



VBC Recognized at Hospitality Association's Annual Awards Ceremony

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Huntsville, Ala. – The Von Braun Center (VBC) is honored to be recognized at the Huntsville-Madison County Hospitality Association's (HMCHA) 24th Annual Pineapple Awards Ceremony. This year's prestigious event was hosted virtually on January 19, 2021.

The HMCHA holds the Pineapple Awards ceremony to honor members who have exhibited outstanding achievement and professionalism in the Hospitality Industry, including: Hotels, restaurants, tourism, travel, attractions, and allied support.

“In the year that shattered our industry, we felt it was even more important to acknowledge our hospitality family,” remarked incoming HMCHA President, Harmony Heard.



During the presentation, the Von Braun Center team gathered inside Mars Music Hall to watch the event. The VBC and members of its staff were awarded in three separate categories.

In the scholarship category, VBC Marketing Assistant, Madeline Weaver, was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. The scholarships are given by the HMCHA to those who are working in the hospitality industry. Madeline is a valuable asset to the VBC team and has a bright future ahead of her.

Prior to officially opening in 1975, the Von Braun Center made its first hire in 1973 with Analoyce Tipton. Analoyce worked for the VBC for 46 years. In those years, she made countless connections and significantly impacted tourism and hospitality in Huntsville. She developed and maintained the scheduling system for the city's civic center that is still the model for booking events today. Analoyce passed away in April 2020 and left behind a lasting legacy with her peers in the industry. The HMCHA dedicated the *Lifetime Achievement Award* to Analoyce Tipton during the Pineapple Awards ceremony. Analoyce's sister, Dale Hopper, proudly accepted the award on her behalf.

In light of the extreme circumstances COVID-19 placed on the Hospitality Industry in 2020, the HMCHA created a new award, the *Outstanding Team Award*. A “People's Choice” award, nominations were submitted and the organization's membership reviewed and voted on the strongest nomination.

“It's true, the Hospitality Industry received an unprecedented blow in 2020 that we are still feeling into 2021,” commented VBC Executive Director, Steve Maples. “But throughout the hardships, I'm extremely proud of our

team who immediately pivoted roles and adjusted to our current ‘new’ normal.”

The *Outstanding Team Award* is given to a team who displayed strength, determination, and resilience during the challenges presented during 2020. This award acknowledges the creativity used in adapting to the changes surrounding the community and the Hospitality Industry.

“Our mission at the VBC has always been to improve the quality of life of the Huntsville community and to provide a fun and safe atmosphere for our guests. In the past year, we have created new free events for the community and adjusted all of our operations to accommodate guidelines ensuring the safety of our guests. On behalf of the entire Von Braun Center team, we are honored to be chosen for the *Outstanding Team Award*.”

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About the Von Braun Center

The Von Braun Center is a multi-purpose facility located in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. The VBC offers multiple venues for presenting cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting and social events. Venue spaces include the Propst Arena, Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, Mars Music Hall, North Hall, South Hall, and East Hall. Additionally, the VBC has an on-site full-service restaurant and rooftop bar – Rhythm on Monroe. With over 170,000 square feet of flexible meeting space the VBC is able to accommodate events of all types and sizes. The VBC hosts multiple community events including the Huntsville Christmas Parade, Family Fun Festival & Expo, and the Von Brewski Beer Festival.