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ARCOPEDICO NAMED NSRA 2018 VENDOR OF THE YEAR

Tucson, AZ (November 5, 2018) – The National Shoe Retailers Association (NSRA) honored Arcopedico, a strong supporter of independent footwear retailers, as its 2018 Vendor of the Year during NSRA's Annual Leadership Conference, held October 31-November 1 in National Harbor, MD.

"My grandparents, Manuel and Virginia Simas, were traveling in Portugal in the early 1980s," explains Sydney Simas, Arcopedico's marketing and sales director, adding, "My grandmother's feet were killing her, and she bought her first pair of Arcopedico shoes in a pharmacy. She fell in love with the brand." When they returned to the United States, they tracked down the telephone number of the Arcopedico factory so Virginia could order one pair in every color for herself.

Her enthusiasm led them to begin selling the brand, not previously available in the U.S., at their California gift shop. Arcopedico footwear is handmade using a patented metal-free design, with flexible footwear features including twin arch supports, one on the outside and one on the inside, which help distribute body weight naturally. A lightweight, colorful knitted upper adapts to the natural contours of the foot, providing support and comfort while allowing the foot to breathe and blood to flow unrestricted to the toes. In 2011, Arcopedico introduced patented Lytech material, an innovative ultra-light blend of polyurethane and Lycra, to the line, making the 11-ounce machine-washable shoes a natural for travelers.

The footwear became a hot seller at the gift shop, prompting the Simas family to focus on selling footwear, and Simco Imported Shoes was launched. In 1993, Simco Imported Shoes moved to Reno, Nevada, where son Dan joined the company, followed a few years later by son Doug; today, Dan and Doug run the company, with Dan's daughter Sydney and son Shane handling daily operations.

"Thanks to [my grandparents'] dedication, Arcopedico has become known as the original knitted shoe, a high-quality comfort brand specializing in lightweight, anatomically-designed, arch- and circulation-supporting shoes handmade in Portugal," says Sydney. Independent shoe stores are key to our marketing plan: "We look for sit-and-fit type stores with a staff we can train to recognize how our brand might be perfect for someone with bunions or hammer toes, for example, or other fitting issues," she explains.

Internal customer service reps provide personal service to all retailers; the Simas family sees them as one of the company's biggest assets, according to Sydney Simas. "Retailers can call, email, fax or use the B2B website to place orders. We want our brand to work in the stores. Independent retailers are the reason we are in business, and we are very grateful for all the friendships we've developed over the years. The shoe industry is such a special industry, with lots of open communication between vendors and retailers. Everyone is willing to help you, so we feel really lucky."

In presenting the award, past NSRA chairman Mark Denkler (Vince Canning Shoes and Tootsies, Delray Beach, FL) called Simco Imported Shoes "a genuine pleasure to partner and work with. The Simas family understands retailing and wholesaling, and the fact that their brand prospers when retailers prosper. For independent shoe retailers, Arcopedico represents a real win-win."

Dan Simas accepted the award on behalf of Arcopedico and Simco Imported Shoes, saying, "Coming from NSRA, this award is really special. We're grateful to the independent shoe retailing community and we look forward to continuing to do mutually beneficial business with you."

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NSRA president Chuck Schuyler agrees. “Because NSRA represents family businesses, our members understand the challenges inherent in passing a business on to the next generation. They appreciate how well the Simas family has transitioned into its third generation, and how each of those generations has worked hard to help independent retailers succeed with Arcopedico. The original knit shoe and its American distributors are a model of how to succeed in business.”

About NSRA
NSRA was founded in 1912 to represent independent shoe retailers and provide their companies with business services, education programs and information resources that help them remain profitable and on the leading edge of retail. For more information, please visit www.nsra.org.

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