



## For Immediate Release

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## DRI Congratulates John Willardson

CHICAGO – DRI is pleased to announce that member, John Willardson, The Willardson Law Firm, located in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, has been awarded the North Carolina Association of Defense Attorneys (NCADA) J. Robert Elster Award for Professional Excellence. Willardson has served in many leadership roles at DRI and has been a member since 1984.

The J. Robert Elster Award is given to members of the NCADA who exemplify the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and ethics and conduct themselves in a civil, courteous manner with all persons. The awardee must also exemplify sustained, excellent services to individual and corporate defendants and to the community.

“John Willardson exemplifies the best our profession has to offer society; superior legal skills, high character, community involvement, and gentlemanly dealings with everyone. It was evident that his North Carolina colleagues hold him in the highest esteem, and are very proud of him,” said John Cuttino, DRI President-Elect.

Willardson has a strong history of personal and professional service. He served from 2004–2007, as the North Carolina State Representative for DRI. From 2007–2010, he served on the DRI Board of Directors as Mid-Atlantic Regional Director over North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. Willardson worked tirelessly on behalf of DRI and our 22,000 members.

“DRI celebrates John Willardson’s accomplishments personally and professionally. His work, character and commitment to the defense bar are extraordinary. John is most deserving of this honor,” said John R. Kouris, DRI Executive Director.

Willardson is a native of Santa Monica, California, and has lived and practiced in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, for over 35 years after graduating from UNC-Chapel Hill, where he completed a double major in Spanish and political science. He served in the United States Army before attending UNC Law School where he obtained his J.D. in 1972.