

# Starkey Press Release

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F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

## Starkey CEO, William F. Austin Named 2004 'Humanitarian of the Year.'

PHOENIX – William F. Austin, founder of the Starkey Hearing Foundation and CEO of Starkey Laboratories, was presented with the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC) Humanitarian of the Year Award.

This award is named for former U.S. Senator Frank E. Moss, whose legislation created both the Medicare and Medicaid home care benefits and who served as NAHC's Senior Counsel for 21 years. Austin was honored for his efforts to "heal the broken ears of the world."

"Among all of the people in the country, no one cares more about helping those less fortunate than William Austin," said Val J. Halamandaris, President of the NAHC. Also honored at the Association's 23rd Annual Meeting on October 27 in Phoenix, Arizona were former First Lady Nancy Reagan, former U.S. Senator Robert Dole and Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne.

Austin is considered the world's foremost expert in hearing aids and his clientele includes four former Presidents, Billy Graham, Buzz Aldrin, Kirk Douglas, and others. "Of course, it's fun to help a movie star," Austin says, "but the best is to see a child react when he first hears. I wish I could go on all the missions we conduct each year. The things we see are so remarkable. It's like you snapped on a switch and let them hear the world."

Halamandaris said, "Webster defines a humanitarian as a philanthropist or a friend of mankind. Bill Austin personifies caring in action. He has given unselfishly of not only his dollars and the products made by his company, but also his time to help those in need. He deserves the respect and commendation of all people."

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Since 1973, Austin and the Starkey Hearing Foundation have conducted more than 200 missions a year to countries such as Vietnam, Mexico, the Ukraine, the Dominican Republic and South Africa to fit needy children with hearing aids. In addition, the Foundation promotes hearing health awareness and provides hearing aids, hearing aid batteries and other hearing products to needy people free of charge.

NAHC, based in Washington D.C. is the largest and most respected organization representing over 5,000 hospices, home health agencies, some one million nurses and allied personnel who provide care at home for more than five million ill, disabled or dying persons every year.

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*Starkey Laboratories, Inc. headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota is a worldwide provider of comprehensive digital hearing systems including custom and standard devices, protection products, instrumentation, and unique business solutions. Founded in 1967, Starkey owns and operates manufacturing and sales facilities in 21 countries, including the Audibel, MicroTech, NuEar, Omni and Qualitone companies. Starkey is the recognized world leader in the design and development of innovative custom digital hearing instruments*

*About The Starkey Hearing Foundation*

*Founded in 1978, the Starkey Hearing Foundation is dedicated to helping hearing-impaired people worldwide. Its mission is to promote hearing care awareness through the support of hearing research, education and charitable programs. On average each year the Foundation provides more than 50,000 hearing aids to needy individuals, completely free of charge. Through donations of time, money, products and materials, the international outreach program has improved countless lives through better hearing.*

*In addition to its philanthropic endeavors, the Foundation is committed to providing support and sponsorship of a number of industry-related public awareness campaigns. For more information about the Foundation, please visit [www.sotheworldmayhear.org](http://www.sotheworldmayhear.org)*