



### **Lodging Operator of the Year**

#### **Anthony Carey, [The Siena Hotel](#)**

Anthony Carey is the longest serving employee of the Siena Hotel in Chapel Hill. He started many years ago as a bell boy and has worked his way up to the role of General Manager. He recently earned national acclaim in 2016 as the Eastern Region Full Service GM of the Year for Marriott Hotels in the Americas. Presented by Marriott International, this accolade recognizes the premier service and leadership of only one general manager for all full-service Marriott brands. Anthony has reinvented the Siena Hotel as a one-of-a-kind experience in the Triangle, offering his guests a taste of Italy upon entering the hotel's golden doors.

### **Restaurateur of the Year**

#### **Lance Trenary, President of [Golden Corral](#)**

Lance Trenary has dedicated his career to making positive impacts every day as a mentor, leader, ambassador, and lobbyist for the hospitality industry's 1.6 million employees. He began his 43-year career in his father's restaurant. Lance has led every functional area of the business, including development, human resources, training, facilities, and ultimately President and CEO. As President and Chief Executive, Lance leads the long-term strategy, culture, innovation, and development of the 46-year-old, Raleigh-based family dining company with almost 500 restaurants in 42 states.

Lance's passion for the industry stems from the economic opportunities it provides to any person willing to learn and work hard. Over his many years in restaurants, Lance has seen people move literally from dish rooms to boardrooms. Restaurants are the type of business that offer people from all walks of life the chance to achieve the American Dream. To that end, Lance encourages young people to pursue careers in the industry.

As an early advocate of the National Restaurant Association Education Foundation's ProStart Program, Golden Corral has supported ProStart since expanding to North Carolina in 2006. Thanks to Lance, Golden Corral continues to support ProStart as a top contributor and current partner by sponsoring students in both the state and national competitions as well as providing judges and mentors. Lance and his wife, Paulette, also established a scholarship in former CEO Ted Fowler's name to benefit students and teachers.

### **Ken Conrad Award for Service to the Community**

#### **Dean Ogan, Owner of [Rocky Top Catering](#)**

Philanthropy is at the core of Rocky Top Catering's corporate values, and Dean Ogan has set the standard that his employees model. He believes strongly in giving back to the local community that supports his company and employees. This commitment is instilled throughout the company, from the corporate office staff to the management team, all the way to frontline employees.

Dean's service to the local community encompasses volunteer time, financial gifts, and in-kind contributions. Just a few of the organizations that benefit include SECU Family House, Step Up Ministry, Lucy Daniels Center, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Tammy Lynn Center, The Salvation Army, UNC Healthcare, WakeMed Foundation, and many more.

### **Ken Conrad Award for Service to the Community**

#### **Buddy Bengel, Owner of [Bengel Hospitality](#)**

No storm in recorded history has dropped more water on the Carolinas than Florence, an incredibly devastating deluge for much of eastern North Carolina. Having prepped his restaurants for the impending storm, Buddy Bengel of Bengel Hospitality was able to help with rescues and evacuations as the storm affected his company's home of New Bern. Even more impactful, Buddy staged his mobile food unit in preparation to feed affected residents and volunteers after the storm had passed. He also organized a charitable effort called the New Bern Relief Fund that helped to bring together a variety of support for New Bern and surrounding communities. Buddy's preparation paid off and benefitted thousands in the weeks to come.

In addition to winning NCRLA's Ken Conrad Award for Service to Community, Buddy has also been selected as a state finalist for the National Restaurant Association's Good Neighbor Award. He awaits to learn if he will be one of three national winners, who will each receive \$10,000 to support their charities and travel to Washington DC to be recognized.

### **Griff & June Glover Award for Distinguished Service**

#### **Mike Martino, [Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center](#)**

Mike Martino has been General Manager of the Sheraton Imperial Hotel for 29 years. During that time, he has positively impacted thousands of guests, and hundreds of employees. Mike also gives back to the community and hospitality industry every day. He is actively engaged with the Durham Rescue Mission, and is deeply and personally committed to ongoing education for those in the hospitality field. Mike has served on numerous advisory boards, including Durham Careers in Hospitality, ECU, North Carolina Central, and Wake Tech. He served for several years on the board for NCRLA, including his term as 2017 Board Chair. Mike is also a trustee of the NC Hospitality Education Foundation.

### **Lodging Manager of the Year Award**

#### **Robert Foster, [Biltmore Farms Hotels](#)**

Robert Foster joined Biltmore Farms Hotels in 2007 as General Manager of the DoubleTree by Hilton with 20 years of experience. The Biltmore Farms Board promoted him to Director of Operations for three portfolio properties in 2015. Quickly adapting to the unique culture and mountain lifestyle of the Asheville community, Robert rapidly built authentic relationships in both his internal hotel community and the community beyond. These relationships help make him an impactful leader in business and hospitality in Western North Carolina.

Robert takes an innovative approach to employment and recruitment in the hotel industry. He collaborates with many local workforce development agencies to provide job opportunity and training to locals who need assistance so they can succeed at work. Robert works with an extensive list of nonprofits and governmental agencies, including Helpmate, for women and children who are survivors of domestic abuse, Western North Carolina Workforce Development Board, Goodwill, Veterans' Affairs, and Green Opportunities. Additionally, he volunteers his own time with community organizations such as the Buncombe County Literacy Council and the Historic Biltmore Village Association. He also chairs the Tourism Product Development Fund Committee of Buncombe County.

He created "Sweet Dreams, Full Plates," a program that encourages hotel guests to forgo room service in exchange for a contribution from the hotel to a local foodbank. Originally designed to offer overburdened housekeepers shortened hours during the holidays to allow time with their families, this program has grown to a month-long

event at 35 hotels in Asheville and contributed over \$42,000 in 2018. Robert is currently working toward implementation of the program on a national scale.

### **Lodging Employee of the Year**

#### **Solida Richmond, [Burke Manor Inn & Pavilion](#)**

Solida Richmond has been a team member at the Burke Manor Inn for over two and a half years as Head Housekeeper. However, if Solida had a business card, it would have to be poster size as she frequently jumps in to act as a Front Desk Manager, Banquet Manager, Sales, Maintenance, Prep Cook, and General Utility to address any guest needs. Solida is also a single mother of an amazingly bright three-year-old and a full-time student getting her hospitality degree. She is scheduled to graduate in December 2020.

Solida's desire to grow and learn about the hospitality industry has been witnessed by guests, her team, and her professors. She always arrives on time, with a smile, and a soft spoken, yet mature attitude toward her duties. She has never missed a day of work, and she works six days a week.

### **Restaurant Manager of the Year**

#### **Megan Bailey, [Carolina Ale House – Wilmington](#)**

Megan Bailey was hired as a Server at the Carolina Ale House in 2014. With her positive energy and sales-driving spirit, Megan was quickly promoted to Bartender. She was key in planning and executing programs like tap takeovers, which enabled the Wilmington location to see significant increases in the bar business. Megan was promoted to Manager in May 2016 and continued to grow as a leader, with another promotion to Assistant General Manager in 2018. During Megan's stint as AGM, her General Manager was pulled away to support in other markets, so she had to fill the top leadership slot. Megan dealt with the transition of both her Heart of House leaders, as well as leading the development of two team members into Key Hourlies and Manager. Megan was officially promoted to General Manager in September.

### **Restaurant Manager of the Year**

#### **Vinnie Delillo, [Mama Ricotta's](#)**

Vinnie Delillo found his calling in the restaurant business at the age of 12. His Sicilian grandparents started his life-long learning about Italian food in the family business then. Vinnie's passion for learning and hospitality took him to the Culinary Institute of America, FSU's School of Hospitality Management, stints at the Cheesecake Factory, and the role of General Manager for EPCOT Walt Disney World's World Showcase.

Vinnie is a well-known presence at Mama Ricotta's, talking to anyone and everyone who comes through the door and making sure they are treated like family. On his days off, people come in and talk about how much they love conversing with him. More than that, Vinnie instills his spirit and positive attitude in his Assistant General Managers. His sincere appreciation of the food carries over to the guests, enhancing their dining experience.

Vinnie has been a volunteer fire fighter in the Charlotte area for 24 years, and has been on the board of the Red Cross for 20 years.

### **Restaurant Employee of the Year**

#### **Philip Gomes, [Winston's Grille](#)**

Philip greets everyone with a warm hello and a friendly smile, coworkers and guests alike. He comes in everyday and says hello to all of his coworkers. He will ask about their families, their children, their weekends, and their recent vacations. You never see Philip without his trademark smile.

He is always pleasant to be around and makes work that much more enjoyable for everyone around him. In addition to his co-workers, Philip has formed standing relationships with several of regular guests. He has become a part of the Winston's Grille family and guests expect to see him when they come.

Philip never stands still. He constantly moves throughout the restaurant looking for ways to stay busy. Watching him work is like watching part of a circus act. He has incredible strength and amazing balance that will leaves everyone in awe.

Philip is constantly helping others be better at their jobs. You will rarely see a manager walk through the restaurant with dirty plates. This is because as soon as a manager clears plates from a table or tries to carry a tray of dirty dishes to the kitchen, he is there to take the load so the manager can continue with table visits. You may find him following servers to help them carry back large stacks of dishes, speaking with regulars, checking restrooms, or any number of other things that are not technically in his job description.

### **Hospitality Supplier of the Year**

#### **Scott Meltzer, [Ecolab](#)**

Scott Meltzer has spent 23 years with Ecolab in a variety of roles across the Southeast. In each position, he focused on building customer relationships and has shown the ability to forge truly personal bonds with his customers and teams. It is never just about

business with Scott, but rather, always about the people involved. The hospitality industry is not transactional, it is centered on trust, integrity, doing the right thing, and being reliable — which Scott has displayed in every interaction at every level. This is what defines his value as a business partner.

**North Carolina Senate Hospitality Champion of the Year  
Senator Dan Blue**

Senator Dan Blue is the Senate Democratic Leader and one of the longest serving and most respected members of the legislature. He has served in both the NC House and Senate. Senator Blue is a member of the Appropriations, Finance, Redistricting, and Rules committees. He has championed hospitality issues for years and co-sponsored the Brunch Bill.

**North Carolina House of Representatives Hospitality Champion of the Year  
Representative Chuck McGrady**

Representative Chuck McGrady is in his fifth term representing Henderson County in the NC House. He is a Chairman of the Appropriations committee and a Chair of the House Alcoholic Beverage Control Committee. Representative McGrady has been a tireless supporter of the North Carolina hospitality industry and NCRLA.