



News Release

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THE SPARK INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES ITS 2017 SPARK AWARD RECIPIENTS

SIMSBURY, CT, November 28 – The SPARK Institute, a nonprofit organization representing the retirement services industry, announced the winners of its 2017 SPARK Awards for Investment Innovation and Innovation in Plan Design & Administration at the SPARK Forum.

The SPARK Award for Investment Innovation was given to Chuck Dobson, a Regional Chief Investment Officer (CIO) and a Senior Plan Consultant for NFP, a leading insurance broker and consultant that provides employee benefits, property & casualty, retirement and individual private client solutions. He is responsible for leading the investment efforts of the retirement practice in the Southeast and working with institutional clients on all plan-related issues. Chuck has spent his entire career (17 years) in the investment industry and is a Chartered Financial Analyst and CFP® professional.

Chuck was nominated by Amundi Pioneer, the US investment headquarters for Amundi, which is among the world's top 10 largest asset managers and the leader in Europe, with over \$1.3 trillion under management as of December 31, 2016.* Amundi Pioneer formed in 2017 following the acquisition of Pioneer Investments by Amundi, includes the operations of two US-based companies the former Pioneer Investment Management USA Inc. (Boston, MA) and Amundi Smith Breeden (Durham, NC). Amundi Pioneer has approximately \$89.46 billion in assets as of October 31, 2017. By leveraging the benefits of our increased scope and size, Amundi Pioneer has expanded investment resources and the ability to introduce new and enhanced product offerings and solutions, tailored for our clients. Amundi Pioneer offers a broad and diversified range of fixed income, equity and multi-asset investment solutions. A focus on proprietary research, robust risk management, disciplined

investment processes and close partnerships with clients has made Amundi Pioneer an investment manager of choice among leading institutional and individual investors worldwide.

The award for Innovation in Plan Design & Administration went to Carol Idone, Vice President of Client Relationship Management and Consulting at Strategic Benefit Services. Carol has nearly 20 years of experience in the financial services and retirement planning market, having previously worked at The Hartford and AIG Valic. Before entering financial services, she was a Certified Public Accountant with KPMG and subsequently served as the Chief Financial Officer/Senior Vice President of Finance at Seton Health System in Troy, New York. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the State University of New York at Albany. She holds her FINRA series 7, 24 and 63 licenses and is also a CFP® professional.

Carol Idone was nominated by Lincoln Financial. Built on Abraham Lincoln's ideals of courage, strength and optimism, Lincoln Financial Group's Retirement Plan Services has been a proven provider of retirement solutions for over 60 years, managing thousands of retirement plans that enroll millions of participants in organizations of all sizes in the small-business, corporate, healthcare, education, nonprofit and state and local government sectors. Lincoln Financial Group is the marketing name for Lincoln National Corporation (NYSE:LNC) and its affiliates. With headquarters in the Philadelphia region, the companies of Lincoln Financial Group had assets under management of \$229 billion as of December 31, 2016.

More information on these winners is available upon request by contacting SPARK at 860-658-5058 or by email at info@sparkinstitute.org.

About The SPARK Institute

The SPARK Institute represents the interests of a broad-based cross section of retirement plan service providers and investment managers, including members that are banks, mutual fund companies, insurance companies, third-party administrators, trade clearing firms and benefits consultants. Through the combined expertise of its member companies, the Institute provides research, education, testimony and comments on pending legislative and regulatory issues to members

of Congress and relevant Government agency officials. Collectively, its members serve approximately 80 million participants in 401(k) and other defined contribution plans.

*Source IPE “Top 400 asset managers” published in June 2017 and based on AUM as of end December 2016. Amundi and Pioneer Investments combined figures pro forma as of December 31, 2016.

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