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**2011 Sports and Entertainment Venues
Tomorrow Conference Lifetime Achievement
Award Ceremony:**

ALEX HODGES

2011 Sports and Entertainment Venues Tomorrow Conference Lifetime Achievement Award Ceremony

At the 2011 Sport and Entertainment Venues Tomorrow Conference in Columbia, SC, Alex Hodges, Chief Executive Officer, Nederlander Concerts, was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for numerous accomplishments during his career. With a career spanning over 40 years in the industry, Hodges has had the rare distinction of serving the live entertainment world as not only a concert promoter and venue executive, but also as a talent agent, artist personal manager and corporate executive.

Prior to returning to Nederlander Concerts in 2007, Hodges served as Executive Vice President of House of Blues (HOB) from 1999 to 2006 before the company was sold to Live Nation. After the company was sold, he served HOB Concerts as President and CEO and maximized the performance at HOB during the transition into Live Nation. He was Senior Vice President at Universal Concerts / MCA Concerts from 1994 until an acquisition by House of Blues. He was Vice President of Nederlander Concerts from 1988 to August 1994, and was named Talent Buyer of the Year in 1993 for promoting the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles as well as promoting a wide range of headline talent at other venues including arena and stadium events.

Prior to working as a promoter and venue executive Hodges had been a talent agent. In the 1960s he represented many world famous recording and touring artists including Otis Redding, Percy Sledge, Sam and Dave, and Clarence Carter among many others. He founded the Paragon Agency in 1970 and Empire Agency in 1980, and represented several legendary artists such as The Allman Brothers Band, Atlanta Rhythm Section, Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Police, The Marshall Tucker Band, The Charlie Daniels Band and Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble.

In the mid-1970s he organized fund raising concerts for Jimmy Carter's Presidential campaign, and also was named Agent of the Year during the period. In 1984, he moved from Georgia to Los Angeles to become Senior Vice President of International Creative Management, a large full-service film, television and music agency where he was head of the West Coast music and live performance departments that represented over 250 artists including Dire Straits, John Denver, James Taylor, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Air Supply, and Culture Club, and many others.

In the 1980s, Alex was also the personal manager for Gregg Allman and Stevie Ray Vaughan, who he represented until the guitar legend's untimely death in 1990. He served two years in the United States Army as a Finance Officer and was awarded the highest administrative award, Certificate of Achievement, in March 1967. He is a graduate of Mercer University and attended Mercer Law School prior to accepting his commission in the Army.

Mr. Hodges was introduced at the awards ceremony at the University of South Carolina by John Huie, agent for Creative Artists Agency, and a long-time friend of Mr. Hodges.

Introductory Remarks by John Huie

First of all, I want to know how many students are here? Raise your hand. Wow, half of the room. I went to Davidson College not too far from here. I was a sociology major. There was no sport and entertainment management program when I went to college. But I had a passion for being in the music business.

I got an email today from one of my roommates in college, Mark Jackowitz. His daughter Rebecca is a sophomore at Davidson, and she sent me an email that I want to read to all of you.

Dear Mr. Huie, I am signing up for classes for this spring and I am having some trouble decid-

ing what I should take. I am extremely interested in the kind of work that you do. I was wondering if you could give me some advice regarding what types of classes and majors would open the door to your field. As you probably already know Davidson doesn't have a lot of selected majors and I'm unsure of which one to pursue. Any advice you can give me would be awesome.

I really apologize to all you academics here because recommending courses or a major simply to aim at the job is not my style, so I'm gonna give you my rendition of my response to Becca.

Keep in mind that Davidson is a really good school and there are many wonderful academic classes and majors at Davidson and many other campuses around the country. But I said,

Becca, 'live the life.' We at Creative Artists will not hire you without a degree. If you can find a great fit academically, then do it, but more important than what you do in the classroom is what you do outside the classroom. Go hang out in the student union when you aren't hitting the books and going to class. Join every committee that works with live bands. Tell William Brown, the student activities director, that you want in and that you are going to be the next John Huie out of Davidson College. During your junior year, I hope I get a phone call about what a super star you are and how you are running things there. And then I'll help you get a summer internship, and then the world will be yours.

You guys can get a degree that says sport management, but if you don't go out and put it into practical terms and hit the street, it means nothing. I was amazed to hear that one could get a doctorate in sport and entertainment management. I didn't know there was a masters degree in sport management or sport and entertainment management until recently. The academic opportunities are so much greater than what was available when I was in school. It blows me away. I can tell you that I can raise a lot of money for a graduate student if someone can do a dissertation on the psychology of ticket buying.

My whole life I had a passion for being in the music business. When I was a senior in school, on Christmas day 1977, I looked in the paper and there was a seminar about how to manage bands, and I went. I thought, wow,

I need to attend this. I think it was January 10th of 1978 and Alex Hodges was the featured speaker. Now earlier I had done some work booking bands and had bought a lot of them from a guy named Buck Williams at Paragon Agency.

So I see that Alex is speaking at this conference and I say I am gonna go and pay my 50 bucks. In 1978, when you are 18 years old, 50 bucks is a lot of money. My dad is a minister so he didn't have any bucks. I paid my own 50 bucks to go hear Alex speak. I attend, and he blows me away about the management business and how to be in the entertainment business, so I introduced myself to him after his talk. He says, "Oh, you are the guy Buck Williams keeps talking to me about." I go—Oh, that's a good sign: right? He then says, "Hang around, let's meet at the bar afterwards." When I was 18 you could drink so we met at the bar and we started having cocktails and we're sharing about the business and I am on cloud nine. I think I've hit the jack pot. I am getting ready to get through my last term of my senior year in college, and Alex asks when can I visit him in Macon. I say well I can go during spring break and he says to come on down. So at that meeting he asks, "What do you want to do after school?" I said, "I want to start a college department for you. I want to book schools, that's what I want to do." He says, "OK—that sounds good to me." WOW... I am thinking to myself as my mind is going 100 million miles an hour, that it looks like I have already secured my first job out of college. In my head I think I am going to make at least 250 bucks a week. And I am thinking I've got to have this; I've got to have that. And this guy is ready to offer me a job. So he says, "You know we are gonna help you with finances. You know this is kind of like graduate school, so you should be paying us." And I think, oops...here comes the set up. He says, "We are gonna to start you at a low salary, something around 150 or 160 bucks a week." And I said "Mr. Hodges, with all due respect, I can't start for less than 200 bucks a week." He said, "Done!" That was the first lesson I learned in agenting. I just got hustled by my soon-to-be new boss. So then he goes to a calendar and says, "When do you graduate?" I said, "May 28th, sir." "That's a Sunday, can you be here on the 29th?" I mean as much as I want to be in the business, I just graduated college, I want to go to Europe, I want to go travel...I want to start in September. And I said, "I'd like a little vacation before starting since I just will have graduated from school." He says, "Be here June 12th."

I showed up to Paragon Agency on June 12th, and this man launched my career. I walked in the first day ... there's your desk, there's your phone. No lessons, I am like ... what am I gonna do? You know, I went to the bookstore and bought a Barrons College guide. I just started cold calling schools and asked who does this, who does that. I started building my rolodex of contacts. And I learned on my own. I didn't have anybody giving me lessons. Unfortunately, if one worked at my company today it's three-to-four years before you even get a shot. He gave me the shot, but I had the guts to go get the shot too. It is team work.

You are going to have go get it, guys. Don't sit back and think because you got the sheepskin the world in general or this business in particular is going to always have open doors for you. You have to go work. And what my current boss, Richard Lovett, head of CAA, always says is, "We are successful because we out-work our competition." You have to be smart and you have to out-work the competition. So I really encourage all of you to remember that's the key to success.

One more thing, about a year after starting I am kicking butt, and I think I am getting a raise. I am gonna

make 250 bucks a week, by God. So I go to Alex and I say, "You know I think I'm doing pretty good job." He says, "Yeah you've been doing a pretty good job. You've picked up this pretty quickly." So I ask him, "Don't you think it's about time I get a raise?" Alex says, "You see this cup of water, this is our company." I said "Yeah." [Illustrated by putting a finger in a glass of water.] Alex says, "See, this is you in the company. See what happens when the finger comes out? The hole gets filled up." I didn't know what to say. I didn't get the raise.

But because of his good training, I've turned myself into a freaking towel. [Illustrated with a glass of water and table napkin that soaked up all the water.] I make a difference when I leave now.

Thank you Alex, the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award, a well-deserved man has been doing this not 40 years but 50 years. And let me tell you. He still goes to two or three shows a week after putting in the 60 hours in the office at 70-years old. So there are no free rides. Follow your passion and lead by example. He is my example and hopefully I pass on his wisdom to people who work with me. Thank you!

Remarks by Alex Hodges

Trying To Get It Right Through The Years

Hello. Thank you. It is great to be here and to receive this award.

My father was a tough old guy. But I saw him get watery eyes sometimes watching a good commercial on the TV when they had a dog or kids in it. So it can happen. [Handkerchief in hand.]

Now you guys know why I hired John Huie. The stories are true, a couple of them I'd like to forget *maybe*, but, it was a pretty good ride. Thanks John for that introduction.

John is a trooper for coming in here and leaving Nashville with family and his job and all those duties. We share a number of things in common. In particular, we share having children. We share having supportive

wives. We share love of the music business. We share that we're not afraid of work. We also share that we went to the same high school, Decatur High School in Decatur, Georgia—the Decatur Bull Dogs. Ah, a few years apart actually.

Thank you *Venues Today* magazine! Thank you University of South Carolina, Department of Sport and Entertainment Management and the leaders of this year's conference, especially Linda Deckard and Frank Roach!

Lifetime Achievement Award—Wow, I guess I can't ask myself what am I gonna do when I grow up now?

I'm very fortunate to have the support of the Nelder family and that company will be a hundred years old next year, in 2012. And my senior boss, James M.

Nederlander, will be 90 years old next year. I saw him in New York last week in the office. He's still working. So that's pretty cool inspiration.

This award means a lot to my wife, Karen, who decided to leave the dogs behind in Los Angeles and come out here to the conference. Since our children are grown it's now the dogs—they rule, most of the time. We are blessed with a son, a daughter, and two grandchildren from my son and it's just been a real blessing. I am learning that with two children and two grandchildren, you have to work for a lifetime. So thanks for this award. I am going to keep doing my job and get another one in 15 or 20 years.

How did I get here myself?

It seems like it was somehow by chance. But chance is something you wonder about through the years —how you land on your feet like a cat with nine lives so many times, because things change and you run into different difficulties and so forth. When I ponder the word “chance” and think about being at the right place, the right time—like meeting John Huie and talking at the bar in Atlanta—I was wondering if chance is random or if chance is a path being revealed slowly over time?

Life involves free will, decision making, a lot of grit and determination, making a lot of decisions, and experiencing a lot of ups and downs. It's a bumpy road, but it's been a pretty good one. And I have had some good luck along the way.

Luck is funny too, because you don't know how much life is really luck. The great golfer, Ben Hogan, told a reporter who asked him if his luck would hold up one more day, to which he replied, “You know, it's a funny thing, the more I practice, the better my luck gets.” I think that statement is true. You've got to practice, you've got to work.

Was it chance that in college, after history class at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, I was talking to my friend, Phil Walden, who was a fraternity brother. He was telling me about quitting his cousin's store selling clothes, and starting to book bands full time, along with being a full-time student. And that he had opened up a little office above WIBB radio; and it was a very, very small office. All of a sudden, he asked me a ques-

tion, “You type don't you?” And I answered, “Yes, I type.”

My aunt had gotten me to type when I started college—on an old Royal typewriter—and I earned some money typing term papers. And that led to two hours a day working with my fraternity brother typing letters to schools and fraternities—doing what John was talking about, booking bands to schools. These were unknown, unrecorded bands. I believe I made a dollar a half-day initially.

Was it chance or luck that one singer who was winning the talent contests decided to join one of the bands, and that guy's name was Otis Redding? Otis was just awesome. It led to me being Otis's agent while I was still in school. He had his first hit, “These Arms of Mine,” and then his career took off.

I had two years of service in the Army later and when I came back and I was his agent once again. Otis died in December 1967 at the tender age of 26 with all of those great songs behind him.

Was it chance or luck that two years after Otis died I'd been out of the music business, living in Atlanta, and Phil Walden came and we had lunch. He gave me an unreleased album in a plain white sleeve and asked me to go home and play it—listen to it. It was a forthcoming album and it happened to be the first of The Allman Brothers Band.

At the time I had a real full-time gig in Atlanta out of the entertainment business as Executive Director of the Republican Party of Georgia. But I immediately started plotting my resignation after hearing the album and seeing the band play at a club in Atlanta. I returned to Macon to start Paragon Agency. So we've gone from 1961 to 1970 in this period.

Was it chance or luck that while I was representing The Allman Brothers, for 20 years overall, that I walked into a club, not knowing who was playing, and heard a man on stage who was really kicking ass. It was Charlie Daniels and his band, with two wailing guitars and two drummers, and I just said I have got to be this guy's agent. I pulled that off; and I represented Charlie and the CDB for 13 years.

Was it chance or luck that some years later after forming Empire Agency that I got a call from a friend that I hadn't talked to in 10 years and he said you've got to come check out Stevie Ray Vaughan. So I did; and I represented Stevie Ray Vaughan for his entire recording career. I became his agent first, in 1983, before his album came out; and later I managed Stevie. I was with him on the weekend of the helicopter crash in 1990.

I did not grow up in a household of entertainment people, not in New York or Los Angeles. So being in an entertainment world seems an unlikely path especially as there were no conferences like this or degrees as John Huie was saying. But I was influenced by music. My brothers and my mother influenced me by playing classical, jazz, and swing music. At the time, my brothers gave me albums like Frank Sinatra and Johnny Mercer, a Georgia native. During the period I started listening on my own to WAOK radio at night, not turning on the radio too loud, insuring not to wake mom and pop. But I got R&B music like the Coasters, Chuck Willis, Big Joe Turner, other R&B stuff; and I heard the voice of a lady DJ—they called her the Mystery Lady; and one of the first female DJs ever. She played The Penguins' "Earth Angel" and it was like magic.

I listened to a lot of Johnny Mercer tunes. He had a lot of hits in the war years. He also started Capitol Records. A song you probably all know that he wrote was "Moon River." But another earlier song had moved me, and it still does for the message and philosophy of this song. The song is "Accentuate the Positive." The kind of a hook line in the song was "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, and don't mess with Mr. In-Between." I love that song. But the idea of the song—taking this vast area between negative and positive, and personifying it as "Mr. In-Between"—was cool. So that really moved me a lot, especially for the word "positive" as it fits in with everything that I try to do. I believe the message of being positive fits with the credo of mine—you've got to "get it right." Whatever I'm doing I've spent these years trying to get it right.

The force of music is incredible and there are other potentially positive forces in your lives, such as a teacher, parents, and siblings. My brothers were a lot older than me, so they were more like heroes when I was young. And one brother had me as the ring bearer at his wedding. Another brother had me as the mascot for the De-

catur High School graduating class. Another gave me part-time jobs.

Anyway, as I was growing up, Elvis comes along. I listened to Elvis and I couldn't drive yet. And I had to go see him perform. As some of you might remember, attending your first concert might have been before you could drive and you go in the station-wagon with a mom or dad driving. I saw Elvis perform a matinee show at the Fox Theater in Atlanta, Georgia. The girls were screaming so loud that it wiped part of the concert out, but you're just watching him perform. It was unbelievable and totally awesome.

In terms of getting it right, there are so many stories that I could tell you, but I am going to give you a little story of my mother telling me that she wanted me to get the dandelions out of the yard. They had encroached in her yard and she was not a happy camper. So she gave me a paper bag and a tool, showed me how to do it, but I was not paying attention. I went out and got all the dandelions from this huge patch, put them in the paper bag, and took it to her for inspection. Now this is management—she is checking it out. She looks at them and she is very disappointed. She said to me, "You didn't get the roots. You have to get the roots." So we went out to the yard looking for the dandelions and she showed me again. And I want to tell you, it would have been a lot easier to do it right the first time because you can't find the dandelions if you have already taken the tops off. It was not easy and I got it done. And it was one of my first lessons in getting it right.

When you're moving along in this world, you want to get it right. You don't want to be a victim of trying to do crisis management. Though you may learn in a class about crisis management, in my experience crisis management is an art. It's also a heck of a lot better if you don't have the crisis, but if you do have one you get right by tackling the task of solving it right the first time. You have to go to the center of it and deal directly with it, find a solution, get some help and not let it just fester and sit there and become an ongoing situation that affects your entire organization for an extended period of time.

Mistakes can be fatal. Sometimes you look at a mistake and say it's just a small one. If your Blackberry isn't working because you didn't charge it, that could lead to a larger mistake. But, imagine a mistake like Lynyrd Sky-

nyrd's plane going down in that crash. You know why it went down? It ran out of gas. How hard would it have been to fill it up with gas? What a tragic shame.

A mistake could be like the coach at Georgia Tech who was hired for his dream job at Notre Dame. A writer decided to do a great story, like *Venues Today* does a great story on various aspects of our industry. In the Georgia Tech bio and the coaches bio there were errors, there were exaggerations. It eventually became known to everybody after reporters discovered the errors and exaggerations. Five days after George O'Leary got his dream job at Notre Dame he had to resign; he never coached a game at Notre Dame. But it tells you as students, and it tells you as teachers and mentors, be sure people don't lie on their resumes. Get it right.

Stevie Ray Vaughan's name is Stevie Ray Vaughan, V A U G H A N with an "A" before the "N." Sometimes it is spelled wrong and you'll see it maybe when downloading a song. But try to get it right. Gregg Allman: G R E G G, two G's. And someone might send out something and it would go out, sometimes, with one G. Just wrong! And that perpetuates other mistakes. So for Stevie, we put in the rider, V A U G H A N, if you get it wrong and if we find it anywhere—dressing room, on a coffee cup, even on a hand written note—you'll pay for the hotel rooms for the night. After that, people started getting it right.

You know, we are on duty, constantly. Like John Huie was saying, this is a lifetime or lifestyle business. We are on duty 24/7—we're on call. When you think about some events in history, in life, maybe 9/11, you remember where you were!

When John Kennedy, our President, was assassinated I know where I was. On November 22, 1963 I was in a little office, above a radio station in Macon, Georgia, booking bands that nobody heard of at that time.

The world stopped when President Kennedy was assassinated. But it didn't stop for me and Phil Walden's brother, Alan. Phil was in the service in Germany and Alan and I were in Macon booking the bands. The world didn't stop for us because we had to call the schools, and find out if we had potential cancellations. We had to call all the fraternities and find out the cancellations and we had to get in touch with the bands and be sure they didn't go if it was a cancellation.

So you are on duty all the time.

Later, in 1967, when I got out of the service, Otis, Phil, and Alan were really popping, and I joined them as an agent—then for Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Percy Sledge, Arthur Conley and other acts we booked. We had the largest R&B roster that there was. And years later, when I rejoined the field in 1970 and we started the new booking agency, we had The Allman Brothers Band. And we had another level of success.

I'd gone from R&B music to rock & roll music. I later signed Stevie Ray Vaughan, in 1983, with a promise that no shows would be less than 1,000 dollars a night. And before the run was over with Stevie he was a real legitimate headliner. He once won Tour Package of the Year and played multiple shows in some places. He headlined at Madison Square Garden. A few years before Stevie ever stepped foot in Madison Square Garden I promised him one of our goals we would achieve was for him to headline Madison Square Garden and sell it out—all the way around. And we got there, it was no longer on the bucket list. Selling out Madison Square Garden was a pretty big deal.

Over the years as a promoter a variety of changes occurred in the industry—buyouts occurred with the companies involved. A few years ago, in 2007, I rejoined Nederlander after first working there many years before. We promoted a lot of big shows at places like the Rose Bowl and Yankee Stadium in the 1990s. These are big, important venues and these complimented what we were doing at the Greek Theatre and other venues in Los Angeles.

I step back and marvel that 20 years ago was the 60th anniversary of the Greek Theater. As I mentioned, I used to listen to Frank Sinatra on my brother's albums. Then we made a deal for Frank Sinatra to perform as part of the 60th anniversary of the Greek Theater in 1991.

Now we have just finished the 80th year of the Greek Theater and in the 80th year we had Florence and The Machine which is one of the newer bands, some people in this room don't know Florence and The Machine. But it was an awesome two nights—sold out. We had Sugarland, John Huie's artist—for two sell outs at the Greek Theatre. During the 80th season we also had Adele.

So over the years, I have seen a lot of changes, a lot of wonderful moments. I've seen vinyl records and 78 rpms go by the way-side, unless you are a collector. Thirty-three rpms come and go, CD's come and virtually go. I have seen XM and Sirius replace much of radio, after earlier seeing FM replace AM as the radio choice for most music. We now have Pandora and Spotify for music on your computer, and you've got all your music easily available. You will find some misspelled artist names, but hopefully fewer and fewer. With all these changes—with the walkman coming and going—now it's iPhone, iPod, iPad, you know Apple's done a marvelous job.

There will be more changes. Technologies will change, music will change. Music will move you! Music will sell tickets, put people in seats. Music will change though, but it will continue to borrow from the past. Music will steal from life and experiences; and it will touch you in every way. I love every bit of it; I love promoting the show. I love going to the show. I love the negotiation.

One thing won't change—live entertainment. Live entertainment, sports and live music won't change, it will be here. Somebody will book the band, trucks and planes will roll and fly, somebody will turn on the lights. The fans will come and they'll get that unbelievable once-in-the-lifetime experience.

This award is awesome, it's outstanding. It just makes me feel good. It's really nice, and I appreciate John's words, and being here with all of you. I want to keep doing this. I'm still typing, like you—on email.

I will continue to work to “get it right” and these are the keys for me:

- Be Open to opportunity, so that “chance” may reveal a path,
- Be Prepared, so that “luck” may be maximized,
- Be Positive, so that I can move forward with confidence,
- Be Vigilant, so we can prevent errors and prevent crisis,
- And Be Myself

It's kind of like what Otis Redding sang in one of his songs—a song he never got to hear on the radio—“Sitting on the Dock of the Bay.” In this song one of my favorite lines is: “I can't do what 10 people tell me to do, guess I'll just have to remain the same.”

Thank you!