

Don DePaulis Named the NHFA "Trailblazer of the Year" Double Nominee for 2020

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ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, August 22, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It is a rare honor and great privilege to be nominated by the National Home Furnishings Association (NHFA) for recognition for the industry's most prestigious award, the coveted "Trailblazer of the year" for 2020. This award is bestowed by fellow top retailers and is judged by a panel of industry leaders, industry media, retired professionals and past winners.



Winter Park Village Flagship Store

[Don DePaulis](#), company President and Trailblazer nominee stated "At [Relax In Comfort](#), our family tradition began as the first sleep & back care merchant in the country". This award is especially remarkable as the Trailblazer recognition is in addition to being nominated as the NHFA "Retailer of the Year" for 2020, in the small business category. DePaulis added "I am honored to be a double nominee by the industry for our contributions with our best in class selection of adjustable number beds and luxury massage chairs"

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Don DePaulis, President

Although graduating with a BSBA degree in Finance & Computer Science from The University of Central Florida

(UCF) in 1983, DePaulis immediately joined the family business to help continue the legacy founded by his parents Anthony & Lucy DePaulis in 1967. During his storied career, DePaulis was instrumental in the development and launching of the Sleep Options chain of sleep stores self-funded by Hillenbrand Industries of Batesville, IN. The initial budget was over \$20M for the

first round and soon after the launch, & under the guidance and leadership of DePaulis, Relax In Comfort took over control of the Flagship Sleep Option stores in Ohio & Indiana.

However, DePaulis would soon discover the biggest challenge of his career would surface in early 2020 as the COVID-19 global pandemic ensued. DePaulis lamented “We were not prepared to be closed for several months with no revenue or to have 50% of our future revenue stream (trade shows) to be cancelled indefinitely.” However, DePaulis continued “During the pandemic our wellness products were needed more than ever, we just had to figure out a path forward”. DePaulis immediately launched a new e-commerce website from scratch and partnered with Furniture For Life and [Personal Comfort Bed](#) which provided immediate e-commerce driven traffic to supplement the greatly reduced consumer flow at our mall and lifestyle center locations that were operating at 20% of pre pandemic levels”

As a Trailblazer and mentor to many, DePaulis has personally mentored dozens of aspiring college interns, from various academic backgrounds and introduced them to the wellness furniture category. One of his most notable students was Co-Founder of Personal Comfort, Scott Stenzel. Scott stated to his team “There would be no Personal Comfort without Don DePaulis and Relax In Comfort.” In addition, DePaulis routinely networks with various niche thought leaders on industry best practices to innovate and reimagine strategic planning. DePaulis has also launched a licensee program to allow approved staff members to launch their own retail location, under his direct guidance & leadership , as a Relax In Comfort branded store.

Although equipped with a technically driven degree in Finance & Computer Science, DePaulis has engaged in many more exploratory endeavors. One of where he is creatively re-imagining his way through and out of the challenges presented by COVID-19. DePaulis added “We have approached innovation as a necessary ingredient for our sustainability. As big box stores continue to migrate into our niche with low quality products we must continue to innovate and accelerate our standards to out flank the big box stores and remain hyper competitive. As a small company we operate as a speed boat not an ocean liner, which gives us the ability to move



Don DePaulis with the Relax in Comfort Show Team



NHFA Now 100 Years Strong

quickly and adjust immediately to market conditions.”

Based on the 53-year history so far, and given the day to day involvement in the company’s operations, Relax in Comfort is well suited for an exemplary year despite the challenges and hardships the pandemic created. DePaulis ended the interview by stating “All of us at Relax In Comfort enjoy offering solutions and hope for our customers and we are committed to making the World a more comfortable place.”

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