all manufacturers and importers to the same rigorous safety requirements for clothing

storage furniture. However, the Alliance registered opposition to STURDY, because it mandates a fast-track rulemaking process allowing CPSC to bypass cost-benefit analysis and to forego response to industry comments and concerns.

An AHFA compromise forwarded to lawmakers in April would have limited the “fast-track” rulemaking to children’s products as defined in the Consumer Product Safety Act, while calling for CPSC to adopt the current voluntary standard, ASTM F2057-19, as a mandatory standard for all other products. The proposed compromise was ignored.



**M**eanwhile, AHFA's Furniture Safety Task Group – a dedicated group of engineers from AHFA member companies – turned its attention to the heart of STURDY: the requirement for new performance tests that simulate the weight of children up to 60 pounds; evaluate the impact of carpet on furniture stability; evaluate the impact of loaded drawers and multiple open drawers on stability; and evaluate the dynamic force of a child up to 60 pounds pulling, climbing or playing on the furniture.

Meeting at a UL testing lab in Holland, Mich., the group set out to develop a series of pass/fail performance test methods meeting all requirements in STURDY. At the conclusion of two-and-a-half days of testing, re-testing and evaluation, three new test methods were drafted. But, as the group prepared to present its work to the ASTM Furniture Safety Subcommittee, CPSC released its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPR) in July.

CPSC's timing was not inconsequential. It began work on the NPR in November 2017, conducting extensive and costly research over the subsequent three years. Release of the NPR in July – with support for STURDY growing – gave the agency an unusual

opportunity. Should STURDY pass, CPSC would be able to implement the provisions within its NPR with unusual speed -- 180 days, to be exact.

As a result, AHFA and its furniture safety task group turned all attention to the NPR and the herculean task of dissecting its 1,100 pages to determine its potential impact on the industry. By September, the group had tested hundreds of units and finalized a worksheet to walk companies step-by-step through the complex calculus of the NPR's prescribed "tip-over moment" measurements. After demonstrating the test methods at AHFA's Regulatory Summit in September, the group's work helped inform a letter from AHFA to the CPSC commissioners in October.

The letter pointed out three key deficiencies in the NPR. First, the two prescribed test methods produce different results for the same unit. Further, both test methods rely on inherently

subjective input – namely the tester's visual perception of a precise "tip-over moment." The inability to repeat the test consistently and the variability of the data acquisition will render the regulation unenforceable, AHFA warned.

Second, the rule proposes a hangtag that fails to provide any meaningful safety information for consumers. Finally, the rule grossly underestimates the cost of compliance.

AHFA remained engaged with parents, regulators and legislators throughout November and December, attempting to advance a proposal to update ASTM F2057 using the test methods developed by the AHFA task group in April – thus meeting the key requirements of STURDY. Then, AHFA proposed amending STURDY to require adoption of the updated F2057 as the mandatory standard.

The year concluded with nearly all stakeholders encouraged by the proposed changes to ASTM F2057 that could result in a robust furniture stability standard that addresses the safety concerns

outlined in STURDY, provides a pathway for expedient adoption and ensures a reliable foundation for enforcement.

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## ***Federal Flammability Standard.***

By the time the COVID-19 Regulatory Relief and Work From Home Safety Act was published in the Federal Register in April, AHFA had already sponsored four webinars for members explaining the new federal flammability regulation for upholstered furniture. The Act was based on the Safer Occupancy Furniture Flammability Act (SOFFA), which AHFA drafted in 2017. It required the CPSC to adopt California's Technical Bulletin 117-2013 as a federal flammability standard for residential upholstered furniture. Because AHFA members had already been complying with TB 117-2013 for years, little changed in 2021, other than the required flammability label. Labeling details and sample labels were made available to the membership in May. In response to AHFA's advocacy, CPSC allowed the industry a year – until June 25, 2022 – to meet the new labeling requirement.





## Chemical Regulation.

Manufacturers and importers of performance fabrics, as well as all the upholstery manufacturers and importers who use them, received a wake-up call in 2021.

In March, AHFA alerted the membership that state-level activity to regulate chemicals in consumer products was ramping up – and all eyes were on a family of chemicals known as PFAS – per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances. This class of more than 9,000 chemicals is used in everything from cookware, food packaging and carpets to outdoor apparel and firefighting foam. Select chemicals within the class also are used to bring water and stain repellency to some of the industry’s popular “performance fabrics.”



Industry had breathed a sign of relief in February when California announced it would not include household furnishings containing PFAS in its 2021-2023 priority product work plan due to resource constraints. Instead, the state targeted PFAS in carpeting in 2021, as did the State of Vermont.

The relief was short-lived. In August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed

a new reporting and record-keeping rule based on provisions within the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The proposed rule applies TSCA regulatory reporting requirements over a 10-year horizon to over 1,000 PFAS compounds. Many – including AHFA – were surprised when EPA targeted not only the manufacturers and importers of the chemicals themselves, but also companies that manufacture and import articles containing the chemicals.

In comments submitted to EPA in September, AHFA argued that the inclusion of “articles” in the reporting rule would subject an unrealistic expectation and burden on the small businesses that comprise the majority of AHFA’s membership. Upholstery manufacturers not only have not maintained the information required from the past 10 years, but most never had access to such data on their fabrics. AHFA requested that “articles” be exempted from the reporting requirement but, at year’s end, had not received a decision from EPA.

In the meantime, Maine passed a law prohibiting the sale of any product in the state with “intentionally-added” PFAS, and seven more states had proposed policies to eliminate or restrict PFAS in consumer products under consideration for 2022.

## Laminated Products.

Even a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency official has laughingly referred to Title VI of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) as “the gift that keeps on giving.” Otherwise known as the Formaldehyde Emission Standard for Composite Wood Products, this regulation has been fully implemented ... except for one final deadline that is fast approaching. When the rule went into effect in May 2017, it gave manufacturers (defined as “fabricators”) a seven-year window to find alternatives to UF resins used in the fabrication of laminated products. Without viable NAF (no-added formaldehyde) or ULEF (ultra low-emitting formaldehyde) resin options, manufacturers using laminated component parts in a finished product will be subject to costly testing and record-keeping requirements – the same as panel producers – beginning March 22, 2024. With less than three years left before this deadline, AHFA began a survey of members in the last quarter of 2021 to identify whether any alternative glues were being utilized. AHFA also continued efforts to exempt laminated products from the testing and record-keeping requirements outlined in the rule.

# EXTRAORDINARY Pursuits

**A**gainst the backdrop of a foam shortage caused by Winter Storm Uri in Texas, unprecedented congestion at the nation’s ports, debates over vaccinations and mask-wearing, and skyrocketing transportation and material costs, AHFA served as a stable and effective resource for members in 2021. The full calendar of programs and services described on the following pages helped members navigate the year’s challenges.



Tiffany Bowman, Bluewater Logistics, at the AHFA Logistics Conference.



AHFA Chair Jeb Bassett at the 2021 Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs.



2021 Solution Partners Golf Tournament winners Larry Putnam, Casey Rogers, Bryan Hollar and Doyle Wyantt, Catawba Valley Community College.



# JAN

Jeb Bassett, COO of Bassett Furniture, begins a second term as Chair of AHFA's Board of Directors, having agreed – in concert with the other officers – to the add-on year of service due to the pandemic's disruption of his 2020 term.

ICFA's incoming Board Chair, Harold Hudson of Summer Classics Private Label, pledges to promote programs to help retail members who are still feeling the impact of the pandemic in 2021.

A \$1.4 trillion omnibus spending package passed in the waning hours of 2020

includes AHFA's Safer Occupancy Furniture Flammability Act, now renamed the COVID-19 Regulatory Relief and Work from Home Safety Act. It directs the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to adopt California's Technical Bulletin 117-2013 as a federal flammability standard for upholstery. AHFA begins a four-part webinar series to help members unpack the new federal rule.

ICFA launches "Webinar Wednesdays," a monthly series of one-hour, online education forums focused on topics of interest to the membership.

AHFA urges its members to begin 2021 with a renewed commitment to product safety, beginning by updating the product descriptions on their websites with tip-over prevention information.



# APR

AHFA proposes amendments to STURDY that would allow CPSC to advance quickly on a mandatory rule for children's furniture by adopting the current voluntary standard, ASTM F2057, for general clothing storage furniture not defined as children's products.

The COVID-19 Regulatory Relief and Work From Home Safety Act is published in the Federal Register. The effective date is June 25. However, as a result of AHFA's advocacy, the rule provides a June 25, 2022 compliance date for new labeling.

After in-depth discussions among manufacturers and retailers, ICFA confirms plans to host the ICFA Preview in July and Casual Market Chicago in September as scheduled. COVID protocols will be required of all attendees.

A task group of AHFA/ASTM Furniture Safety Subcommittee members meets at the UL furniture testing lab in Holland, Mich., to develop a series of performance tests to meet the requirements of STURDY. At the conclusion of two-and-a-half days of testing, re-testing and evaluation, three new performance tests are drafted.



# FEB

Against a backdrop of increasing cybersecurity breaches in our industry, AHFA hosts Vincent LaRocca, CEO of CyberSecOp, in a webinar designed to help member companies safeguard their businesses against cyber criminals.

ICFA launches an online sales training program to help retail associates gain skills and confidence. More than 400

participants sign on for the 12-week training conducted by Bob Phibbs of SalesRX.

The webinar series on the new federal flammability regulation continues with guidance on establishing an effective compliance testing program and an update from California officials on that state's Technical Bulletin 117-2013.

STURDY – the Stop Tip-overs of Unstable Risky Dressers on Youth Act – is reintroduced in the House and Senate. The legislation requires the CPSC to adopt a mandatory federal stability standard for clothing storage furniture within a year of the measure's passage.



# MAY



AHFA holds its second virtual government affairs meeting, hosting Reps. Kathy Manning (D-NC) and Don Beyer (D-VA), along with Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) during the online event.

The Solution Partners division awards 12 scholarships to the children of AHFA member company workers. The 2021 winners have parents working at

Bradington-Young, HSM Solutions, Culp, Ethan Allen, Best Home Furnishings, New Classic Furniture, Vanguard, Norwalk, Marsh & McLennan and Flexsteel.

In anticipation of its 62nd annual presentation of Apollo Awards for retail excellence, ICFA updates criteria to prioritize five regional finalists in both single-store and multi-store categories.



# MAR

AHFA holds a fourth webinar on the new federal upholstered furniture flammability standard, this one advising members on steps they can take to minimize risk. Both federal and California officials continue working to finalize their respective compliance details.

As manufacturers race to update law labels before the June 25 effective date of the new federal flammability regulation

for upholstered furniture, AHFA posts comprehensive law label guidance on its website for easy reference. At the same time, the Alliance petitions CPSC for an extension in the labeling deadline.

In ICFA's annual consumer survey, 90 percent of respondents agree that their outdoor living space is more valuable to them now than ever before. The pandemic is credited with prompting Americans to spend more time relaxing, grilling, gardening, dining and playing outside.

A members-only webinar outlines the provisions in STURDY and the potential impact of this legislation on residential furniture design.



# JUN

Supply chain disruptions, port congestion and rising shipping costs are topics discussed during the 2021 Logistics Conference, "Navigating Into the Future," in Wilmington, N.C. Sponsored by AHFA's



Specialized Furniture Carriers, the event attracts more than 100 transportation and logistics executives.

Fred Piercy, retired transportation director of Bernhardt Furniture, receives the Alvin W. Daughtridge Lifetime Achievement Award from the AHFA Specialized Furniture Carriers division.

The new federal flammability standard goes into effect, requiring all upholstered furniture to carry a new compliance label. AHFA updates its "Anatomy of a Law Label" document to provide members with guidance for updating their flammability labels.





# JUL

CPSC releases its long-awaited Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Clothing Storage Units. AHFA's Vice President of Regulatory Affairs Bill Perdue, along with members of the AHFA Furniture Safety Task Group, immediately begin a detailed review of the 1,100-page document and launch trial runs of the proposed new testing methods.

Parents Against Tip-overs (PAT), Consumer Reports, the Consumer Federation and KID

(Kids in Danger) join with Ikea to submit proposed changes to the STURDY Act for Senate consideration. Ikea - which declined to comply with the voluntary furniture stability standard until after it had recalled 17.3 million non-compliant units in 2016 - announces its support for STURDY and the mandatory standard it would produce.

Summer Classics Founder Bew White III is named the 2021 recipient of ICFA's coveted Lifetime Achievement Award.

ICFA holds a successful in-person Preview event at theMART in Chicago. Steven Dennis and Andy Hamilton (at right) are among attendees at the Preview's sales rep function.



# AUG

Members of AHFA's Furniture Safety Task Group complete a painstaking review of the testing protocol in the CPSC's proposed rule for furniture stability. The effort produces a worksheet members can download to help complete the complicated calculations necessary to determine a clothing storage unit's "tip-over moment."

AHFA's Furniture Foundation awards \$44,000 in grants for 2021, with a focus on scholarships for training and academic programs to support the industry.

As the highly contagious Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus surges across the nation, AHFA reminds members to take advantage of the Alliance4Safety resources on the AHFA website and on the Alliance4Safety website. The Alliance4Safety resources were created in 2020 to provide home furnishings companies with a roadmap for operating safely during the pandemic.



**ALLIANCE 4SAFETY** Protecting health. Preserving jobs.

# SEP

At the annual Regulatory Summit - a hybrid event with both online and in-person attendees - AHFA's Furniture Safety Task Group demonstrates each of the tests proposed in the CPSC's furniture stability rule. A video of the demonstration is a key tool in communicating the complexities of the testing protocol to member companies ... and to the CPSC commissioners.



ICFA hosts an in-person Annual Awards Gala at the Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park, recognizing excellence in manufacturing, retailing, sales and customer service. In addition, Brown Jordan wins the Lillian B. Winchester "Best of Show" in the Design Excellence competition for its H Collection armchair.

The Solution Partners division hosts its 30th Annual Education Golf Tournament at Lake Hickory Country Club in Hickory, N.C., raising over \$26,000 for the education fund that supports scholarships for the children of AHFA member company workers.

Steve Elton, chief brand curator for Brown Jordan, is elected chair of the ICFA Board of Directors for 2022. Eli Hymer of Gasper Home & Garden is selected chair of the ICFA Retail Council, and Melissa Glikes of Sissett's is selected vice chair.



# OCT

Two AHFA-member company executives - Rob Spilman, chairman and CEO of Bassett Furniture Inds., and Patrick Cory, CEO of Cory First Choice Home Delivery - receive the prestigious Spirit of Life Award from the City of Hope.

AHFA sends a letter to the CPSC outlining serious concerns with the agency's proposed rule for clothing storage furniture stability.

Nicholas Spino joins the AHFA staff as website and digital communications manager, a new position.

ICFA holds a productive planning meeting in Cincinnati attended by more than 35 members of the Board of Directors. A highlight of the meeting is a visit to Watson's flagship store.



# NOV

New and revised furniture stability tests, developed by AHFA and ASTM member companies in April, are presented to the ASTM 15.42 Furniture Safety Subcommittee. AHFA proposes that the new tests, designed to meet the requirements within STURDY, be incorporated into the voluntary standard - providing a feasible pathway for CPSC to adopt F2057 as a mandatory stability standard.

Michael Padjen joins AHFA as vice president of membership and associate member relations, including managing AHFA's Solution Partners and Specialized Furniture Carriers divisions.

ICFA members participate in the 25th Annual Walk for Hope to raise money for City of Hope. International Market Centers pledges to match the first \$10,000 raised by ICFA. Donations from members and friends reach \$35,000.

Following success of its retail sales associate training program with SalesRX launched in the spring, ICFA announces a second 12-week program for spring 2022.

At the Annual Meeting and CEO Conference in Colorado Springs, Colo., Wyatt P.E. Bassett, CEO of Vaughan-Bassett Furniture in Galax, Va., receives the 2021 Distinguished Service Award.

Roger Bland, CEO of Southern Motion (at right), is elected Chair of AHFA's Board of Directors, with Joe Johnston, CEO of Johnston Casuals, as First Vice Chair.



# DEC

A fifth and final AHFA Member Bulletin is issued on OSHA's Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), which requires employers to set coronavirus protocols and enforce compliance. From President Biden's Executive Order in January requiring OSHA to develop the ETS, through its introduction in November and immediate court challenge, AHFA kept members apprised of the order's implications.

AHFA presents CPSC with a plan to expedite adoption of a mandatory furniture

stability standard that meets all testing requirements outlined in STURDY.

New promotional materials, including a downloadable online toolkit, are introduced to help increase the number of applicants for the annual Solution Partners Scholarships. The 12 \$2,500 scholarships are awarded each year to the children of full-time workers at AHFA member companies.

Greg Van Dyke, vice president of sales for Hanes Industries, Conover, N.C., (at right) is elected chair of the Solution Partners Board of Directors, and Steve Ennis, vice president of sales and marketing for Murrow's Transfer, Thomasville, N.C., is elected chair of the Specialized Furniture Carriers for 2022.



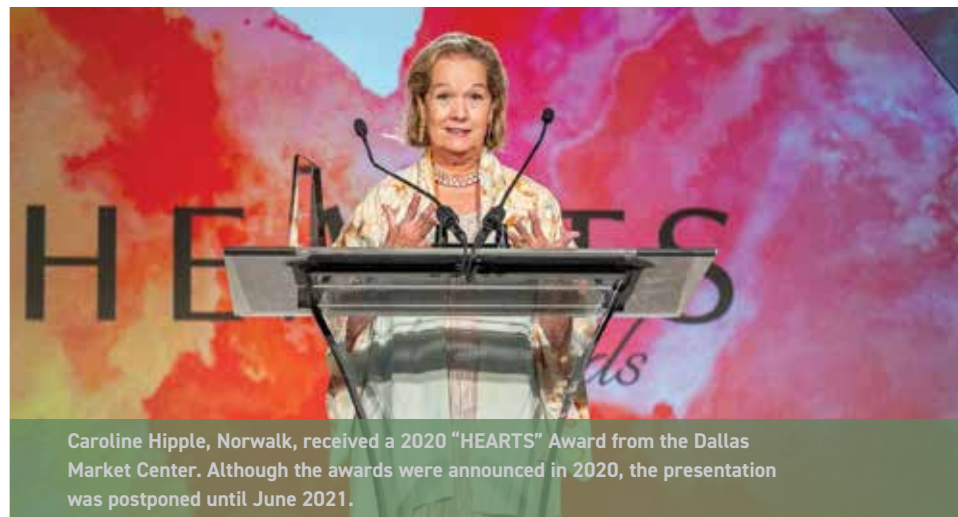


# EXTRAORDINARY Achievements

The applause of industry colleagues never sounded as inspiring as it did in 2021 as we celebrated our industry's leaders and visionaries in person once again. AHFA and its affiliates honored lifetime achievements, annual excellence and the promise of future leadership and ensured each recipient enjoyed their moment in a real, not virtual, spotlight.



City of Hope 2020 honorees, including Rob Spilman (center), Bassett Furniture, were recognized at an awards dinner in October 2021. Joining Spilman on stage following the presentation were (left to right) Chuck Reilly, Bruce Cohenour, Kevin O'Connor and Jeb Bassett.



Caroline Hipple, Norwalk, received a 2020 "HEARTS" Award from the Dallas Market Center. Although the awards were announced in 2020, the presentation was postponed until June 2021.



Members of the casual furnishings industry cheered enthusiastically as both 2020 and 2021 award recipients were announced at ICFA's 2021 awards gala.



Distinguished Service Award recipient Wyatt Bassett (second from right), with presenters (left to right) Andy Counts, AHFA; Farooq Kathwari, Ethan Allen; and Jeb Bassett, Bassett Furniture.



Award-winner Fred Piercy with Richard Tucker of Shelba D. Johnson Trucking.



ICFA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Bew White III, with Harold Hudson, both of Summer Classics.

## Lifetime Leadership

Wyatt P.E. Bassett, CEO of Vaughan-Bassett Furniture in Galax, Va., was honored with AHFA's Distinguished Service Award for his lifetime of "servant leadership" that has included a commitment to producing American-made furniture and an equal commitment to producing it sustainably. He served as chair of AHFA's Board of Directors in 2013, served many years on the board of the International Woodworking Fair and has helped lead the American Furniture Manufacturers Committee for Legal Trade since its 2003 inception.

**Bew White III**, founder of Summer Classics, received ICFA's 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award and was honored during the industry awards gala held during Casual Market Chicago in September. An innovator as well as entrepreneur, White developed trademarked performance fabrics, UV-resistant wicker and outdoor cushion components during his career. Summer Classics now produces cast aluminum and wicker outdoor furniture in Asia, but also supports more than 400 local jobs in its Alabama cushion plants. Its products are sold in 50 states and Canada, including in 19 Summer Classics Home retail stores.

**Fred Piercy**, retired transportation director for Bernhardt Furniture, received the Alvin W. Daughtridge Lifetime Achievement Award from AHFA's Specialized Furniture Carriers in June at the 2021 Logistics Conference in Wilmington, N.C. Piercy retired after 43 years at Bernhardt, but remained active in the transportation industry, including serving several years as a business development and consulting agent for CV International. He was a charter member of the Furniture Shippers Association and served as chair of AHFA's Transportation and Logistics Division.



## Casual Industry Honors

**T** CFA returned to an in-person industry awards gala with a festive event at the Fairmont Chicago Millennium Park during Casual Market Chicago in September. **Telescope Casual Furniture** was named Manufacturer of the Year; **Paul Bentley** was named Sales Representative of the Year; and **Sara Brown** of Telescope Casual Furniture received the Mia Nault Unsung Hero Award. Apollo Awards for retail excellence went to **Patios Plus** of Rancho Mirage, Calif., in the single-store category and **The Fire House Casual Living Store**, Charlotte, N.C., in the multi-store category. A dining armchair in **Brown Jordan's H Collection** won the Lillian B. Winchester "Best of Show" award in the Design Excellence Competition.



## Foundation Grants

AHFA's Furniture Foundation awarded \$44,000 in grants for 2021, with a focus on scholarships for upholstery training programs and for furniture design students. Catawba Valley Community College based in Hickory, N.C., received \$22,000, including \$15,000 for scholarships to the Alexander Furniture Academy in Taylorsville, N.C., and \$7,000 for scholarships to the Catawba Valley Furniture Academy in Hickory. Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute received \$5,000 for scholarships to the CCC&TI Furniture Technology Institute in Hudson, N.C. Finally, Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., received \$12,000 for four furniture design program scholarships.

## Solution Partners Scholarships

In the 21 years since AHFA's Solution Partners division began presenting scholarships, 125 students have received awards. The 12 recipients of \$2,500 scholarships in 2021 had parents working at Bradington-Young, HSM Solutions, Culp, Ethan Allen, Best Home Furnishings, New Classic Furniture, Vanguard, Norwalk, Marsh & McLennan or Flexsteel.



A sewing student at the Catawba Valley Community College Furniture Academy.



Unsung Hero Award winner Sara Brown of Telescope Casual Furniture (right), with presenter Teresa Buelin, Outdura.



Amanda Smith of Apollo Award winner Patios Plus, with presenter Warren Juliano of Lloyd Flanders.



Doug Sanicola of Outdoor Elegance (third from right) presents the 2021 Manufacturer of the Year Award to Telescope Casual Furniture.



Jonathan Ogden and Grant Henegan of Apollo Award winner The Fire House Casual Living Store, with presenter Patrick Troy, TUCCI.



Paul Bentley, Sales Representative of the Year (left), with presenter Doug Sanicola, Outdoor Elegance.



# Planning an EXTRAORDINARY Future

**A** HFA will need to maximize its resources in 2022 to address a wide range of issues with potentially lasting impact on our industry. Providing strong advocacy and developing tools members need to meet compliance obligations will remain our top priority, along with offering programs and resources that provide unbeatable value for our members. Here's a brief overview of the issues and challenges ahead.



2022 began with the speed of a zipline for AHFA, particularly in the areas of product safety and chemical regulatory activity. Given the promise of adventure ahead, it seemed fitting that AHFA offered a thrilling zipline excursion as part

of its 2021 Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs at the end of the year. Among those taking in the magnificent aerial views of Seven Falls Canyon was Jessica Oser, wife of Benchmark International executive Joel Oser.

## **Promoting Safety**

Both legislative and regulatory measures are advancing that threaten to throw a mandatory furniture stability measure wildly off course, to the detriment of child safety. AHFA will continue advocating for a mandatory stability standard that holds all manufacturers to a rigorous stability standard while ensuring that safety remains affordable for all consumers.

## **Chemical Chaos**

AHFA will closely monitor chemical regulatory activities involving PFAS (per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) for potential impact on our industry's indoor and outdoor performance fabrics. With both federal and state-level action accelerating, the complexity of this issue promises to increase in 2022.

## **Laminate Deadline**

For the past nine years, AHFA has worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to efficiently and effectively implement Title VI of the Toxic Substances Control Act – otherwise known as the formaldehyde rule. One hurdle remains: liberating laminated wood products from the rule's onerous testing and record-keeping requirements before the March 2024 deadline. In 2022, resources are dedicated to researching resin alternatives and completing a successful petition for exemption, along with seeking an extension of the deadline if necessary.

## **ICFA**

Extending the successful ICFA sales training program in 2022 will provide instruction for more members' retail associates. The Association also will implement a consolidated Casual Market Chicago event in mid-July, promoting showroom buying activity along with educational and social activities. Finally, ICFA resources will be focused on executing a smooth transition for the annual trade show from theMART in Chicago to AmericasMart in Atlanta for 2023.

## **Solution Partners**

Companies throughout our industry are focused on addressing logistics and supply chain challenges in 2022, and AHFA's Solution Partners division plans an expanded offering of informational webinars throughout the year to bring insight and expertise to those discussions. The division also will take a fresh look at industry data needs and develop an "Automation Ideation Team." In addition, the Specialized Furniture Carriers will bring another information-packed Logistics Conference to the industry in June. These programs and tools will expand supplier opportunities to both improve and share their expertise, advance their current knowledge of home furnishings industry challenges and establish valuable connections in 2022.



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1912 Eastchester Drive, Suite 100  
High Point, North Carolina 27265  
336.884.5000 [www.ahfa.us](http://www.ahfa.us)

The mission of the American Home Furnishings Alliance is to promote the growth and global leadership of its member companies by:

- Providing exceptional advocacy;
- Promoting effective product and safety standards;
- Presenting relevant education; and
- Serving as the preeminent media resource on industry news and trends.

