The School of Hospitality Business Alumni Association presents

2015 Celebration of Leadership Awards Ceremony & Reception

Saturday, November 7, 2015
6 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

The Waldorf Astoria Hotel
Empire - Vanderbilt Rooms
301 Park Avenue
New York City, New York
CONGRATULATIONS
to our
2015 Honorees!

From:
The School of Hospitality Business Alumni Association
The School of Hospitality Business Director’s Fund
The School of Hospitality Business Hospitality Association (HA)
The School of Hospitality Business Student & Industry Resource Center (SIRC)

www.hospitalitybusiness.broad.msu.edu
Welcome Remarks ........................................................................................................ Dr. Michael McCall
Director, The School of Hospitality Business

2015 Hall of Fame “Class of Innovators” Award Presentations.............................. Chuck Day (BA ’91)
President, The School’s Alumni Association
Regional Director, Revenue Management
InterContinental Hotels Group

Dan E. Burdakin (BA ’81)
Chairman Emeritus, The School’s Alumni Association
Distinguished Alumnus

Richard D. Farrar (BA ’73)
Secretary, The School’s Alumni Association
Principal, The Farrar Consulting Group

David C. George (BA ’79)
President
Olive Garden, Darden Restaurants, Inc.

John M. Keeling (MBA ’74)
Executive Vice President
Valencia Group

John G. Malone, CHA, CHSP (BA ’82)
Area Director, Franchise Services
Choice Hotels International

John W. Pharr (BA ’69)
President
Strand Development Company, LLC

2015 Industry Leader of the Year Award Presentation............................................. Chuck Day (BA ’91)

Mark G. Laport
Co-Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer
Concord Hospitality Enterprises Company

Congratulatory Remarks.......................................................................................... Sanjay Gupta
Eli and Edythe L. Broad Dean
Eli Broad College of Business

Closing Remarks....................................................................................................... Dr. Michael McCall
Director, The School of Hospitality Business
Relationships and outstanding service are the bedrocks of the hospitality industry, but innovation drives success. And Celebration of Leadership 2015 recognizes four individuals who are being inducted in The School of Hospitality Business’s Alumni Association Hall of Fame “Class of Innovators.”

Each Alumnus is a leader who has displayed creativity, a willingness to take risks, the ability to develop effective teams, and that special Spartan work ethic. One is a highly respected restaurateur who has been at the helm of the industry’s most iconic concepts. Another leads the development and management of upper upscale and upscale hotels. Yet another has built a company that develops and operates in the two- to four-star hotel segment. And another is a hotel operations and strategic expert, creating and building effective franchise relationships.

Each honoree gives back to his alma mater, supporting The School’s efforts and its students in a variety of ways. Donating financially, providing Destination Auction packages, recruiting and hiring interns and graduates from The School, returning to campus to speak in classes, and attending School events – our Class of Innovators is comprised of alumni who model the way as innovators.

The School honors an Industry Leader of the Year who founded a company which has earned accolades and enjoyed remarkable success, but which has also been responsible to the environment and to the communities it serves, reflective of his own personal values.

All the honorees at Celebration of Leadership 2015 have lived their lives and conducted their careers in ways that have influenced others with their passion and hard work, raised the standards of professionalism in the hospitality industry, and inspired our students and alumni.

Thank you and Congratulations!
David C. George (BA ’79)
President
Olive Garden, Darden Restaurants, Inc.

We like to believe it all started with Les Gourmets. Dave George served as culinary co-chair during his senior year in the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management. Or maybe it was his kitchen experience on Mackinac Island, serving as dishwasher and grill and sauté cook. Either way, Dave says he became “enthralled with kitchen energy,” and the rest is history.

President of Olive Garden since January 2013, Dave is also a member of Darden Restaurants’ Operating Team and Executive Team. He leads a company with 828 restaurants, more than 95,000 employees, and $3.6 billion in annual sales.

Dave’s successful career began with Houlihan’s, where, after graduating, he became assistant manager. Through his 12 years with the company, Dave held positions of increasing responsibility, including area director of operations for eight restaurants. In 1991, Dave became vice president of operations for Battleground Restaurant Group.

Dave joined LongHorn Steakhouse in 1998 as vice president of operations, North. He later became vice president of operations for The Capital Grille, a division of LongHorn’s former parent company, RARE Hospitality International. He returned to LongHorn in 2001 as senior vice president of operations, and was named president in 2003. He remained in that capacity following Darden’s acquisition of RARE in 2007, leading the company to a position of unquestioned excellence in the casual dining steak business and providing inspiration to over 20,000 associates.

Dave is known for getting on the front lines, spending as much time as possible with those he describes as “closest to the action.” He says, “If you want to understand the issue, search out the moment of truth – what takes place between your employee and the guest. Listen to the employees point of view and do everything you can to simplify what it takes to deliver the guest experience.”

Perhaps Dave’s greatest innovation is his effective leadership. He instills in his associates the belief that “There is no limit to what we can achieve, if we do not care who gets the credit.” He says, “The power of the team is meaningfully more potent than any individual.”

Each step along the way in his remarkable restaurant career, Dave has mentored and developed hundreds of leaders at various levels in his companies, from general managers to executive vice presidents and presidents. And many of those individuals have been students and alumni in The School. He has demonstrated a loyalty to his alma mater that The School’s alumni are known for: generously donating to The School financially, recruiting and speaking at the annual CAREER EXPO, and repeatedly serving as a visiting leader in the classroom. Dave is a former Spartan athlete who regularly hosts events for fellow Spartans at his companies’ restaurants, and in numerous ways has assisted with other special projects. The School’s Alumni Association named Dave Alumnus of the Year in 2011.

Dave encourages students to “surround yourself with people who are smarter than you are, who will challenge your thought process, and open your eyes to new perspectives.” Dave has done this himself throughout his career, which helps explain his innovative spirit and ability to challenge the status quo in the restaurant industry.

Asked to finish the phrase, “Spartans Will,” Dave says, “Bring to life the best this world has to offer.” To that end he serves as a national trustee for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and notes with pride the achievements of this very important organization.

For all his success and influence in a very competitive segment of the restaurant industry, Dave remains down to earth and approachable, always willing to give advice and support to The School. Alumni who have worked with Dave are effusive in their praise for not only his abilities, but his character and integrity as well.

Dave and his wife Lori live in Winter Park, FL and have two children, Jillian and Bryan.

For the many ways you have positively influenced the restaurant industry, inspired students and alumni, and supported your alma mater, Dave, CONGRATULATIONS on being inducted into The School’s Alumni Association Hall of Fame Class of Innovators.
John M. Keeling (MBA ’74)
Executive Vice President
Valencia Group

A Middle Eastern Studies major at UCLA in the 1960’s, the hospitality industry was probably the last thing on John Keeling’s mind. But now, 40 years later, he is executive vice president and one of five principals of Valencia Group, which specializes in the development and operation of upper-upscale and luxury independent hotels.

A foremost leader in the lodging industry, John has been immersed in training and mentoring hospitality industry consultants, developing the industry’s leaders, and teaching courses for the Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, the Louisiana Chapter of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers, and the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants. In addition, he has guest lectured at the University of Houston, Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management and for not-for-profit organizations with The Support Center of Houston. He has also guest lectured on hotel design at the Rice University School of Architecture.

Just how did this happen? After struggling to put himself through college, John left school and served from 1967-69 with the 1st Battalion 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Viet Nam as an infantry squad leader/Vietnamese interpreter and company supply N.C.O. Awarded the Purple Heart and receiving the Navy Commendation with Combat “V” in 1969, John returned to UCLA to finish his degree, now with his wife and young family. He found employment with the UCLA Residence Halls in food service and, later, general management. After two years, he came to MSU’s School of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management to earn an MBA. From 1972-74, John had the good fortune of serving as graduate assistant for School Director Dr. Robert Blomstrom, for whom he researched material for a revised edition of Business, Society and Environment. He also researched case studies for Marketing of Hospitality Services with faculty author Dr. William J. E. Crissy. John maintains that Dr. Blomstrom “motivated me by both his example as a leader and educator and provided me with challenging assignments that helped me to grow professionally.”

After graduating from MSU, John worked with Marriott International as manager in the food and beverage departments of several properties. By 1976, however, his career as a hotel consultant was underway. John served with Laventhol & Horwath until 1990, becoming regional managing partner of the Southwest Region, and initiating the monthly Trend of Business in the Lodging Industry for the region.

In 1990, John established the firm Hospitality Counselors, Inc., which merged with PKF Consulting in 1992. John became senior vice president and shareholder responsible for the South-Central United States. From 2009 to the present, John has not only provided leadership with Valencia Group, but has also been a principal in The Keeling Consultancy, LLC, accepting assignments regarding arbitration or the formation of an expert opinion on matters involving hotels. John has earned numerous industry awards over the length of his career, including the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Hotel & Lodging Association of Greater Houston and a Distinctive Service Award by the Austin Hotel & Lodging Association.

An active member of The School’s Real Estate Investment Management Advisory Council, John urges students to “look for assignments and opportunities that stretch you beyond what you currently perceive as your limits. Like building muscle, you will only grow by lifting more than you are comfortable with.” Remember, he says, “Failure is preparation for ultimate success.” In the 1980s, John used his ability to speak Vietnamese to assist the YMCA in Houston’s program to help the mothers of American-Vietnamese children fathered by American GI’s to relocate to Houston. He eventually became a member of the Board of Directors.

This unique hospitality industry leader went back to school to earn another degree in the 1990s, this time completing a Masters in Theological Studies from the University of St. Thomas. Today, he teaches theology to adults for the Catholic Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston.

John is married to Evelyn, and they have two grown children, Kellie and Geoffrey, as well as five grandchildren.

THANK YOU for your leadership in the hotel industry, as well as your inspiring personal and professional history and impact upon those around you, John. CONGRATULATIONS on being inducted in The School’s Alumni Association Hall of Fame Class of Innovators.
Hall of Fame “Class of Innovators”

John G. Malone, CHA, CHSP (BA ’82)
Area Director, Franchise Services
Choice Hotels International

“The possibilities in our industry are nearly endless for those who are willing to work hard, apply themselves, and are curious about exploring different career paths.” With these words, John Malone reminds students in The School of the Spartan work ethic that will serve them well – and that has propelled him to top levels in the hotel industry.

Since 2012, John has been area director of franchise services for Choice Hotels, with the responsibility for cultivating effective franchisee relationships, owner engagement, and proactive service to clients in central and northern Michigan with 65 properties across seven hotel brands.

Known as a creative problem solver with the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, John is adept at interpreting individual property and portfolio performance data, both internally and externally. Using this information and his skill at building relationships, he has developed effective methods for improving performance indices and guest experiences, and for maximizing profits for owners and for Choice Hotels International.

Before joining Choice Hotels, John served in a number of capacities with Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group in Minnetonka, MN, starting in 1996 as a regional manager. He quickly moved to senior regional manager, director of operations, and ultimately, regional vice president. In that capacity, John oversaw the Country Inn & Suites Western Division, with a total of 114 properties and annual gross room revenue in excess of $219 million. John successfully directed the on-line process and launch of three Park Inn full-service properties. His work with Carlson Rezidor contributed to the growth of the overall Country Inn & Suites brand to 500 hotels, and helped the brand earn a #1 JD Power Ranking. John had the great honor of receiving the Carlson Great Leaders Award for 2007-2008.

Drawn to the hotel industry from a young age, John first worked for a small golf resort with restaurant and banquet services and a small hotel. John received excellent operations and executive training after graduation, serving as assistant manager, general manager, and general manager of regional training with Red Roof Inns from 1982-89, and then as general manager with Drury Inns in Schaumburg, IL, from 1989-96.

John believes deeply that there is an opportunity to make a positive impact “each and every interaction you have in our industry.” He personifies this belief as a mentor to students in The School and to alumni who have worked with him. In fact, he says that one of his greatest pleasures throughout his career has been to “coach” friends, business associates, franchisees, and colleagues when they are considering career changes or need assistance with networking. “These opportunities never end in our industry,” he says.

Serving The School as a long-time member of the Appointed Board of Directors of its Alumni Association, John frequently comes to campus for Homecoming, mentoring meetings with students, and to attend Destination Auction and other student-led events. John would like to be known as an authentic leader who always strives to do his best, and has contributed to all the organizations with which he has shared his skills and talents. “I have been honored to work with some great companies, where I have learned so much from great leaders.”

Completing the phrase, “Spartans Will,” John says, “Remain steadfast in providing innovative learning and practical experiences for students in The School of Hospitality Business, so that they can thrive in our industry, make an impact, and be future leaders.”

John’s life reflects his belief in the importance of serving others, whether they are guests in hotels or restaurants, or franchisees and colleagues. “Working hard, serving others, and doing just one thing better each day can make a common activity extraordinary because you took the time to excel at your work. As Spartans, this is what we do.”

John has served through volunteer work with the St. Vincent DePaul Society, and notes that having a “servant’s heart” outside one’s professional life is just as rewarding and important as anything one might accomplish in a career.

For this giving attitude and its influence on your successful career and in our School, The School’s Alumni Association thanks you, John. CONGRATULATIONS on being inducted in the Hall of Fame Class of Innovators.
John W. Pharr (BA ’69)
President
Strand Development Company, LLC

It has been said that John Pharr’s name is synonymous with Strand Development Company. He started his career with Strand, opening the 312-room Ocean Front Holiday Inn in Myrtle Beach, SC in 1971. By 1984, John was president of the company and leads it still today.

Under his leadership, Strand has earned a place among the leading hotel management companies in the Southeast, with operations centers in Charlotte, Myrtle Beach, and Atlanta. Founded 45 years ago, Strand Hospitality focuses on developing, investing, and operating properties as well as managing for third-party management contracts. The company specializes in the two- to four-star hotel segments, and is approved to operate hotels under all the leading hotel brand families, including Marriott, Hilton, Starwood, Wyndham, Choice, and InterContinental Hotel Group.

Recalling his student days as a bellman, at the front desk, and as a banquet waiter at MSU’s Kellogg Center, John says, “It was my first experience in the hospitality business, and it helped motivate me to seek out a career in hospitality.” He later worked summers at Meadow Brook Country Club and Win Schuler’s. But it was an accounting class with Dr. John Russwinkle that made him “Realize quickly that this knowledge is essential to operating a successful business.”

He tells current students to “work hard, volunteer for the tough assignments where you will learn quickly, and develop relationships at all levels of the organization. Always do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it.” John’s success and longevity with Strand is mirrored by his outstanding service with the United States Air Force Reserve. For 36 years he was services officer, advising the Air Force on the operation of over 100 hotels worldwide. He retired in 2006 as a colonel.

In addition to leading Strand Development Company, John has raised the level of professionalism of the hotel industry in the Southeast. He has served as a director of the Myrtle Beach Hospitality Association, earning in 2001 its “Hotelier of the Year” award. He has been a director of the South Carolina Hospitality Association and the American Hotel & Lodging Association. For the past 40 years, John has served as a director for Myrtle Beach National Companies, operator of 24 golf courses and four ocean front resorts in the area.

Over the years, John has been a caring mentor, guiding many individuals who now have successful careers in national companies. He has also helped people gain the experience and confidence that helped them to establish their own businesses. For The School, John serves as a member of the Appointed Board of Directors of the Alumni Association, and is a very active member of the Real Estate Investment Management Advisory Council. His company regularly donates hotel and vacation packages to The School’s annual Destination Auction, and John has been an effective advocate and cheerleader for The School at national and regional conferences and meetings such as North America Hotel Investment Conference (NATHIC), the New York International Hotel, Motel & Restaurant Show, Celebration of Leadership, and Annual Gathering of Leaders.

With John’s guidance, Strand selects a charity each year and leads a fundraising drive at each of its hotels, with the total donation being made at the company’s annual conference. John maintains that this activity is not only financially successful for the charity, but “it is also a great team building experience.” Personally, John has volunteered for 25 years as an Air Force Academy admissions counselor, interviewing and assisting qualified high school students in gaining admission to the United States Air Force Academy.

Throughout his career, John has been known for his integrity and honesty, and for the relationships he has built with hotel owners over 40 years. He personifies his own words when finishing the phrase, “Spartans Will:” Always be among the leaders in the industry and will be known for their hard work and dedication.

John lives in Myrtle Beach with his wife, Annie.

Thank you for your advocacy for your alma mater, John, and for the integrity and honor with which you have led your company and served our nation. CONGRATULATIONS on being inducted in The School’s Alumni Association Hall of Fame Class of Innovators.
Mark G. Laport
Co-Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer
Concord Hospitality Enterprises Company

Mark Laport founded Concord Hospitality Enterprises Company in 1985, and under his leadership, it has become one of the hospitality industry’s largest and most respected owners, operators, and developers, on the verge of topping the 100-hotel mark, with hotels in 20 states and two Canadian provinces.

Like many of his industry contemporaries, Mark was introduced to the industry in college (at Mount Union College) when he worked as a night auditor, “a very enlightening experience,” by his recollection. His first foray into ownership was in 1974, when, with a $500 down payment borrowed from friends, he purchased the Girard Diner in Erie, PA after several years of being a customer. The loan, by the way, was paid back within 30 days!

Mark became a well-respected and energetic restaurant owner, homebuilder, and community leader. After founding Concord, he used his aptitude for identifying market voids and filling them with the exact right product to lead the company to remarkable and continuous growth through even the most difficult economic cycles. In fact, thirty years after opening its first hotel, Concord’s portfolio now numbers 84 upscale and upper-upscale hotels, more than 11,620 guestrooms, and a pipeline nearing $1 billion comprised of 21 hotels in various stages of construction, with a large volume of deals in active negotiations to add to these figures. Under Concord’s management, the current portfolio exceeds $2 billion in net asset value with annual revenues of $500 million, generating profits in excess of $150 million. Concord’s success can be explained by its founder’s remarkable integrity, adherence to core values, and belief in doing what is right.

Under Mark’s guidance, Concord’s 3,946 associates embrace a corporate culture defined by its five cornerstones: Quality, Community, Integrity, Profitability, and Having Fun. His vision is to be the employer and manager of choice, and he has indeed attracted top talent. Mark is justifiably proud of “having created thousands of meaningful jobs while fostering successful leaders with whom I have had the privilege to work side by side and build lifelong friendships.”

Indeed, Mark has been an energetic recruiter and employer of many graduates of The School of Hospitality Business who he says “support and drive tremendous results in several of the company’s upscale and upper-upscale hotels.” Further, he says, “I am very proud that MSU graduates have lifted my company’s status and helped lead our consistent growth as an industry leader. The School’s positions with Concord have included key roles such as COO, vice president of sales and marketing, senior vice president of business development, and multiple general managers.”

Over the years, Concord Hospitality has been honored with more than 100 industry awards celebrating its development expertise and operational excellence, as well as its commitment to corporate social responsibility. Concord is a nine-time winner of Marriott’s Partnership Circle Award, the company’s highest honor, as well as numerous other recognitions from Marriott, Hyatt, and Choice Hotels.

Mark was an early advocate for sustainable development, determining before most others that all of his future developments would be LEED certified. Concord’s new and retro-fit hotels have, since 2000, been engineered to use an average of 25-30 percent less energy. Concord was also the first major management company to partner with Clean the World, diverting 53 tons of soap and bottled amenities from local landfills and contributing them to underdeveloped countries.

Believing deeply in community stewardship, Mark has committed to providing food and shelter for families in need in every community where Concord operates. Over the course of the company’s history, Concord’s associates have raised funds to feed more than 22,000 needy families and have donated in excess of $500,000. He tells students, “Careers in hospitality can be tremendously rewarding. Those of us that are passionate and focused on contributing to our industry, colleagues, and guests will find an array of opportunities that are likely to bring deep satisfaction and achievement.” Certainly this is true in the life and career of Mark Laport.

Mark and his wife Vicki live in Raleigh, NC, and have two grown children, Amy and Mark.

Thank you for the inspirational lessons of your values, leadership, and success, Mark, and CONGRATULATIONS on being named The School’s Alumni Association 2015 Industry Leader of the Year.
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President, National Restaurant Association

1991 – Michael E. Hurst (BA ’53)
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Choice Hotels International is proud to celebrate Mark as this year’s Michigan State University 2015 Industry Leader of the Year. Mark has been a phenomenal development partner for Choice and we are honored to have the opportunity to work with such an experienced and respected industry leader.

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The Hyatt family celebrates with Mark, as he is named The School of Hospitality Business’ 2015 Industry Leader of the Year.

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- Dan H. Mathews, Jr. (BA ’66)
- Sara C. Parks (MBA ’70)
- Lori Schafer & Bob Pierce (BA ’83)
- James F. Rainey
- Richard A. Russell
- Amy C. & Richard D. Vogt

**Other**
- Jessie Wilson Lindner (BA ’13)
- Lois Schroeder
- Kathleen M. & James W. Swanson
Congratulations, Spartan!

Dave George (BA ’79)
President, Olive Garden
Darden Restaurants

We are so proud of you!

Phil Hickey (BA ’77)
Ken Hill (BA ’56)
Values are the foundations, or the core of an individual or an organization. They are how one acts, how an organization conducts itself. Values determine one’s personal vision, and one’s vision is the situation or circumstance which one wants to create, ideally, in the future. An organization’s mission is its purpose, why it exists. Most exist to add some distinctive source of value to the world. One’s position is how one is perceived by one’s customers.

Core values are the bricks upon which we build our School. As the foundation, these values define how we act, behave, and live. Our core values are: Collaboration, Creation of Knowledge, Each Other, Giving to Community, Honesty, Hospitality Industry, Individualism, Integrity, Merit, Social Responsibility, Status, the Students, Treating People Right, and Work Ethic. All of us, each day, try to exemplify one or more of these values.

Our vision is to be the recognized leader in Hospitality Business education, research, and service.

Our mission is...
- to INSPIRE continuous learning by empowering present and future managers to ACQUIRE knowledge, skills, and global Hospitality Business leadership positions
- to CREATE knowledge by engaging in collaborative theoretical and applied research for the benefit of undergraduate and graduate students, Hospitality Businesses, and the community of hospitality management scholars
- to ENGAGE our Hospitality Business partners through outreach and service, and
- to ENHANCE global Hospitality Business economic, community, and academic development
- to CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE The School’s global leadership position in Hospitality Business operations, development, ownership, and management.

Our position is to be perceived as the premier educational experience for the business of hospitality, and to remain The First, The Original, and still The Leader.
The Alumni Association’s mission is to provide active leadership in support of the mission of The School through membership participation, image enhancement, financial commitment, and promotion of synergies among students, faculty and staff, alumni, community, and industry partners.

The Hospitality Association was founded in 1928 as the Student Hotel Association. The mission of the Hospitality Association is to develop hospitality leaders through opportunity, guidance, and responsibility.

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