

TheDrum.com

Clio Sports honoree Mario Andretti talks about his personal brand on and off the racetrack

By [Lisa Lacy](#) - 17 May 2017 16:57pm



Racing icon Mario Andretti received the [Stuart Scott Lifetime Achievement Award*](#) at the Clio Sports Awards on Tuesday (May 16).

The award celebrates a major figure in sports whose career-long contributions have made a lasting impact on the advertising industry – and Andretti certainly fits the bill.

“[The award] is a little bit outside my wheelhouse, but it’s wonderful and I appreciate it,” Andretti told The Drum. “The creative people are here. I’ve worked with creative people my entire career. I’ve learned from that – how to try and advance brands.”

Andretti's own brand includes a five-decade career with wins at the Indianapolis 500, the Daytona 500, the Formula One World Championship and the Indy Car National Championship, to name a few.

He told The Drum the secret to maintaining a personal brand as long as he has is hard work and pride.

"It takes a long time to create that, so I've been very fortunate. I always say I count my blessings every day because I had a long career and I know how many bullets I had to dodge to do that. And it's not a given, and so that has given me exposure and longevity, and I was able to accomplish most all of my ambitious goals," Andretti added. "It's something you have to cultivate and you hope that you have your family behind you that understands. I was armed with all of that."

ESPN's Hannah Storm, who hosted the evening's festivities, said the Andretti name is in and of itself an iconic brand.

"It speaks of an era but also of timelessness. He's still such a handsome man, so together, so powerful in the world of business," she told The Drum. "Look at where his legacy has spread to, in his sport and beyond. He's taken something like racing, that has a very devoted audience, and he's known worldwide. It's still a name that resonates today. He's a very appropriate honoree."

Storm has her own personal brand, one built on a solid core of journalism, interviewing the biggest names in sports, but also branching out into producing, directing and branded content, as well as leading the Hannah Storm Foundation, which funds surgeries for kids around the world who suffer from vascular anomalies.

Even with as many sports celebrities as Storm has interviewed, being able to hand Andretti the award named after her late colleague and friend Scott, was an honor for her, especially since the Andretti name spans generations and is synonymous with family. The Andrettis have remained a fixture in racing over the years as subsequent generations – including now retired son Michael and grandson Marco – have gotten behind the wheel.

"I'm proud of what we're doing. We have a family legacy here now. We're going to third generation drivers. It's a sport that has been our life, certainly my life, and it's treated me very, very well," Andretti said. "I have a very competitive family around me. My kids, they all have passions for what they do. They are, on top of everything else, very competitive, and that's what we like. We beat the hell out of each other.

They don't give the old man any kind of a break, and I like that, even though I get mad about it. But it seems that's what prevails in our family."

Andretti has certainly remained active in retirement, working with brands like Bridgestone Firestone, MagnaFlow, Mattel, Phillips Van Heusen, Honda and GoDaddy. He also has a number of personal business ventures including a winery and petroleum business.

As for how he chooses the brands he works with, Andretti said it's all about a win-win situation rooted in a common interest.

"And it's cyclical," he added. "Things change. But for us, our sport does not exist without sponsors present. If we are winners, obviously we get more exposure, and exposure is what the brands really want, and they want to be proud of that. So you have to be able to deliver. It can be brands totally unrelated to the mechanical side of our sport. For the longest time we had K-Mart. They used cross-marketing. Target has done that. So there are many ways to maximize the situation. K-Mart was able to track the exposure value, and they were getting 16 to 20 times the exposure value than they were paying. And I know because the chairman and CEO of K-Mart is a good friend of mine. Actually, he's a partner in the winery, so we know all the numbers. It's all about maximizing the situation and producing value."

In addition to Andretti, brands including Nike, Under Armour, Gatorade, North Face, Foot Locker, ESPN, Adidas and the Paralympics 'We're the Superhumans' were recognized at Clio Sports this year.

<http://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/05/17/clio-sports-honoree-mario-andretti-talks-about-his-personal-brand-and-the-racetrack>

###

***To learn more about the legendary Stuart Scott, visit <https://clios.com/news/2015-stuart-scott-lifetime-achievement-award>.**