

FY21 Board of Director Nominees

Elected Directors

Michael Canfield



Michael currently serves as the President and CEO of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and Indian Pueblos Marketing. These corporations are owned by the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico and are operating on tribal land located in the City of Albuquerque. He is also the president of Valliant Consulting Group, a consulting firm specializing in providing Organizational Development and Human Resources services to Native American organizations throughout the United States. Michael has strong ties to the New Mexico community. He is a member of the Laguna Pueblo and serves on many community and business boards including Albuquerque Economic Development, Visit Albuquerque, New Mexico Mutual, Economic Forum, The Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Laguna Construction Corporation, The Near North Valley Neighborhood Association and the New Mexico Gas Company.

Tom Garrity



Tom is President of The Garrity Group Public Relations where he specializes in public relations, issue management and crisis communication strategies for businesses and organizations in the public and private sectors. Tom's experience in the travel, hospitality and event industries includes brands that define New Mexico including the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, the New Mexico Chile Association, as well as the "alien" brand through his work with the 1997 Roswell UFO Encounter and subsequent work with the City of Roswell. He has helped to launch a variety of hotel brands in the state and helped to build crisis communication response infrastructure for the New Mexico Department of Tourism during the historic Cerro Grande fire season. In 2012, Tom's contribution to the communications industry was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Public Relations Society of America New Mexico Chapter.

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Deepesh Kholwadwala, MSME



As Owner and President/CEO of Sun Capital Hotels, Deepesh has over 16 years of experience in the hotel development industry which includes market assessment, acquisitions, lodging product placement, entitlements, financing, and construction. His company is responsible for delivering turn-key services spanning from project conceptualization to day-to-day operation of extended stay and select service hotels. Sun Capital currently owns and/or manages nine hotels with five properties in the pipeline. Deepesh's hospitality industry honors include the Marriott Horizon Award, Marriott Gold and Marriott Platinum Service Awards, Hilton Lighthouse Award Recipient, IHG's Quality Excellence Recipient, IHG's New Comer of the Year Award and the New Mexico Lodging Association Member of the Year. From 1993 to 2012 Deepesh was a principle member of the technical staff at the Intelligent Systems and Robotics Center at Sandia National Laboratories. While there, he earned the Individual Leadership Award, R&D100 Award, Technology in the Service of Society Award and five executed patents.

Christine M. Pauley, CAE, CMP, CEM



Christine is the Director of Meetings & Conferences at the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) with over 18 years of conference, events, exhibits, and meetings management. ASRT's Albuquerque office is the national headquarters of the largest association of medical imaging professionals with over 155,000 members. Christine has had the unique experience of working on both the Association side and the Corporate side, both domestically and internationally. Her experience working in both for-profit as well as not-for-profit arenas has afforded her the opportunity to work with CVBs and DMOs across the country, as well as in Europe and Asia. This experience gives Christine a unique insight to understand Visit Albuquerque's goals, mission and its role and impact in the community. Christine is a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), Certified in Exhibit Management (CEM) and Certified Association Executive (CAE).

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William R. Stafford



As Co-Owner of Sadie's of New Mexico, William comes from a long-standing Albuquerque family business with over 45 years in the restaurant industry. He was General Manager at Sadie's from 1984 to 1995. In 1995 William left Sadie's to pursue his performing arts career. In addition to over 60 film and theatre productions, William spent 1995 to 2000 in the San Francisco Bay area holding positions at the Willows Theatre Company, San Jose Stage, American Conservatory Theatre. In 2001 William joined the Norwegian Cruise Lines as the Company Entertainment Manager. He returned to the family business full time in 2004. Past Education Positions include Director of Education at the Southwest Repertory Theatre and Drama Teacher at the Bosque School. William was a member of the Board at the Musical Theatre Southwest and Mother Road Theatre Company, holding the position of President on both boards.

Appointed Directors

Leah Black



Leah Black is the Executive Director at the New Mexico Brewers Guild and is a member of the City of Albuquerque Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board. She will be joining the Visit Albuquerque Board as their representative.