

2007 Who's Who in Hospitality Honorees

Birmingham Business Journal - April 27, 2007

Bryon Archer Event facility leader
Title: CEO/COO

Organization: WorkPlay

Job description: To successfully manage and maintain the WorkPlay business model with a focus on developing strategies that promote financial growth and stability as well as operational efficiency.

Primary achievement: The successful restructuring of WorkPlay, which has resulted in a more than 100% increase in total company revenue in less than one year.

Other accomplishments: My other passion in life since I was sixteen is songwriting. A popular musician has recorded one of my songs and has now sold several thousand copies of the album. In addition, I have received recognition from major record industry executives for my abilities as a songwriter.

Civic Endeavors: Through involvement with WorkPlay, we are able to host many fundraising events for organizations including St. Judes and Childrens Hospital. In addition, as a member of the City Stages Associate Board I have been able to contribute to promoting community minded growth through the annual City Stages festival.

Kevin Arrington Facility leader
Title: Director

Organization: Boutwell Memorial Auditorium

Job description: Oversees the day-to-day operations of the facility, which hosts a number of different events.

Primary achievement: The facility was renovated in both 1988 and in 2005 and the center will soon be a historic location in the National Park System because it is already included in the Birmingham Civil Rights National Register District.

Eddie Barnes Theater leader
Title: Managing director

Organization: Birmingham Children's Theatre

Job description: Serves as the director and choreographer for the acclaimed Birmingham Children's Theatre.

Primary achievement: Established the University of Alabama Dance Program in 1987.

Other accomplishments: Was the founding director of the First American Ballet Theatre, New York City/University of Alabama Summer Intensive Training Program and established the first Radio City Rockette Summer Intensive in the nation, the dance program was fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance, was named professor emerita of theater and dance prior to joining the Children's Theatre, was honored with an endowed scholarship by the University of Alabama in February 2007.

Cody Benson Restaurant manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Tavern on the Summit

Job description: Oversees the operations of a restaurant that accomodates 250 and serves traditional American cuisine.

Primary achievement: Has served as general manager of the restaurant for five years. The restaurant itself has been open for eight years.

Civic endeavors: The restaurant is involved in numerous nonprofit agencies and charities.

Daniel Briggs Restaurant owner
Title: Owner

Organization: daniel george Restaurant and Bar

Job description: Chef, owner and operator of daniel george restaurant & bar in Mountain Brook

Village. Daily and seasonal menu development in conjunction with consistent staff training.

Primary achievement: Graduate of The University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., graduate of Johnson & Wales Culinary School in Vail, Colo., married to Beth Vest Briggs and has one daughter, Mia.

John Brigham Event center director
Title: Director

Organization: Gardendale Civic Center

Job description: Oversees all the operations of the Gardendale Civic Center, which is equipped to host many types of events.

Sabrina Bouska Butler Event director
Title: Tournament director

Organization: Bruno Event Team/Regions Charity Classic

Job description: Managing all aspects of the Regions Charity Classic, Champions Tour event.

Primary achievement: Working my way through graduate school and getting a job in the sports industry.

Other accomplishments: Entire career to date has been in the event management field and my goal to become a tournament director has now been achieved. I am proud to say that I am one of only four women tournament directors on the Champions Tour.

Civic Endeavors: Very fulfilled working on the Regions Charity Classic as each year all of our proceeds are donated to worthwhile charitable organizations - over \$9 million to date, actively participates in the College Hills Neighborhood Association, board member for Media for Health, Inc., which produces radio soap operas that teach health issues affecting the African American community.

Paul Campbell Restaurant manager
Title: Head coach (general manager) Organization: Shula's Steak House

Job description: Directs all aspects of this \$2.5M 150-seat restaurant; design promotion and marketing strategies; supervise, train, and mentor 35 personnel, ensuring delivery of exceptional service; develop and manage wine list featuring over 100 wines.

Primary achievement: Maintained such high standards regarding operations, food, and service, that Birmingham is now the highest rated store in the company.

Other accomplishments: Created and opened two restaurants named to Esquire Magazine's list of America's Best New Restaurants, earned AAA Four-Diamond Award, conducted complex project analysis and offered innovative approaches to restructure the existing business model of CNN Center facilitating development of a flexible food and beverage strategy that effectively met the ever-changing needs of CNN Center, designed an interactive Human Resources Intranet site for Warner Bros. Studio, established logical design methods that enhanced programming and maximized performance of site currently accessed by 10,000 employees.

Civic Endeavors: An active member of the Knights of Columbus and a supporter of the Jimmie Hale Mission. Serve as a volunteer in local classrooms.

Mike Clarke Hotel leader
Title: Marketing consultant

Organization: Alta Vista Hotel & Conference Center

Job description: Sales and marketing consultant, developing and implementing individual and group sales & marketing plans, and developing conference and social meetings market segments.

Primary achievement: 48 years in the hospitality industry with 8 years as VP of Operations for Dunfey Hotels of Boston prior to forming Coventry Consulting Inc.

Other accomplishments: Masters degree-Business Administration, commercial pilot, past president of the Birmingham Hotel Motel Association, past member of the board of directors of Birmingham Jefferson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Governors Staff for Tourism & Travel in Tennessee, co-owner of DigiTrax Productions recording studios in Birmingham.

Civic endeavors: Search and rescue pilot, and director of emergency services personnel for the Alabama Wing of the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary.

David Cohen Restaurant/hotel leader
Title: Director of Food and Beverages

Organization: The Wynfrey Hotel

Job description: Oversees all culinary aspects of the Wynfrey including the Chicory Grill, Shula's Steakhouse, Ivory's Lounge and others.

Primary achievement: Brunches at the Chicory Grill are extremely popular and have won several awards, including being voted the number one brunch in Birmingham by the Birmingham News.

Other accomplishments: Previously worked at the Westin Hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

John Collins Amusement park director
Title: General manager

Organization: Alabama Adventure

Job description: Oversees all aspects of the largest amusement park in Alabama, including sales and marketing, staff and operations.

Primary achievement: Since arriving at Alabama Adventure, has helped sustain the park's status as the top amusement park in Alabama and one of the top tourist attractions in the state.

Other accomplishments: Has worked in the theme park business for over 30 years, began working in the industry at the age of 15 and worked throughout college; previously worked at Six Flags.

Civic endeavors: The park is involved in several charitable causes and activities.

Rebecca Corretti Catering company owner
Title: Owner

Organization: Carraway-Davie House & Conference Center and Corretti Catering

Job description: Supervises the Carraway-Davie House & Conference Center's in-house catering, while her husband, Ken Effinger, serves as general manager. Serves as owner of Corretti Catering, which provides a wide range of both on and offsite catering options.

Primary achievement: Along with her husband, has taken the business from a small operation to a large, competitive establishment that provides top-quality, professional service to the community.

Other accomplishments: Previously served as catering director at Ruth's Chris Steak House in Birmingham, and has also worked for the Four Seasons Cliff Hotel in San Francisco, the Ritz Carlton in Chicago and the Le Parker Meredien Hotel in New York.

Civic endeavors: Multiple Sclerosis Society, Magic Moments, the National Humane Society and Hand and Paw.

David Cross Catering company leader
Title: Chief executive chef

Organization: Culinard Catering

Job description: Oversees the retail operations for Culinard, the Culinary Institute of Virginia College, which includes the Bakery at Culinard, the new Bakery at Innovation Depot, and Culinard Catering, which caters throughout the metro area plus contract foodservice at locations including Pelham Civic Complex and Ballantrae Golf Club.

Primary achievement: Certified Executive Chef certification from the American Culinary Federation, graduate of Oklahoma State University with a bachelors degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management.

Other accomplishments: Works to involve Culinard students in retail operations, completed Westin International Apprenticeship Program, Certified HACCP Management, and National Sanitation Foundation Silver Medal at ACF Culinary Competition, is also Chef Grillardin, International Chaine des Rotisseurs, and past president of the American Culinary Federation, Columbia, Mo. Chapter.

Civic endeavors: Has two children on scholarship at the University of Alabama, has worked with Taste of the Nation Star Chefs Benefit for March of Dimes and the Liver Foundation's annual benefit.

Richard L. Davis Conference center manager
Title: General manager

Organization: The Cahaba Grand Conference Center

Job description: Responsible for the day-to-day management of the Cahaba Grand Conference Center including organizing and directing all conference services, marketing strategies, and financial management. Primary achievement: Transitioning the Cahaba Grand from a private corporate facility to a public-use facility.

Other accomplishments: Designated a Certified Meeting Professional by the Convention Industry Council. Current Steering Committee Chairman for the Alabama Branch of the National Business Travel Association. Served on the Product Advisory Board of CEO Software Solutions.

Civic endeavors: Active in fundraising for local charities including the American Heart Association and Camp Smile-A-Mile.

Renee Deason Hotel marketing leader
Title: Director of Sales and Marketing

Organization: The Hotel Highland at Five Points South

Job description: Currently leading the sales and marketing efforts of what was formerly known as the Pickwick Hotel.

Primary achievement: Has an extensive track record in sales, marketing, food and beverage, as well as operations; consistently reaches achievements set forth both in a professional and personal environment.

Civic endeavors: Currently or will soon be a member of the Birmingham Hospitality Association, Birmingham Lodging Association, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce and several other tourism, civic and charitable organizations.

Ken Effinger Event center manager
Title: Owner

Organization: Carraway-Davie House & Conference Center

Job description: Serves as general manager of the house, along with wife, Rebecca Corretti, who oversees the facility's in-house catering. He oversees staffing, maintenance, renovations and future development.

Primary achievement: Has taken the business from a small operation to a large, competitive establishment that continues to provide top-quality, professional service to the Birmingham community.

Other accomplishments: Next-stage developments include expansion of the facility and its catering enterprise.

Civic endeavors: Multiple Sclerosis Society, Magic Moments, National Humane Society and Hand in Paw.

Martin Everse State park leader
Title: Park administrator

Organization: Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park

Job description: Oversees the day-to-day operations of the park, which is located on approximately 500 acres in McCalla.

Primary achievement: Has worked at the historical park since 1993.

Other accomplishments: Previously worked at Brierfield Ironworks Historical State Park and also served as the county administrator for Bibb County.

Civic endeavors: Actively involved in the Cahaba River Society and in the promotion of the Cahaba Lily Festival in West Blocton.

Jack Fields Convention center director
Title: Executive director

Organization: Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex

Job description: Manages the BJCC, which includes a 220,000-square-foot exhibition hall, 100,000-square-feet in meeting rooms, a state-of-the-art Medical Forum Conference Center and office build, a 19,000-seat arena, 3,000-seat concert hall, 1,000-seat theater and a 770 room hotel.

Primary achievement: Named executive director in December 2004.

Other accomplishments: Previously served as the director of real estate and business development and was responsible for the daily operation of the convention complex and the Medical Forum Conference Center, was also a partner in a Birmingham commercial real estate company and worked in shopping center management.

Civic endeavors: Member of the International Association of Assembly Managers, chairman of the Gardendale Planning and Zoning Commission and is active in the Downtown Civitan Club.

Beth Floyd Event center manager
Title: Executive director

Organization: The Harbert Center

Job description: Manages nonprofit community-based event facility; responsible for day-to-day operations and employee matters; prepares monthly financials and annual budgets; responsible for marketing activities.

Primary achievement: Created a more united, cohesive environment among the food service and center management.

Other accomplishments: Oversaw \$800,000 renovation; raised profile of the organization through expanded marketing efforts and helped the company realize profits for the first time in 20 years; developed strategic marketing plan; created balanced budget and stay true to being a diplomatic leader with a commitment to transparent leadership, honesty and integrity.

Civic Endeavors: Current president of the International Facility Management Association; member, Kiwanis Club of Birmingham; 2005, 2006 United Way Allocations Team member; 2002-2004 board of directors, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce; 2002-2004 board of directors, Girl's Inc.; member 2003-2004 YWCA Momentum Executive Women's Leadership class; 2004-2006 Steering Committee, YWCA Purse and Passion event.

Dr. William Foster Zoo leader
Title: CEO

Organization: The Birmingham Zoo

Job description: Oversees the operation of the Birmingham Zoo, which is a fully accredited, nonprofit zoological park with more than 700 species located on a 122-acre site.

Primary achievement: Before becoming CEO of the Birmingham Zoo, led the complete transformation of the Louisville Zoo, including an eight-phase, \$140 million master plan project.

Other accomplishments: Worked at the Louisville Zoo for 27 years before coming to Birmingham. The \$15 million Gorilla Forest Exhibit added during his tenure received the 2003 American Zoo and Aquarium Association Exhibit Award. He earned his doctor of veterinary medicine and bachelor of sciences degrees from Tuskegee University. Since he became executive director of the Louisville Zoo in 1989, revenue increased from \$600,000 to \$10.2 million and attendance grew to approximately 871,000 people.

Civic endeavors: Past president of the American Association of Zoo Veterinarians; currently serves as chairman of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, founding member of the Louisville Arts and Cultural Attractions Board and served on the board of the Louisville Automotive Club.

Catherine Gilmore Arts leader
Title: President

Organization: The Metropolitan Arts Center and Virginia Samford Theatre.

Job description: Oversees the operations of both the theatre and the Metropolitan Arts Center, which is a united arts fund and central arts agency dedicated to promoting and cultivating the arts in Birmingham. Primary achievement: In 2001, she co-chaired the \$3 million fund-raising campaign to restore and renovate the historic Clark Memorial Theatre as a multi-purpose arts center for the Birmingham community - now re-named the Virginia Samford Theatre.

Other accomplishments: Founded the BRAVO! Birmingham Arts Festival, creator and producer of the Alabama Ballet's first City Dance inner city outreach program, Leadership Birmingham graduate, 2005 Women in History Award nominee, Festival of Arts Silber Bowl recipient for outstanding contribution to the arts, 2001 Alabama Operaworks Founder's Award, responsible for the formation and coordination of the Birmingham Metropolitan Orchestra.

Civic endeavors: Member of the board of directors and past distinguished secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Birmingham; former member of the board of directors for Operation New Birmingham.

Jim Griffin Museum director
Title: Director

Organization: Southern Museum of Flight

Job description: Oversees the operation of the Southern Museum of Flight which houses several aviation history exhibits, as well as the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame.

Primary achievement: Named director of the museum in June 2005 and began his tenure in September of that year.

Other accomplishments: Holds several pilots' licenses including commercial fixed-wing, commercial helicopter and commercial gyroplane ratings with over 2,000 hours of flying time, member of the Experimental Aircraft Association and has built, modified, owned and flown many experimental and classic aircraft, also an accomplished acrobatic pilot, member of the Birmingham Aero Club and has served as the club's air show chairman.

Gene Hallman Event team director
Title: President and CEO

Organization: Bruno Event Team

Job description: Oversees the operations of the sports marketing and event management company which hosts numerous major sporting events in the Birmingham area.

Primary achievement: Founded the Bruno Event Team in 1995, along with partner Ronald Bruno. The team currently employs more than 60 people.

Other accomplishments: Also serves as executive director of the Alabama Sports Foundation, which he created and began in 1995, and as president and CEO of Zoom Motorsports, which is the exclusive promoter of events at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham. Has served as executive director of the Regions Charity Classic, an official Champions Tour Event that has raised more than \$8 million for Alabama charities.

Civic endeavors: Member of the United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Society; the Children's Literacy Guild Advisory Board; co-chairman of the Alabama chapter of "The First Tee;" selection committee member of the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame; serves on the advisory board of the Alabama State Sports Commission, the Birmingham Pledge and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Business.

Sara Hamlin Tourism leader
Title: Vice president of tourism

Organization: Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

Job description: Promoting and marketing Birmingham as a tourism destination to consumers, tour groups, reunion planners and others; also assists with promoting major events for the past 15 years.

Primary achievement: Increasing the booking in terms of the number of consumers visiting Birmingham.

Other accomplishments: Serves on the American Bus Association board of directors and board of governors and recently completed certification through Indiana University.

Civic endeavors: Currently actively involved in the YWCA board of directors and with the City Stages event.

Chris Hastings Restaurant chef/owner
Title: Chef/owner

Organization: Hot and Hot Fish Club

Job description: Owns and operates the Hot and Hot Fish Club a local, fine-dining restaurant that also includes Hot and Hot On Location, a full-service catering company and Hastings Creations which features signature food items and products.

Primary achievement: Chef Chris Hastings received the Robert Mondavi Culinary Award for Excellence in 1998.

Other accomplishments: This year Chris has been nominated for the "Best Chef in the South" by the James Beard Foundation, also serves as an Alabama ambassador for the Wild American Shrimp organization, the Hot and Hot Fish Club have been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and various other national publications.

Civic Endeavors: Inducted as a member of Leadership Birmingham in 2005, along with wife, Idie, also donates his resources and/or time to the Greater Birmingham Humane Society, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and The Community Kitchens of Birmingham.

Idie Hastings Restaurant owner
Title: Owner

Organization: The Hot and Hot Fish Club

Job description: Along with husband, Chris, who is the chef, co-owns and operates the Hot and Hot Fish Club, which is a local fine-dining restaurant that includes Hot and Hot on Location, a full-services catering company and Hastings Creations, which features signature food items and products.

Primary achievement: Received the Birmingham Business Journal's Top Birmingham Women Award in 2003.

Other accomplishments: The Hastings and the Hot and Hot Fish Club have been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Bon Appetit, Gourmet, Cooking Light, Coastal Living and various other national publications.

Civic endeavors: Serves on the board of the UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center, along with her husband, Chris, donates their resources and/or time to the Greater Birmingham Humane Society, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and The Community Kitchens of Birmingham.

Gaynell Hendricks Airport leader
Title: Chairwoman

Organization: Birmingham International Airport Authority

Job description: Chairs the board of directors for the largest international airport in the state.

Primary achievement: Was named the first female director of the Birmingham International Airport Authority board of directors.

Other accomplishments: Currently operates five full-service preschools for children ages three weeks to 6 years old, has degrees from LeMoyné-Owen College and Memphis State University, was named the Entrepreneur of the Year from the National Black MBA Association's Birmingham Chapter, was named the Outstanding Female Entrepreneur by the Auburn University School of Business and was featured in Black Enterprise magazine.

Civic endeavors: Currently serves on the board of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the Birmingham Zoo Inc., the Regional Cultural Alliance, the Alys Stephens Center, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, the American Red Cross and the Summit Club; also a member of the Women's Network, Rotary, the Birmingham Chapter of Links Inc. and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

Danny Hiatt Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: The Wynfrey Hotel

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Job description: Responsible for overall direction and management of all facets of an upscale, Four Diamond property with more than 300 employees.

Primary achievement: Has more than 32 years in hotel management, received the 1996 Presidents Award from Grand Heritage Hotels for the Tutwiler, named Alabama's 2000 Hotelier of the Year for the Wynfrey Hotel.

Other accomplishments: Has helped the Wynfrey achieve Four Diamond status for 22 consecutive years; elected chairman of the Alabama Hospitality Association and the Greater Birmingham Convention Bureau; selected president of the Birmingham Lodging Association; the Wynfrey was named as one of the "Best in Business" in the suburban hotel category by Lodging Hospitality Magazine; has received the Pinnacle Award from the readers of Successful Meeting magazine for the last eight consecutive years; the Wynfrey Hotel was voted as having the best brunch by the Birmingham News and Birmingham Magazine.

Civic endeavors: Served on the board of directors for the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce for four years.

Barry Hoehn Tourism leader
Title: Director of Convention Sales

Organization: Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

Job description: Responsible for leading the bureau's world-renowned sales team that consistently achieves and exceeds its goal of making Birmingham a destination of choice for meeting planners.

Primary achievement: Named director of convention sales for the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2005 after joining the bureau as national sales manager in 2004.

Other accomplishments: Has many years of experience in the hospitality industry, previously served as director of sales at the Campbell House in Lexington, Ky. as director of sales and marketing for Edgewater Beach Resort Management Inc. in Panama City Beach, Fla., and at the Renaissance Hotel at World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Fla.

Wanda Hogan Restaurant owner
Title: Owner

Organization: La Cocina

Job description: Oversees the day-to-day operation, including the staff.

Primary achievement: Having maintained a good relationship with a consistent client base for more than 27 years.

Other accomplishments: Winner of several restaurant awards including the Best Burrito and Best Hot Sauce awards from Birmingham Magazine.

Civic endeavors: Supports the Boy and Girl Scouts of America and have also made considerable donations to local schools in the area and have given donations and support of several departments at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Tim Hoover Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: The Redmont Hotel

Job description: Oversee all aspects of the hotel including but not limited to the front desk, housekeeping, sales and marketing, maintenance and food and beverage.

Primary achievement: Advancing from assistant general manager to general manager in only three months time.

Other accomplishments: Awarded White Glove Award in 2003, awarded Elite Property of the Year Award in 2004.

Civic endeavors: Member of the lodging association, the local chamber of commerce and the convention and convention and bureau.

Eric Hoxit Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Birmingham Airport Hotel & Suites

Job description: Oversees and directs operations for a 196-room airport hotel with 3000+ ft. of flexible meeting space as well as food & beverage facilities.

Primary achievement: The job our team does everyday- providing each of our guests with first-class service.

Other accomplishments: Managing partner of Ala-Tcos International, L.L.C. a hospitality development and consulting company aiming to be the premiere developer of environmentally friendly sportfishing, eco-tourism and adventure destinations in Central America. Ala-Tcos current projects include Laguna Nueve Jungle Fishing Adventures, and Costa Ricas first Ultra-Luxury Sportfishing resort, The Lodge at Laguna Nueve, on Costa Ricas Caribbean coast.

Civic endeavors: Vice-President of the Alabama Friends of Cost Rica, a non-profit organization with the goal of strengthening cultural and educational ties between the people of Alabama and Costa Rica.

Mary Jones Event facility manager
Title: Manager

Organization: Park Lane

Job description: Manages the day-to-day activities of Park Lane and coordinates events.

Primary achievement: Started out as a server and worked way up to management and event coordination.

Other accomplishments: While working for one of the top caterers in Birmingham, helped husband build and operate a small business and raised two grandchildren.

Glenda Kennedy Theater leader
Title: Executive director

Organization: Birmingham Broadway Series

Job description: Leads Birmingham Broadway, which has brought national touring Broadway shows to Birmingham for 17 seasons.

Primary achievement: The organization's 45 performances of "The Lion King" brought people to Birmingham from 29 different states to see the show.

James Koikos Restaurant owner
Title: Owner and manager

Organization: Bright Star Restaurant

Job description: Manages front-of-house operations including greeting and seating customers and organizing front-of-house personnel - hostesses, cashiers and servers.

Primary achievement: Third-generation owner (along with brother, Nicky), of a business that has flourished in downtown Bessemer for 100 years.

Civic endeavors: Member of two bank boards, active in Shriners and the Jesters, active member of Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bright Star has been influential in the revitalization of downtown Bessemer, member and past president of the Red Elephant Club.

Mike Lal Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Ram Hospitality LLC, DBA Quality Inn Vestavia

Job description: General manager of Quality Inn Vestavia and regional manager of multiple properties including the Holiday Inn Express in Trussville, striving for excellent customer service while containing costs.

Primary achievement: Achieved significantly improved bottom line at the properties by focusing on quality of product and level of service while keeping costs within line.

Other accomplishments: Graduated Bachelor of Science with honors in physics from the University of Delhi in India in 1980, MBA in Information Systems from the University of Dallas in 1983; certified hotel administrator in 2006 from the Educational Institute. Acquired several properties in the last 10 years and improved business.

Civic endeavors: Active member of church and community and has helped raise funds for church and community needs, member of the chamber of commerce and is also very family oriented and tries to express those family values in the community.

Grant Lynch Jr. Speedway manager
Title: President

Organization: Talladega Superspeedway

Job description: Oversees the operations of Talladega Superspeedway, which hosts several races, including NASCAR Nextel Cup races.

Primary achievement: Named general manager of Talladega Superspeedway in January of 1993 and was promoted to vice president of International Speedway Corp. and president of Talladega Superspeedway in November of the same year.

Other accomplishments: Was appointed to oversee construction and manage Kansas Speedway in 1997; named president of Great Western Sports to lead its efforts to construct a track near Seattle in 2004; previously served for 11 years with R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., where he managed the company's involvement in NASCAR Winston Cup racing.

Civic endeavors: Serves on numerous boards, including the board of directors Regions Bank of Talladega County, Antique Talladega, the local Boy Scouts Council and he has been chairman of the Talladega Economic Development Authority since 1993. He is also on the Alabama Wildlife Federation Board, the state Board of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Alabama

Institute for Deaf and Blind.

Bryne B. MacCann Museum events manager
Title: Special events manager

Organization: Birmingham Museum of Art

Job description: Plans and implements corporate events and parties as well as weddings and receptions, responsible for marketing the Birmingham Museum of Art as premier event space in Birmingham. Primary achievement: Striving to ensure that guests at events are having a great experience at the Birmingham Museum of Art as well as providing clients with excellent service so that they are worry free when planning an event.

Alan Martin Restaurant chef/manager
Title: Chef and general manager

Organization: The Standard Bistro

Job description: Oversees the restaurant operations to provide guests with a consistent, quality dining experience, which requires daily operations management, staffing, creative menu development, staff training, purchasing, receiving, bookkeeping, marketing and a healthy dose of cooking.

Primary achievement: Graduated with honors from the Culinary Arts Program, AIA, Sous Chef Highland's Bar & Grill and Bottega, executive chef at The Victoria Inn (Anniston) and Metro Grill, executive chef and general manager Standard Bistro.

Other accomplishments: Has been featured in the Birmingham News, Birmingham Business Journal's Luxury Living, Southern Living, Birmingham Magazine and Portico and has appeared on the Food Network's shows "Best Of" and "Top Five," recently made numerous appearances locally on the Fox 6 morning show, voted one of Birmingham's "Best Chefs" in Birmingham Weekly.

Civic endeavors: Active in Magic Moments, Share Our Strength, Kid One Transport, Alabama Wildlife Center, American Heart Assoc., Children's Hospital Foundation, Alabama Head Injury Foundation and Magic City Art Connection.

Susan Mason Event center manager
Title: Managing partner

Organization: B&A Warehouse

Job description: Manages day to day operations, plans corporate, social and off-site events and executes marketing for continued growth. As the community representative of B&A, Mason constantly monitors the quality of all aspects of her business.

Primary achievement: In less than 5 years has nurtured B&A into one of the largest caterers in Birmingham with sales of over \$2 million.

Other accomplishments: Increased full time employees from 5 to 20 with part time in excess of 75. In addition to health and dental benefits, B&A employees enjoy a 401(k) plan. As a company B&A has contributed more than \$100,000 in-kind last year to nonprofit groups.

Civic Endeavors: Part of B&A's success is Mason's involvement to the community. She serves as president of the Symphony Volunteer Council, board member of the Full Life Ahead Foundation and Magic City Actors Theatre. Mason is also a member of NAWBO, Women's Exchange, Greater Birmingham Humane Society, Opera Birmingham and AWEP.

George McMillan Chef/restaurant owner
Title: Chef/owner

Organization: daniel george

Job description: Chef, owner and operator of daniel george restaurant & bar in Mountain Brook Village. Daily and seasonal menu development in conjunction with consistent staff training.

Primary achievement: 7 years of service in the Birmingham Metropolitan Area, 9 years of marriage to Meredith McMillan

Civic Endeavors: President of Birmingham Originals, local chapter of CIRA (Council of Independent Restaurants of America) Inaugural class member of Children's Hospital Committee for the Future

Kathy G. Mezrano Catering company owner
Title: President/owner

Organization: Kathy G. & Co.

Job description: CEO of a multifaceted catering and event planning company, overseeing sales and marketing departments, and maintaining relationships with exclusive venues, developing specialty rentals and design, and training service staff.

Primary achievement: Building a more than \$3.5 million company from a passion for entertaining and a love of food, becoming recognized by winning industry awards at the national level.

Other accomplishments: Maintaining a 40-year marriage while developing a growing business for

25 years; having won industry awards from the International Caterers Association and the Atlanta Chapter of the International Special Events Society; cover stories in industry publications like Special Event & Catering Magazine; chaired National Catering Conference in 2000.

Civic endeavors: Board member of the Women's Fund with particular focus on the wine dinner event and domestic violence committees, development board of John Carroll High School, Women's Network, Women's Exchange, Heart Guild, supporter of the ASC, Alabama Ballet and the Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

Steve Miller Resort manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa

Job description: Responsible for the overseeing and operation of Renaissance Ross Bridge golf resort and spa. This facility has 325 full time associates and generates annual revenues of \$25 million dollars.

Primary achievement: Has a Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Administration from the University of Nevada, and 26 years experience in the industry; the last 14 of which have been in the general manager role.

Other accomplishments: Lived in a total of 11 states working for the following companies: Walt Disney World, Hyatt Hotel Corporation, Adam's Mark Hotel, Kimpton Group, Double Tree Hotels, Hilton Hotels, and PCH Hotels and Resorts.

Civic endeavors: Recently received the Janie Greene Award, an award recognizing his outstanding support of the Jefferson State Culinary Arts Program; currently the treasurer and board member of the Greater Birmingham Lodging Association, as well as the Trustee for The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce; has held previous board positions with Big Brothers Big Sisters, United Way and Sedona Lodging Council, and was the chairman of the board for Sedona Village Business Association.

Jeremy Morrow Hotel general manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Inn Towne Suites of Oxmoor

Job description: Oversees the day-to-day operations of the hotel which has 152 guest rooms.

Primary achievement: Has served as general manager of the hotel for nine months.

Clifford Muldrow Banquet center manager
Title: President, owner

Organization: Reo's Banquet Center

Job description: Provide quality services in the area of food, planning and special events; supervises and manages the staff and operation of Reo's.

Primary achievement: Serving as owner of Reo's Banquet Center for nine years.

Other accomplishments: Also opened the first limousine service in Birmingham in 1976, owned multiple convenience stores, and owned Fantasy Queen Horse & Carriage & Service in 1985, was awarded the Junior Achievement Certificate of Appreciation, Business Person of the Year 1985, SBA's Minority Plaque, the Booker T. Washington Business College Small Business Award in 1984, the Birmingham Medweek 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award and received the Gulf Oil Appreciation 10 Years Service Award,

Civic endeavors: Member of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church and serves on the deacon board and the male chorus; has supported the community and its projects and charities for many years in church, civic and cultural events.

William Murray Hotel management leader
Title: President

Organization: Integral Hospitality Solutions

Job description: Heads Integral Hospitality Solutions, which owns or manages more than 40 hotels nationwide, primary role is bringing new hotels into the system and overseeing the development of innovative management tools.

Primary achievement: Founding Integral Hospitality in 2003 and leading the company to become one of the Top 50 hotel management companies in the country; and the renovation of the Tutwiler.

Other accomplishments: In addition to leading Integral Hospitality as it grew from 2 hotels to more than 40 hotels, has used 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry to create a management program called Game Plan that is used at each of Integral's hotels, is also a semi-professional meteorologist - recording weather reports for several radio stations and acts as a storm watcher for the National Weather Service, in 2002 landed a multi-year contract with a publishing company to publish his weather calendar, which highlights historic weather events.

Civic endeavors: Has served as chair of the board of directors for the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau, also serves on the board of directors of the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Scott Myers Professional sports leader
Title: Owner and Managing Partner

Company: Alabama Steeldogs

Job description: Scott is part owner of the Alabama Steeldogs Arena Football Team and is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the team and its personnel.

Primary achievement: Myers has played an instrumental part in the Birmingham sports scene for many years. He marketed the Birmingham Fire during its two years in the World League of American Football; was the General Manager of the Birmingham Bulls in the East Coast Hockey League; and assisted the Alabama Sports Foundation in managing the inaugural SWAC Championship Game at historic Legion Field.

Other accomplishments: Has also been a part of major sports events competing in the 2006 New York City Marathon and running with the bulls in Pamplona, Spain.

Civic Endeavors: Involved in many charitable endeavors in Birmingham and serves on a number of boards including: the Birmingham Athletic Partnership, the Kenny Morgan Scholarship Foundation, Alabama Department of Youth Services - Vacca Campus Advisory Board, and the MTW Street Child Ministries, is also a member of the Monday Morning Quarterback Club and the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA).

Blaine Neessen Restaurant manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Cobb Lane Restaurant

Job description: Oversees all the day-to-day operations of the restaurant, which has been located in Birmingham since 1948.

Primary achievement: Was named general manager of Cobb Lane Restaurant in October 2006.

Other accomplishments: Previously managed restaurants in San Diego, Calif. and Destin, Fla.

Civic endeavors: Restaurant is involved in numerous charitable organizations and has donated gift certificates for several fundraisers.

Jonathan Nelson Professional sports leader
Title: General manager

Organization: Birmingham Barons LLC

Job description: Oversees and manages the day-to-day operations of the Birmingham Barons as well as other events at Regions Park, sells advertising, individual and group ticket packages, member of the Southern League's Board of Directors.

Primary achievement: Raising a family which includes wife Christy, son Jonathan Jr. and daughter Sophia.

Other accomplishments: Began as intern with Barons in 1993 and hired on as a full time employee in 1994. Worked for the Detroit Tigers in Detroit in 1997. Returned to Barons as Assistant General Manager in 1998. Promoted to General Manager in August, 2004. Graduated from University of Montevallo with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech in 1993. Received Nathalie Molton Gibbons Award from University of Montevallo in 2005.

Civic Endeavors: Active member with American Baseball Foundation, Vestavia Hills Civitan Club and Autism Society of Alabama. Family attends Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church.

Mark Noyes Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Starwood Hotels and Resorts

Job description: Oversees and manages the daily operations of hotel and long-term financial and operational plans for the

hotel, which support the overall objectives of Starwood. Monitors the performance of the hotel through verification and analysis of guest satisfaction systems and monthly

financial reports. Maintains product and service quality standards by conducting ongoing evaluations and Service Culture Training.

Primary achievement: As general manager of the Sheraton Birmingham, has successfully repositioned the hotel both locally and within the Starwood Hotels and Resorts Inc. organization.

Other accomplishments: As president of the Greater Birmingham Lodging Association, took the organization to new heights, revamped committees, created the board of authority, which enabled members to have access to seasoned general managers and introduced a monthly news letter along with developing a new Web site.

Civic endeavors: Involved in the board of trustees for the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council of Alabama and former treasurer of the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Faye Oates Event leader
Title: Event Manager

Organization: Bruno Event Team

Job description: Primary contact for the Magic City Classic, the 2nd largest historically black college football game in the nation. Responsibilities include coordinating public and media relations; booking celebrities and entertainment; sponsorship sales and fulfillment; marketing and advertising; and assisting with all official events surrounding the Classic.

Primary achievement: In 2006, the Alabama Sports Foundation team secured \$498,000 in corporate sponsorships for the Magic City Classic (largest amount in game history) and achieved the 2nd largest crowd in game history of 66,238 fans.

Other accomplishments: Successfully planned Tom Joyner Sky Show for 7 years. recruited to participate on many planning committees including Vonetta Flowers Day and the Civil Rights Activist Committee, raising 2 children who participate in track, baseball, softball, and karate all while having a demanding career.

Civic Endeavors: Mentor for the Birmingham Urban League's Youth Empowerment Program, chairperson of EPIC Day, actively participates in the College Hills Neighborhood Association, Board member for Media for Health, Inc.

Amrut 'Andrew' Patel Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Parth-Sai Inc. D/B/A Knight's Inn Civic Center UAB

Job description: Look after sales, service, and total management operation on the hotel since 1991.

Primary achievement: Graduated 1975 as a Electrical Engineer in India and moved to USA in 1978. Since 1978, has managed and owning hotel. Own a multiple franchise property. Knight's Inn was previously Villager Lodge. This property was previously the first franchise Villager Lodge in the U.S. In 2003, Villager Lodge merged with Knight's Inn.

Lawrence Pijeaux Jr. Museum leader
Title: President and CEO

Organization: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

Job description: Responsible for the day-to-day operation of the facility, which is a state-of-the-art, multimedia facility housing exhibitions of historical events from post-World War I racial segregation to present-day racial progress. He began his tenure with the museum in 1995.

Primary achievement: Named Alabama's Tourism Executive of the Year in 2006, was instrumental in securing the 2007 Association of African American Museums Conference and the 2008 Southeast Museum Conferences for the city of Birmingham.

Other accomplishments: Helped the museum achieve full accreditation from the American Association of Museums in July 2005, was appointed to the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science Board of Directors in January 2007, has served as president of the Association of American Museums since December 2004.

Civic endeavors: Active in the American Association for State and Local History, the American Association of Museums, the United Way of Central Alabama, Rotary International, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel and 100 Black Men of Birmingham.

Rusti Price Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: The Tutwiler Hotel

Job description: Since October 2006, has led the hotel through much of its renovation as well as its conversion to a Hampton Inn and Suites, will oversee all aspects of hotel operations as the hotel moves into a new era.

Primary achievement: Has had a lengthy career in hospitality, beginning in 1976, has been able to climb the hotel industry ladder while staying in Birmingham all 30 years. She has served as Director of Operations for multiple hospitality companies in the area.

Other accomplishments: Founded Hospitality Business Solutions, which provided sales and marketing as well as training consultation for hotels, before stepping away from her company to work with a local management company; a proud military spouse - her husband serves with the Alabama National Guard Troupe that was the first in the state to be deployed after Sept. 11, and in his absence she served as the Family Support Coordinator for those left behind, was awarded the Alabama Commendation Medal.

Civic endeavors: Serves on the Board of Trustees for the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce as well as the YWCA Board of Directors.

Jeff Purner Attraction leader
Title: Manager

Organization: Porsche Driving Experience

Job description: Manage all aspects of the Porsche Driving Experience for Porsche Cars North America including sales, event planning, hospitality and program logistics. Instrumental in facilitating events for Marketing, Sales Training and Public Relations Departments for Porsche Cars North America.

Primary achievement: After a successful career in auto racing, has been privileged to play a major role in building the most successful high performance driving school in the world.

Other accomplishments: Won races in the IMSA GTP and GTU Series and formula cars, rookie of the Year in the SCCA Trans AM Series and won 3 championships including an IMSA title driving a Porsche, scored top 3 finishes at the Daytona 24 Hour and 12 Hours of Sebring races, a race team manager, precision/stunt driver for commercials and movies, and television commentator, developed many high performance driving school programs including Panoz Racing School.

Civic Endeavors: Active in Camp Smile-A-Mile, Alabama Symphony, Barber Motorsports Museum and Hand in Paw. Co-Founder of the Motorsports Technical Training Program at Lanier Tech in Gainesville, GA.

Robert Rathburn Event center manager
Title: Executive director

Organization: Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark

Job description: Responsible for all operations of the site including visioning, budgeting, staff and community relations; the primary liaison to the local and professional communities at the regional, national and international levels.

Primary achievement: Has constructed one museum from the ground up, rebuilt one museum and currently planning his third, serves as president of the Southeastern Museums Conference, is a member of the Council of Regional Associations and a member of the American Association of Museums.

Other accomplishments: Designed and built the first hall of interactive exhibits in natural history, has served as vice president of the Glynn county Georgia Red Cross and of the Glynn County United Way, he was president of the Jekyll Island Rotary Club, was a member of the Board of Directors of the Midwest Museums Conference, has also been an associate professor of anthropology at Louisiana State University and taught as adjunct professor at Coastal Community College.

Civic Endeavors: currently focused on creating the premier museums devoted to the 20th Century production of iron and the creation of a new city.

George Reis Restaurant owner
Title: Owner

Organization: Ocean

Job description: Oversees the operations of Ocean, an award-winning seafood restaurant.

Primary achievement: Fulfilled lifelong dream when he opened Ocean in March 2002 and has been honored with several awards, including the AAA Four Diamond Award in 2007 and the Wine Spectator Award in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Other accomplishments: Opened second restaurant, 26, along with his wife, Harriet, in June 2006; restaurant received the Best New Restaurant award from the Birmingham News; has been an active member of the Birmingham Originals since 2002 and currently serves as treasurer for the organization's local chapter; he serves on the executive board of the National Dine Originals and both Ocean and 26 participate at Cork's & Chefs and Break-N-Bread each year.

Civic endeavors: Active in numerous charities including Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Magic Moments, Camp Smile-A-Mile, the Big Oak Ranch and Children's Hospital.

Tim Ritchie Event center manager
Title: President and CEO

Organization: McWane Science Center

Job description: Helping the center fulfill its mission by focusing on five essential tasks, value-based staff development, mission-based financial, board mobilization, clarifications of strategic direction and representing the organization in the community.

Primary achievement: Selecting, empowering and mobilizing a staff that is competent and passionate about the organization's missions and values.

Other accomplishments: Attracted the Alabama Science Teachers Association statewide convention for the past two years, have developed flourishing partnerships with educators that have helped the center become an extension of the classroom, has created the ScienceWorks group of exhibits.

Civic endeavors: Member of the Downtown Rotary Club; member of the board of directors of the Urban League; member of the board of advisors for the Birmingham International Center, the Alabama School of Fine Arts Math and Technology Program; attends Altadena Valley Presbyterian Church and is a board member of the Alumni Association of Leadership Birmingham.

Joe Saling Resort leader

Title: Area Director of Sales and Marketing

Organization: Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa

Job description: Oversees the sales and marketing efforts of both the Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort & Spa, as well as the Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa in Florence, Ala.

Primary achievement: Sales team at Ross Bridge was recently recognized as the Sales Team of the Year amongst 70 other Renaissance Hotels and Resorts.

Other accomplishments: Bachelor's degree in political science from Murray State University and has spent 22 years in the hospitality industry working at Opryland Hotel, Stouffer Nashville, Sheraton Music City, Sheraton Birmingham Hotel, Biltmore Estate and PCH Hotels and Resorts, has also owned his own business in the agri-tourism field and worked in medical sales with Johnson & Johnson.

Civic endeavors: Served as spokesperson for his local Red Cross Chapter and has lead tree planting projects in Kentucky and Tennessee. He has also been a Big Brother and a volunteer for the Music City Marathon along with serving as a youth volunteer at his church.

Kosta Sarris Civic center manager

Title: Director

Organization: Bessemer Civic Center

Job description: Manages day-to-day operations, brings in new business and maintaining regular customers. Helps the center maintain a positive influence and effect on revenue for the city, including hotels, motels and businesses in the surrounding area.

Primary achievement: In 15 years, has accomplished bringing business from a minimum to a maximum capacity, with repeat business due to excellent services and the staff's ability to attend to the customer's demands and needs with a friendly and service-oriented atmosphere.

Other accomplishments: Member of the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau; member of the Alabama Hospitality Association; longtime member of the Hotel/Motel Association; vice president of the Convention and Visitors Bureau of the Bessemer Area Chamber of Commerce; vice president of Governmental Utilities Service Corp.; longtime entrepreneur - owned and operated several restaurants in Birmingham and Bessemer; food and beverage director of various hotels and served as general manager of various hotels.

Becky Satterfield Restaurant owner

Title: Pastry chef/owner

Organization: Satterfield's Restaurant

Job description: Oversees day-to-day operations of the restaurant, which involves recipe development, food costs, labor costs, marketing, advertising, employee relations, customer relations and Web management.

Primary achievement: Attended Culinard from 2002-2004 earning the Dean's Award with a 4.0 GPA, catered and opened restaurant in 2005, earned awards for Best New Restaurant, Best Desserts, Best Appetizers in 2005, recognized for Best Service, Best Restaurants and Best Presentation and the Wine Spectator Award in 2006.

Other accomplishments: Worked as operations manager of accounting for Satterfield & Pontikes Construction in Houston; bankruptcy specialist for asset cases in federal courts located in Houston and Tuscaloosa; attended master pastry classes in Las Vegas, Nev. during the 2004 World Pastry Forum that were instructed by several notable pastry chefs.

Civic endeavors: Taught Bible school and Sunday school for many years in the past, provided desserts for the Zoo Gala in 2005 and 2006, provided/donated desserts for Wild About Chocolate 2006, provided desserts for Magic Moments Wine Auction 2005.

Clayton Sherrod Catering company owner

Title: Owner/chef

Organization: Chef Clayton's Food Systems Inc.

Job description: Oversees the operation of the catering company, which caters all different types and sizes of events.

Primary achievement: Founded Chef Clayton's Food Systems Inc. and produces Chef Clayton's Seasonings.

Other accomplishments: Is an American Culinary Federation Certified Executive Chef and a member of the elite American Academy of Chefs, serves on the regional ACF Chef Professionalism Committee, serves on the board of Culinard at Virginia College and on the board of the Future Culinarians of America Scholarship Foundation at Culinard, graduate of Leadership Birmingham in 1998, has co-authored four cookbooks and has received the R.L. Schreiber Southeast Region Distinction Award in February 1997.

Hani Shindi Hotel manager

Title: General Manager

Organization: Courtyard by Marriott/Homewood

Job description: Serves as general manager of the Courtyard by Marriott/Homewood, which is a 140-room property with two meeting rooms.

Primary achievement: Named general manager of the hotel in April 2007.

Other accomplishments: Previously worked at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Golf Resort and Spa.

Barbara Sirmans Attraction director
Title: Director

Organization: Birmingham Public Library

Job description: Directs, plans and coordinates library operations and serves as liaison between agencies controlling the library operations; interprets policy of the Library Board to the Birmingham Public Library staff and ensures implementation.

Primary achievement: Since 1978, has served at all management levels - neighborhood branch head, community branch head, regional branch head, associate director of branches, associate director of central operations and director.

Other accomplishments: As Associate Director, strived to see that the same opportunities for service were available at all locations throughout the system; was responsible for the construction management of four branch libraries -- Titusville, Pratt City, North Birmingham and Southside while at the same time managed the complete renovation of three branches - Inglenook, East Ensley and East Lake; after becoming director, launched a "Service Excellence" campaign.

Civic Endeavors: 2001 Graduate of Leadership Birmingham, 1995 graduate of Project Corporate Leadership. Professional Memberships: American Library Association, Alabama Library Association, Jefferson County Library Cooperative.

Jim Smither Tourism leader
Title: President

Organization: Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

Job description: Leading the efforts of the bureau to attract conventions and visitors to the Magic City.

Primary achievement: Has enhanced the visibility and image of the city through national ad campaigns and extensive public relations programs.

Other accomplishments: Has had a long and distinguished career in the meetings industry, serving as director of sales for the Kansas City Convention and Visitors Bureau and the executive director of the Baltimore Convention Center, where he was responsible for operation procedures and marketing programs, has also held sales positions with the Houston Convention and Visitors Council and the San Antonio Conventions and Visitors Bureau, has been closely involved with national and international meeting associations and the Destination Marketing Association International.

Dallas Teague Snider Conference coordinator
Title: National account director

Organization: ConferenceDirect

Job description: Independent Contractor with a ConferenceDirect. Marketing and development of corporate and association clients through direct sales, networking and client referrals. ConferenceDirect is a worldwide provider of outsourced meeting planning solutions. The portfolio of offerings include Site Selection/Contract Negotiation, Conference Management Services, Housing & Registration, as well as ConferenceDirect is pleased to provide these services on an individual or all inclusive basis.

Primary achievement: Launched the first Alabama office in March 2004 serving clients throughout the country and abroad; named Rookie of the Year for Conference Direct in April 2006.

Other accomplishments: Was 2005-2006 President Business Professional Women/USA Metro Birmingham, 2004 Top 40 Under 40 Business Leaders Award Birmingham Business Journal, Young Careerist of Alabama /Business Professional Women USA Achieved CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) certification, July 2002.

Civic endeavors: Currently serves as Public Relations Chair on the steering committee for Alabama Branch of the Tennessee Chapter of the National Business Travel Association.

Frederick Spicer Jr. Attraction manager
Title: Executive Director

Organization: Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Job description: Oversees administration, personnel, garden and collections development, events and programming, visitor services, operations, short- and long-range planning and fundraising.

Primary achievement: Despite being the first full time Executive Director for Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Fred Spicer also helped initiate the first Antiques at The Gardens fundraiser. This weekend-long event, hosted at The Gardens, raised over \$160,000 for education programs at BBG.

Other accomplishments: The facilities include spaces both indoors and out, and can accommodate groups of 5 to 500, allowing The Gardens to host countless civic, garden and professional organizations each year. Furthermore, BBG- sponsored events such as plant sales, plant society events, Family Fun Day, Earth Day at The Gardens, educational programs and children's summer and holiday camps bring thousands of visitors to The Gardens each year that might not otherwise find a reason to get outside.

Civic endeavors: A proud graduate of Leadership Birmingham ('06), he also participates in various civic organizations as a speaker and ambassador of The Gardens.

Tom Sprinkle Hotel manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Marriott Birmingham

Job description: Direct the sales and operations of the hotel to meet our business objectives and ensure excellent service for our associates and guests.

Primary achievement: Working in the hospitality field over 20+ years and moving up within the industry to leadership roles that eventually brought me to Birmingham.

Other accomplishments: Received a bachelor's degree in Hotel Administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and entered Marriott's Management Training Program in 1992, has worked in fifteen states across the country in a variety of management positions and regional roles.

Civic Endeavors: Active participation in planning and execution of community service events with organizations including: Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Volunteers of America and the Parkinson's Association.

Frank Stitt Chef/restaurant owner
Title: Chef and owner

Organization: Highlands Bar and Grill, Bottega and Bottega Cafe

Job description: Oversees the operations of the restaurants and creates award-winning, creative new dishes.

Primary achievement: Opened his first restaurant, Highlands Bar and Grill, in 1982, his work has been featured in numerous national publications and magazines, as well as on several television broadcasts and features. He has also mentored and trained other award-winning chefs.

Other accomplishments: Was mentored by Alice Waters, Simca Beck and Richard Olney and has perfected his craft through many visits to Europe, particularly around the Mediterranean Sea, named one of the Great Chefs of America, serves as a consulting editor to Saveur magazine, named one of Food & Wine magazine's Top 25 Hot New American Chefs, received the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence in 2001, inducted as member of Leadership Birmingham in 1993, featured on the Food Network's "Best Of" series, voted into the 1992 Fine Dining Hall of Fame.

Civic endeavors: Statewide chair of Share Our Strength, food chair of the Magic Moments Wine Auction, which is an annual fundraiser to benefit terminally ill children.

Tony Teichmiller Restaurant manager
Title: General manager

Organization: Ruth's Chris Steak House

Job description: Oversees all of the day-to-day operations of the fine-dining steak house.

Primary achievement: Has served as the general manager of the restaurant for the past nine years.

Civic endeavors: Active in several nonprofit and charity organizations, including Camp Smile-A-Mile.

Caron Thornton Arts center director
Title: Executive director

Organization: Alys Robinson Stephens Performing Arts Center

Job description: Chief administrator of the ASC, a four theatre performing arts complex at UAB, dedicated to entertaining, educating and inspiring audiences with the finest artists and performances - the facility hosts and presents over 350 events per year.

Primary achievement: Celebrating the center's 10th anniversary this year and due to the help of many others.

Other accomplishments: The ASC has had numerous highlights in this 10-year history: 50 performances presented by ASC each year, over 350 events rented/hosted each year, ticket sales increased 50 percent last year, three major building phases completed the four-theatre complex by 2006, new courtyard just completed 2007, artists from all over the world have graced our stages, world-class performing arts center.

Civic Endeavors: The center has played a valuable civic role by building bridges and working closely in collaboration with other arts organizations in Birmingham, which has helped to strengthen others.

Kathy Yarbrough Cultural alliance director
Title: Executive director Organization: Cultural Alliance of Greater Birmingham

Job description: Manage the activities of a regional arts council that serves arts and cultural organizations and working artists in 12 counties in central Alabama. We provide grants, technical assistance, sector marketing and advocacy for our community's valuable cultural organizations.

Primary achievement: Working closely with the Jefferson County Commission, we established the Jefferson County Community Arts Fund which dispenses \$5 million annually to arts and cultural organizations in Jefferson County.

Other accomplishments: Built the organization from the ground floor up - now is the largest funder of the arts in the state, created a Web-based events calendar, www.activeculture.info lists events of more than 700 organizations and has become the community's calendar, provides arts groups with workshops, seminars and scholarships to help them with running their business.

Civic Endeavors: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

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