



## **IHOP Celebrates 50 Years at National Franchise Conference**

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Recognizes Success in Family Dining Category; 2008 Franchisee and Vendor Partner of the Year Announced

GLENDALE, CA, Sep 02, 2008 (MARKET WIRE via COMTEX News Network) -- IHOP, one of America's favorite restaurants for breakfast, lunch and dinner, celebrated fifty years of great food, family and fun with more than 1,000 members of the IHOP family, including IHOP franchisees and vendor partners, at its annual National Franchise Conference (NFC) last week in Waikoloa, Hawaii. The four day conference honored IHOP's past, celebrated its success in becoming number one in family dining, and established a new vision for its future -- to create an insurmountable lead in the family dining restaurant category.

Julia A. Stewart, DineEquity Inc.'s chairman and chief executive officer, welcomed franchisees, vendor partners and IHOP employees in her opening address and recognized the system's success in becoming number one in family dining, a vision the company established six years ago. The goal was realized this year as IHOP was recently named number one in system-wide sales by the restaurant industry's leading trade publication, Nation's Restaurant News.

"Today's IHOP was built upon a solid foundation because of those before us who sought to create a brand that brought food and family together," said Stewart. "Because of their leadership and hard work, today we celebrate a brand that for fifty years has listened to its guests to provide a warm and friendly dining environment. It is our privilege to lead this brand into the next fifty years, where with our current leadership we'll continue to remain focused on delighting guests and build upon IHOP's success to take our growth strategies to the next level."

It was fifty years ago this summer when the original "I" that made the world flip was founded in Toluca Lake, Calif. by brothers Al and Jerry Lapin. Inspired by tales of coconut syrup in Hawaii, the brothers embarked upon an entrepreneurial endeavor that quickly became a national staple with its golden pancakes and family-friendly atmosphere. IHOP recognized co-founder Jerry Lapin and early investors Al and Trudy Kallis, along with Randy and Lynn Lapin, respectively the son and former wife of the late Al Lapin.

The conference also included presentations and workshops on service and operations excellence, marketing strategy, technology and building and hiring the right teams. The conference included a vendor partner tradeshow and culminated with the announcement of IHOP's "Franchisee of the Year" and "Vendor of the Year" awards.

Each year at the NFC IHOP awards a franchisee with its highest honor: "Franchisee of the Year," given to the franchisee that has made the most significant contributions to the system. Regional mentoring, operational excellence and leadership are among the judging criteria.

The 2008 Franchisee of the Year was awarded to Larry Meisner, who has been a member of the IHOP family for more than 10 years. Meisner first joined IHOP as a general manager and today he operates 12 restaurants in the southeastern United States. He has built a solid infrastructure to support his organization, yet remains actively engaged in the daily operations of the restaurants, spending time with servers and managers and reinforcing IHOP's commitment to guest service. Meisner embraces new ideas and procedures that can improve his business and maintains relationships to support his business, including numerous initiatives to further connect with the communities where he operates.

The 2008 IHOP "Vendor Partner of the Year" award, first presented in 2002, was awarded to Koch Poultry of Franklin Park, Ill. The award is presented to the vendor that has made the greatest contribution to the IHOP system based on a number of attributes, including: reliability, value, consistency, responsiveness, service and innovation. Koch Poultry has consistently provided reliable, quality products to the IHOP system at a fair value. Additionally, the supplier has provided excellent resources to IHOP's research and development team that have aided in IHOP's ongoing menu innovation efforts. Most importantly, Koch Poultry remains focused and dedicated in its support of IHOP franchisees.

### **ABOUT IHOP**

For 50 years, the IHOP family restaurant chain has served its world famous pancakes and a wide variety of breakfast, lunch and dinner items that are loved by people of all ages. IHOP offers its guests an affordable, everyday dining experience with warm and friendly service. The first IHOP opened in Toluca Lake, Calif. in 1958, and as of June 30, 2008, there were 1,361 IHOPs in 49 states, Canada and Mexico. IHOP restaurants are franchised and operated by Glendale, Calif.-based IHOP, a subsidiary of DineEquity, Inc. (NYSE: DIN).

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