



Strategic Services on
Unemployment and
Workers' Compensation



National Foundation for
Unemployment Compensation & Workers' Compensation

33rd Annual National UI Issues Conference Savannah, Georgia

2014 Award Recipients

Each year UWC accepts nominations for awards to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in research, public policy, UI system integrity and contributions to UWC. A Recognition Awards committee reviews nominations and selects individuals for recognition at the annual National UI Issues Conference.

The **J. Eldred Hill, Jr. Award**: is named after J. Eldred Hill, Jr., former president of UWC (then UBA), and is given to an individual for excellence in the public policy arena in service to UWC and the employer community.

The **UI Integrity Award** is given to an individual who has demonstrated commitment to preserving the integrity of the unemployment system.

This year, UWC and NFUCWC recognize one individual for the J. Eldred Award and one individual for the UI Integrity Award.

Please join me in congratulating these outstanding individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Douglas J. Holmes'.

Douglas J. Holmes
President

Richard A. Hobbie
J. Eldred Hill Award

Rich Hobbie is one of a small number of individuals in the long history of the UI program who have had a significant national impact on the Unemployment Insurance system. From his days as a researcher at the Congressional Research Service, to his service on the House Ways and Means committee staff, to serving as UI Director for NASWA, to his current job as Executive Director at NASWA, Rich has distinguished himself as a strong advocate for a sound UI system.

Rich has also contributed his time as a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Foundation for Unemployment Compensation and Workers' Compensation and served as a presenter at many National UI issues conferences.

His list of positions with increasing responsibility over the years which are reviewed below is impressive but does not fully capture the impact he has had on the program. Time and again Rich has been an expert and credible voice in debates before Congress, among states, with business and worker advocate groups. It is a testament to his expertise and the respect that he commands from all stakeholders that he continues to be called upon to provide insight and expert opinion.

Mr. Hobbie has been Executive Director of NASWA since late 2003. From 1998 to 2003 Mr. Hobbie was Unemployment Insurance Director at NASWA.

Before joining NASWA, Mr. Hobbie was a consultant with the Lewin Group and an independent consultant from 1996 to 1998. During this period he worked on research on unemployment insurance, welfare recipients, and a truck driver training programs.

In 1995 to 1996, Mr. Hobbie was Associate Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Employment and Training Administration, USDOL.

From 1988 through 1995 Mr. Hobbie was a professional staff member and Staff Director of the House Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources. He also was a contributor and editor of the Committee "Green Book," an extensive background book on the programs and policies under the jurisdiction of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

From 1980 to 1987, Mr. Hobbie was a Specialist in Social Legislation at the Congressional Research Service and from 1975 to 1980, he was Associate Analyst at the Congressional Budget Office.

Mr. Hobbie earned a Ph.D. from what is now called the John Glenn School of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University (OSU) in 1975 and also holds MA and BA degrees in Economics from OSU.

We are honored to present the J. Eldred Hill Award to Richard A. Hobbie.

Tennessee Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey

UI Integrity Award

As Speaker of the Tennessee Senate, Ron Ramsey spearheaded significant reforms that enabled the Tennessee Unemployment Trust Fund to recover more quickly, leading to dramatic employer tax reductions, less fraud and abuse, and greater hiring and investment across the state.

Lt. Governor Ramsey took a keen interest in the unemployment system after hearing numerous employer complaints on his statewide Red Tape Tour in late 2011. He and his staff spent a great deal of time researching reforms in Florida, South Carolina and other states, before settling on a series of specific reform proposals for Tennessee.

In 2012, Speaker Ramsey co-sponsored the Unemployment Insurance Accountability Act, Senate Bill 3658, a major overhaul of existing UI law. The law strengthened the definition of "misconduct," specifically defined work search requirements for beneficiaries, required the state to conduct random verification audits of 1,000 claimants per week, outlined specific disqualification or ineligibility events, and defined "suitable work" in order to help more individuals return to work sooner.

In 2012, Tennessee also passed Senate Bill 3659, which requires the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to implement an Internet-based system that allows employers to receive notices and to submit separation information electronically.

Ron Ramsey continued work in 2013 to pass Senate Bill 783, which updated the unemployment misconduct definition with regard to criminal offenses and dishonesty during employment. It also provided for reconsideration of benefits up to one year if a claimant is subsequently convicted of a misdemeanor or felony related to the separation from the employer, mandated departmental training of unemployment hearing officers, and increased weekly audits from 1,000 to 1,500.

As Tennessee's UI Trust Fund has recovered, employer tax rates have dropped to the second lowest tax table and there have been reports of better results in unemployment hearings across the state.

In recognition of his consistently outstanding advocacy to preserve the integrity of Tennessee's Unemployment Trust Fund, we are pleased to recognize Tennessee Lieutenant Governor with the UWC UI Integrity Award.