



**Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association hosts
27th Annual Pineapple Awards Ceremony**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2024

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(Huntsville, Ala.) –The [Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association](#) (HMCHA) recognized the outstanding accomplishments of hospitality professionals in the Huntsville/Madison County community at the 27th Annual Pineapple Awards Dinner on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at the Von Braun Center Saturn Ballroom.

Each year, the organization holds the Pineapple Awards ceremony to honor members who have exhibited outstanding achievement and professionalism in the hospitality industry. In addition to the awards, HMCHA also provides annual educational and professional development scholarships during the event.

The hospitality industry includes diverse market segments of hotels, restaurants, tourism, travel, attractions, allied services and is one of the state’s largest employment providers.

“It was an honor for me to serve as President of HMCHA in 2023,” said outgoing HMCHA President Charles Winters. “I encourage anyone connected to the hospitality industry to join the association and strengthen our connection within the community.”

After making welcoming remarks and detailing a year of success for HMCHA that included officially obtaining 501c6 status as a non-profit association of persons having common business interests, as well as successfully transitioning to a new website and membership platform, Winters welcomed incoming 2024 HMCHA President, Kelley Middlebrooks to address the association.

“As incoming President of the Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association, I am honored to serve alongside a Board dedicated to elevating our community's hospitality experience,” commented Middlebrooks. “Together, we'll cultivate a welcoming environment that showcases the warmth and charm of Huntsville/Madison County to every guest.”

During the awards dinner, the HMCHA continued a long tradition of recognizing and supporting member employees and their dependents with higher education and professional development scholarships.

2024 Hospitality Scholarship Winners:

1. Dylan Sands, son of Amanda Sands with Arrowhead Conferences and Events – General Scholarship
2. Jennifer Hoffman-Little, B’Lisa King Professional Development Scholarship

The **Red Ribbon Awards** are the highest honors for those working in the Hospitality Industry. The winning individuals consistently work to enhance the area's image, promote tourism, and are considered role models to their peers.

2024 Red Ribbon Award Winners:

Food & Beverage Category – Stephen Ryberg, Rhythm on Monroe

Allied Category – Matt Stearns, America's Party Pros

Community Service – Kevin Glouner, Von Braun Center

Lodging & Conference Center – Gennifer Gordon, Embassy Suites

Leaders across the hospitality industry are nominated by members of HMCHA for the prestigious **Pineapple Award**. This award is given to an individual who has been involved with a project that has had a major impact on the hospitality industry and/or has been involved in the improvement of an existing project or program that benefits tourism. This year's Pineapple Award recipient is Kim Martin, Chairperson of Good Culture, Inc.

HMCHA created the **Lifetime Achievement Award** in honor and memory of B'lisa King in 2018. This award is not presented every year and is reserved to recognize an individual who has spent a significant portion of their career in the hospitality and travel profession – contributing to the betterment of the industry in a noteworthy and lasting way over an extended period. Someone who demonstrates outstanding service and has a goal of making the hospitality industry a great place to work within, as well as providing lasting experiences for those who travel to the area. This year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient is Judy Ryals. After a 45-year career leading the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Judy Ryals retired in September 2023. At the time of her retirement, Judy was the longest serving head of any convention and visitors bureau in the nation.

Closing the event, the 2024 Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association Officers and Board of Directors were inducted, followed by the official induction of the 2024 HMCHA President Kelley Middlebrooks.

Special thanks to in-kind sponsors for the event: America's Party Pros, Jeff White Photographer/Clicks Foto, Inc., Designs by Essence, Two Men and a Truck, Alabama A&M University, Fantasy Playhouse, Randolph School, UPS Store, Easy Engraving & Von Braun Center.

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About the Huntsville-Madison County Hospitality Association

The Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association is a 501c6 membership-based association with the purpose to unite representatives of the hospitality and tourism industry, including Lodging, Restaurant, Tourism & Travel and Allied Services for the promotion and protection of their common interests.