



HOTEL MANAGEMENT

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2018 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY



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RACHEL HUMPHREY, COO AND VP-FRANCHISE RELATIONS, ASIAN AMERICAN HOTEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION

After spending two decades as a trial lawyer, Rachel Humphrey decided to transfer her impressive skill set to AAHOA, where she is responsible for the nearly 18,000-member organization's day-to-day operations and its relationship with industry and brand partners. She also connects members with resources to address industry-related issues and oversees the association's education department. "Having a role in helping AAHOA's members, who own almost half of the hotels in the U.S., become the recognized voice of America's hotel owners is a great motivator," said Humphrey, who also serves on the group's executive leadership team. "I come to work wanting to be a part of the trajectory of this amazing association, and I also get the privilege of surrounding myself with an exceptional team who inspire me every day." Humphrey's leap into hospitality was not exactly planned. "I retired from private practice, with no plan, and trusted everything would work out. I am not a risk-taker, but I ended up with a second career completely different from anything I had done before, which has rewarded me both professionally and personally far beyond what I could have imagined," she said. Humphrey doesn't muse much about personal success, but does measure it professionally. "I continuously strive to improve my impact in both aspects. At home, I measure success by whether I am maintaining the balance we all desire."



DOROTHY A. JENNINGS, EVP, HVS

Like a dynamo that drives a well-oiled machine, Dorothy Jennings has enough energy to power her along two industry paths. As EVP at hospitality consulting firm HVS, she is involved in the hotel investment advisory and brokerage division and oversees public relations and marketing as well. On another track, Jennings is the conference coordinator for the New York University International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference, which in 2018 marked 40 years of bringing together hospitality's key movers and shakers. It's a role she has savored since 1979, when she helped conference founder Stephen W. Brener get momentum behind the event. Today, she tandems with conference chairman and Loews Hotels & Co. CEO Jonathan M. Tisch and a team to keep the ball rolling. Jennings, a children's- and animal-welfare advocate, said one of her greatest accomplishments via the conference has been raising millions of dollars in sponsorship donations directed toward scholarships and academic initiatives for students of the Jonathan M. Tisch Center of Hospitality and Tourism. "Some of these students juggle several jobs to be able to aspire to the excellent education they receive at the university," said Jennings. In recognition of her efforts, NYU named a university room in her honor and in June, she received the United Jewish Appeal's Lifetime Achievement Award for her service to the hospitality industry.



SHEILA JOHNSON, FOUNDER AND CEO, SALAMANDER HOTELS & RESORTS

As founder and CEO of Salamander Hotels & Resorts, Sheila Johnson oversees a growing portfolio of luxury properties in four southern states. But Johnson's resume extends far beyond hospitality: She is also a co-founder of Black Entertainment Television; the team president, managing partner and governor of the WNBA's Washington Mystics; and the first African-American woman to attain a net worth of at least \$1 billion. "Throughout my professional career, I have had to overcome numerous business obstacles," Johnson recalled. "When I co-founded Black Entertainment Television, we couldn't get funding. As a female professional sports team owner, I'm in the minority. And there are very few people who look like me who own and develop luxury hotels." Still, she emphasized, "I'm not afraid of breaking stereotypes or glass ceilings." Women in leadership roles, said Johnson, need to advocate for each other. "I have spent a career advocating for other women through documentaries, as an ambassador for a global charity and even hosting women's golf tournaments," she said. Last year, at the Middleburg Film Festival held at the Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, Va., Johnson helped curate an all-female director experience. "It was extremely powerful."



FERN I. KANTER, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND EVP, CHMWARNICK

Some people accept leadership when it is presented to them, others actively seek it for themselves—Fern Kanter has committed the better part of her life to helping other women become the best leaders they can be, improving their lives at home, as moms, in their own businesses and in their careers. "I have met so many incredibly competent, smart, professional women who have not been able to reap the benefits of being smart and competent. Partly at fault is the world around us, but we, too, have to navigate better," she said. "I will continue to work with women, at all stages in their career, to develop their voice, exude confidence, raise their hands and ask for what they want. I want to see that all women who so choose have a clear path to the C-suite." Kanter credits her professional success during the past nearly four decades to passion for what she does and perseverance to get it done. "I don't acknowledge 'obstacles' but rather consider these challenges as opportunities. And as a woman, I think we get more than our fair share (of challenges)," she said. "I didn't allow other people, men or women, to influence my perception of my skills, capabilities or future potential. While you can't control the outside influences (although I cannot say I have never tried), I believe women can choose how they filter information, how they respond and how they allow it to impact them."



SAM MONTRUSS

CEO, CADENCE KEEN INNOVATIONS

Sam Montross has always set out to make someone else's job easier. Running a company with one employee (herself) and one product proved to be a lonely beginning, but her humble start informed her leadership style to this day. "People often confuse management with leadership," Montross said. "A parent manages the family's affairs and tells their kids what to do. Leadership in a parent is one who gives children the tools and the confidence building to become whatever that child's greatness has in store." Montross also said that a good leader is never afraid to ask for help. After all, this is the hospitality business, and both co-workers and leaders should be on hand to provide assistance or guidance when needed. If not, hoteliers should seek it out. "There are so many wonderful people in our industry. Someone along the way helped them when they were starting out," she said. "It is not a sign of weakness to ask who they might know, or how best you should approach a challenge. Don't let pride rob you of the opportunity to learn more quickly, and to allow that person to feel like they contributed to your success. Both win."