



VISIONARY AWARD Maurice Benard

Night IN With NAMI's special guest and Visionary Award honoree was Maurice Benard, two-time daytime Emmy winner who has played Sonny on the ABC daytime drama *General Hospital* for the past 27 years.

Diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 22, Benard has been a long-time advocate for persons affected by mental illness. *He made the courageous decision years ago to have his mental illness written into his on-screen character. When Bernard is not on the GH set or spreading motivation during speaking engagements around the country, he is busy acting for the big screen, writing his candid autobiography, and creating video segments for his inspirational website, State of Mind.*

Earlier this year, Bernard received The Clifford W. Beers Award, Mental Health America's highest honor presented annually to an individual for his efforts to improve conditions for and attitudes toward people living with mental health conditions.

Upon learning of his selection for the Visionary Award, Benard thanked NAMI for believing in him from the start. "I think that you were the first organization to acknowledge the importance of what I was trying to do."

As part of the Night IN With NAMI program, local playwright and performer David Lee White will interview Benard about his 2020 *NY Times* best-selling memoir *Nothing General About It: How Love (and Lithium) Saved Me On and Off General Hospital*.