



**American Rental Association  
1900 19th St.  
Moline, IL 61265**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Two new inductees chosen for the Rental Hall of Fame**

(Nov. 9, 2009) MOLINE, IL –Two long-time rental industry leaders will be the newest inductees into the Rental Hall of Fame. The late Wilbert “Bill” Bourque and Michael Watts will be formally inducted during a ceremony at ***The Rental Show*** in Orlando, Fla., on Feb. 8.

### **Wilbert “Bill” Bourque**

The late Bill Bourque was a pioneer and rental industry leader who was instrumental in helping many people get started in the rental business. He was the former vice president of franchising at Taylor Rental Corp. and later the first general manager of Servistar’s then-new rental program, Grand Rental Station.

Bourque began his career with Taylor Rental in 1967 and his primary responsibility was working with owners on setup and display for new stores. In that capacity, he ultimately worked with more than 650 people entering the rental industry. Bourque attended the ARA convention and many regional shows for more than 20 years. He also presented seminars, both as an executive of Taylor Rental Corp. and as a franchise owner, and was the director of “Taylor Tech,” a training school that included both rental industry training and ARA information for all new rental center owners. Under his direction, Taylor Rental Corp. grew to have 620 stores in 49 states by 1980.

Bourque moved to Servistar in 1985, where he facilitated the opening of the first 100 Grand Rental Station operations. He received a President’s Gold Citation for successfully launching the Grand Rental Center program. He retired from Servistar in 1990.

— MORE —

In total, more than 750 entrepreneurs started in the rental business under Bourque's guidance. Some of those he helped became industry leaders themselves, including ARA Past President Richard Frechette of Quality Rental Centers, Pawtucket, R.I.; Doug Dartnell, a past ARA regional director from Taylor Rental, Concord, N.H.; Wayne Broadwater of Rental Depot, Manassas, Va.; John Bibbo Sr. of Event Source, Cleveland; and Roger Gamache Sr. of A&G Associates/Taylor Rental, Leominster, Mass.

### **Michael Watts**

Mike Watts entered the rental industry in 1970 as a sales rep for Apache Rentals. In 1977, in the midst of a recession, Watts purchased a single location rental store in Phoenix, which became Sunstate Equipment. Watts grew Sunstate from one location to 54 locations in eight states to become the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> largest rental company. Today he serves as chairman of Sunstate, continuing to lead innovation in the company.

Watts' success reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of this industry: an owner who began as a small independent rental operator who has maintained that independent spirit and work ethic throughout the growth of the company. Through the foundation of innovative management, financing, technology and marketing techniques, Watts identified business opportunities to capitalize upon. He has been a leader within the local and national rental associations, including at the international level, and in sharing expertise to benefit rental businesses and manufacturers, which is well recognized. He credits the company's success to quality employees who work well together on their commitment to serve the customer. Involvement and communication among the staff team builds the success of Sunstate, along with a strong focus to meet the needs of the marketplace.

In addition to founding Sunstate Equipment and auxiliary companies, Watts continues to have an active role in the construction industry and the business community. He is well recognized for his and his family's philanthropic contributions. His leadership continues to set a high standard of professionalism for this industry.

Watts and Sunstate remain an active ARA member.

The American Rental Association created the Rental Hall of Fame in 2000 to foster an appreciation of the historical development of the rental industry and the leaders who have made the industry what it is today. Each year, nominations are accepted to recognize individuals who have made a substantial impact on the industry at the national or international level. The induction ceremony is held during the keynote session at ***The Rental Show***.

— END —

**About ARA:** The American Rental Association ([www.ARARental.org](http://www.ARARental.org)) is an international trade association for the owners of equipment rental businesses and the manufacturers and suppliers of construction/industrial, general tool and party/event rental equipment. ARA members, which include more than 7,500 rental businesses and 1,000 manufacturers and suppliers, are located in every U.S. state, every Canadian province, and more than 40 countries worldwide. Now in its sixth decade of operation, ARA is the source for information, advocacy, business development tools, education and training, networking and marketplace opportunities for the rental equipment industry throughout the world. ***The Rental Show*** ([www.TheRentalShow.com](http://www.TheRentalShow.com)) is owned and managed by the American Rental Association.

***The Rental Show* Public Relations Contact:**

Chris Coleman, [chris.coleman@ararental.org](mailto:chris.coleman@ararental.org), 800-334-2177, ext. 266