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# PREMIER

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*Hotel College Alumni  
Light Up  
the Industry*



**UNLV**  
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

## PREMIER

The official magazine of the  
William F. Harrah College  
of Hotel Administration

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## Five Questions for Donald D. Snyder, Dean of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

**A** longtime Southern Nevada businessman who's run local and international banks, led Boyd Gaming Corporation and the Fremont Street Experience, and chaired nonprofit groups like UNLV Foundation and The Smith Center for

Performing Arts, Snyder stepped into academia this fall as interim dean of the UNLV Harrah Hotel College.

Snyder shared his insight on the goals and challenges ahead for the college.

### What drew you to the dean's position?

Retiring from Boyd Gaming in 2005 gave me a chance to do things I never had time to do. Being involved with UNLV the past 23 years as a volunteer gave me a perspective on the university and certainly convinced me of how important higher education is to our community. The ability to blend business experience with academia is an interesting opportunity, so I am encouraged and challenged by it. The opportunity to do this with a college that has an incredible reputation at UNLV is especially exciting.

### What are your priorities?

To ensure that as a college, we do what is necessary to both deserve and build on this reputation that has been created over the past 40 years. To help us do that, I hope to lead the college to think and function more strategically. I expect this focus will enable our college to come together as a college community to do the things that are critical to define and deliver academic excellence at the highest level among programs engaged in our disciplines. Students must remain at the heart of our mission.

We have a number of assets in and around our main campus that can strengthen the academic experience for students and faculty alike. This includes a nationally and internationally acclaimed faculty and program combined with an infrastructure of hotel, gaming, food and beverage, convention and meeting, and entertainment on a scale not duplicated any other place in the world. If we can effectively "connect these dots," no other program can do better than our hotel college.

### Are there plans to continue expanding the college overseas?

First, our college has developed an incredible international reputation. You see that in the international composition of our student body. You also see it when you travel and encounter our alumni and the large number of hospitality companies around the world that have recruited many of our alumni. I am committed to continuing to build on that reputation.

The invitation by the Singapore government to establish a campus there is the highest form of compliment. I am pleased and proud of what UNLV Singapore has become in such a short period of time. A new agreement with the Singapore Institute of Technology creates an even more sound academic and financial foundation on which to further develop. UNLV Singapore is now an integral part of our international reputation.

That said, I believe all overseas programs must serve to strengthen our "heart," and our heart is on the main campus. I want our heart to beat very strongly. International opportunities will be evaluated in terms of how they serve to strengthen the heart.

### What challenges are ahead for the college?

We clearly have a premier hospitality program — something we absolutely must continue to deliver. The current economic environment, serious fiscal problems within state government in Nevada, and competitors — who increasingly want to displace us in the academic community — combine to provide unprecedented challenges. Developing new funding sources and investing all resources in areas of greatest strategic priority will be critical to managing these challenges.

### How long do you expect to be dean?

I am not an interim type of person. I am the type of person who likes to come in, assess the situation, and help move the organization down the road in a strategic and positive way.

That will take more than one or two years to accomplish. In an academic environment, it is a longer period of time than perhaps what I am used to in the private sector. I am here because I want to be, and I am going to be here as long as it takes to effect some of the really positive changes that we have the opportunity to create.

*To learn more about Donald Snyder's career and vision for the Harrah Hotel College, a video of his interview with UNLV Public Affairs is available on [www.YouTube/UNLVNews](http://www.YouTube/UNLVNews). ■*



# Konami Gaming Gives \$1 Million

For students studying gaming management, the bright lights of the Vegas Strip are now shining down on them at UNLV. On Aug. 6, KONAMI CORPORATION, parent company of Konami Gaming, announced its gift of \$1 million to the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. This is the first gift of this size specifically focused on supporting professional development, research, and related activities for the purpose of expanding the knowledge base related to the gaming industry.

“We are deeply grateful for the generosity and support of KONAMI,” says UNLV President Neal Smatresk. “With this focused investment in our gaming management program — including the formation of a scholarship endowment that will benefit students in perpetuity — KONAMI has become a valued partner in maintaining high-quality academic programs and student support in our hotel college.”

“When KONAMI was initially licensed by the Nevada Gaming Commission in January 2000, our founder and chairman, Mr. Kagemasa Kozuki, indicated we would we would make a commitment in the local community where we operate,” states Tom Jingoli,

’96 MS, KONAMI vice president and CCO. “UNLV was a natural fit for us to make a significant donation, as KONAMI has a long history of investing in education.”

Of the total \$1 million, \$500,000 has been designated to establish the KONAMI Gaming Fund. This endowment will exist in perpetuity and provide annual funding to support student professional-development opportunities. This includes student attendance at industry conferences, seminars, and trade shows. While students may receive scholarships to attend school, they may not have the funds to travel to industry conferences, and this donation makes it possible.

“This gift is going to allow for scholarships and professional-development opportunities that were before, at most, a dream to most gaming students and faculty. KONAMI’s investment in our education at UNLV makes me even more proud to be a part of this major,” says David Mikowski, a senior gaming major and president of the UNLV Gaming Management Association.

Four hundred fifty thousand dollars of the donation has been designated to support academic priorities that will help improve or expand upon programs and

research, and emerging needs.

“The donation is more than just a financial commitment to the university; it is a long-term investment in our community. I have spoken to both UNLV President Neal Smatresk and Dean Don Snyder, and we expect to offer internships and training classes for the university. Our hope is to expose the students to the manufacturing side of the gaming industry and the wide variety of career opportunities we offer,” states Jingoli.

To honor and recognize the generosity of KONAMI, the existing one-of-a-kind casino laboratory located in the UNLV Stan Fulton Building will be renamed the KONAMI Gaming Lab. This lab features classroom-style learning, state-of-the-art slot machines, surveillance and security cameras, and table games. Students use this lab to gain an understanding of how the casino floor operates, is secured, and is managed.

“We are enthusiastic about this relationship with KONAMI,” says Dean Don Snyder. “This gift adds more of the manufacturing aspect of the hospitality industry to our instruction, providing students with an even more well-rounded education.” ■■

activities, research, or other initiatives that might otherwise not be funded. The remaining \$50,000 was designated to the UNLV Foundation for a five-year membership in the Academic Corporate Council annual giving program, which supports the mission of UNLV by maximizing private, unrestricted support through annual corporate contributions. Gifts are designated toward providing funding for institutional program development,



**Adam Steinman visits an Italian cheese production plant.**

## Wined and Dined in Italy

### Steinman Wins Scholarship for Trip of a Lifetime

Imagine traveling through Italy, eating the richest delights this exquisite country has to offer while sampling the finest wines as well. For UNLV student Adam Steinman, a self-proclaimed connoisseur of food and wine, it was a dream come true.

Each year, the National Restaurant Association (NRA) honors exceptional food and beverage students with an all-expenses-paid trip to Italy. The NRAEF (the NRA's Educational Foundation) and Gruppo Ristoratori Italiani (a not-for-profit association dedicated to promoting knowledge of authentic Italian food and

wine through education) honor up to six students with this award on an annual basis. During the program, which highlights a specific Italian region, students are offered a firsthand experience in Italian winemaking and cooking.

Steinman, who was a culinary management intern for UNLVino and also served as a teaching assistant, says, "In short, it was the trip of a lifetime ... an educational and gastronomical experience that so many can only dream of and many others cannot fathom."

This year's excursion began in Friuli Venezia Giulia, the northeastern-most state in Italy that is famous for its white wines. While there, the group was housed in villas at two different wineries. "Every day was an adventure. We visited some of the region's most prestigious wineries and sampled several of

their white and red wine varieties," says Steinman. "Although we were the guests of honor, on the inside, we felt like we were about to wake up from a dream. We visited a local cheese and yogurt production plant and a prosciutto factory in the DOC San Daniele.

"Every evening, we were treated to multiple-course dinners at some of the region's most acclaimed restaurants. The cuisine of the region was very diverse but defined by the rich abundance of seafood, corn, pork, veal and, of course, fantastic cheeses. We attended galas in chateaus; dipped our feet into the Adriatic in Trieste; sampled handcrafted beers in the mountain city of Sauris; and absorbed every drop of culture, cuisine, and history that we could." ■



**On March 18, the UNLV PGA program was visited by Allen Wronowski, who will begin his presidency of the PGA of America in November 2010. This was the third PGA national president to have visited the program in the past three years.**



## Dean's Cup 2010

Robyn Hadden, '05 MS

May 2 was the day the hotel college and college of business alumni would compete for the coveted Dean's Cup trophy. It had been a little over a year since the first Dean's Cup competition took place, and since that time, the trophy had been in the care of the college of business dean's office. Would the college of business alumni chapter hang on to its title, or would

the hotel college alumni chapter, the underdogs, prove their putt-putt skills and become victorious this year?

On the windy Sunday evening, the Dean's Cup was held at the Putt Park Miniature Golf Course. With the trophy on display, the winning team would soon be determined and get to accompany the trophy to the dean's office, its home for the next year. In the

# All **F** **R**E Cancer Research

According to UNLV's PGA Golf Management Director Christopher Cain, an important part of any education is to expose future leaders to philanthropic endeavors within their communities. Cain strives to do just that, knowing the annual impact of golf on charitable giving exceeds \$3.2 billion in the United States, according to a Golf 20/20 report.

"We realize the significance of these activities and work to ensure our students are active members of the community," notes Cain. "With this in mind, it is important for students to understand their roles as leaders, and our UNLV PGA Golfathon is one such activity where they are exposed to fundraising and the importance of charity."

The inaugural UNLV PGA Golfathon was held May 1, 2009, and included participants Cain and Brian Esposito, founder of Par for The Cure. "Together, the two played 1,068 holes in 12 hours at the Las Vegas Golf Club. This record-setting attempt sparked the interest of many of the UNLV PGA students who volunteered the day of the event.

This year, it was the students' turn. Each student played 100 holes of golf April 23 at the Angel Park Cloud Nine Golf Course in Las Vegas, and their efforts raised an impressive amount. "Each student had a fundraising goal of \$400," says Cain. "I'm proud to say that we were able to raise \$13,400 from this event."

"Working on this project was extremely rewarding," says student Nick Derella. "As an aspiring PGA professional, I want to contribute as much as I can to make as big an impact as possible on the community that embraces our program. Every year, we work with Par for The Cure and learn how important it is to give back to our community. During the months leading up to this event, we are trying not only to raise money for a cause but also to show that golf can produce great value in things



other than just playing a great game. In the future, I plan to put forth my efforts to help philanthropic causes because I believe it will make me a better person and a better golf professional."

Since 2005, the program has raised a total of \$39,000 in funds for breast cancer research and scholarships. Here is a breakdown of what has been accomplished by the students thus far:

- 2005: \$2,500 (breast cancer research)
- 2006: \$2,500 (breast cancer research)
- 2007: \$4,500 (breast cancer research)
- 2008: \$6,350 (\$5,000 breast cancer, \$1,350 children's cancer)
- 2009: \$9,750 (\$5,000 breast cancer, \$4,000 scholarship, \$750 junior golf, Toys for Tots donations, and donations to the community collaborative partnership Three Square, Southern Nevada's only food bank)
- 2010: \$13,400 to date (\$6,700 breast cancer research, \$6,700 scholarship)

For more information about upcoming events or to learn how to make a contribution, visit <http://www.unlvpgagolfathon.dojiggy.com/>. ■□

□

## *A Golfing Trophy is Merely Proof of the Putting – Shelby Friedman*

Putt Park, a balloon artist kept children entertained while business and hotel college alumni put their game faces on and got ready to compete.

Shortly after the rules were explained, competitors were divided into teams, and teams were assigned to their proper putt-putt holes, the Dean's Cup tournament was officially under way. Laughter and cheers were

heard across the course as teams high-fived each other and tried to get in the heads of their competitors, all in good jest.

Once all teams had turned in their scorecards and the results were tallied, a tie was revealed! The rules stated that in the event of a tie, the most holes-in-one would determine the winning team. After a quick show of hands to resolve

the tie, the Harrah Hotel College Alumni Chapter was declared the 2010 Dean's Cup trophy winner! Accepting the trophy on behalf of the hotel college was Christine Kiely, chair of the alumni board.

The trophy resides in Beam Hall once again; however, it is now in the hotel college dean's office. ■■

# Donald W. Reynolds Foundation Establishes Memorial Scholarship Endowment for Student Matthew S. Anderson



**(From left) David Russi and Jeffrey Kragt are the inaugural recipients of the Matthew S. Anderson Memorial PGM Scholarship.**

**Steve and Debbie Anderson accept a plaque from scholarship recipient Jeff Kragt in honor of their son, Matthew.**

Matthew Anderson was a talented multisport athlete at Faith Lutheran High School, where he lettered in golf and received all-state recognition in both football and basketball. After graduating, he chose to attend UNLV to study in the PGA Professional Golf Management Program, which is one of just 20 programs of its kind in the country. As a senior in the program, Matthew was looking forward to a career as a golf professional and had recently discovered his passion for teaching and youth development. Through two meaningful summer internships, he worked with The First Tee of Southern Nevada and the golf shop at Red Rock Country Club.

After a brief illness, Matthew passed away May 15, 2010.

In recognition of Matthew's life, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation has made a gift of \$70,000 to establish the Matthew S. Anderson Memorial PGM Scholarship Endowment fund at UNLV. This scholarship fund will provide scholarships for current and future golf management students. The first scholarship awards were announced this fall at the PGA Professional Golf Management Family & Friends Banquet. The two recipients, Jeffrey Kragt and David Russi, were Matthew's friends and classmates, and both have demonstrated an interest in working

with and teaching youth. At the banquet, Dean Donald D. Snyder presented Matthew's family with his UNLV diploma. The university will award

Matthew's degree posthumously at the December 2010 commencement ceremony.

To further build upon this scholarship endowment, the first Matthew S. Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament and Banquet was held Oct. 25 at Red Rock Country Club. The funds raised from the event directly benefit this scholarship endowment.

The William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration and the PGA Professional Golf Management Program are appreciative of the support provided by the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. Headquartered in Las Vegas, Nev., the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation is a national philanthropic organization founded in 1954 by the late media entrepreneur for whom it was named. ■■



Photo by Geri Kodey, '86

**F**or Zarnaz Zandi, completing her degree is all about setting a proper example for her young son. Zandi, who goes by “Zee,” is a successful music talent booker well-known in Las Vegas nightclub circles as the “queen of house.” Yet despite her success thus far, she realizes the importance of finishing what you’ve started when it comes to education.

“When I decided to relocate to Las Vegas after two years of college in Washington, I wanted to open a coffee bar,” she says, while also stating that she has been business-oriented her entire life. “This was 1994 and there weren’t Starbucks outlets on every corner so I developed a proposal which I sent to most of the food and beverage directors on the Strip,” she recalls. “Although every single director responded, they were in the midst of doing it themselves. I had just missed the boat!”

Not one to give up easily, Zandi found a location on the Strip and opened an independent coffee bar. “I was very young and the rent on the place was ridiculous,” she says. “I was super busy — attending UNLV full-time, managing my coffee bar, and working another job on the side. I loved it, though, and felt really energized by Las Vegas.”

Even though her plate was full, she found time to join some pertinent UNLV student organizations. “I got involved with the Hotel Association and the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) and I also went on two cruises with Al Izzolo’s group. I really enjoyed the networking from all these activities.”

Eventually, the overhead on the coffee bar became too high to make the operation worthwhile but, with the help of her mother, her coffee outlet became a concession provider at both UNLV’s Thomas & Mack Center and Sam Boyd Stadium. Additionally, Zandi worked in some of Las Vegas’ finest restaurants before helping open Bellagio. It was during this time that she had her son and decided to take a break from school.

A few years ago, after working hard to establish herself in the ever-changing world of Las Vegas nightlife, Zandi decided it was time to finish her degree. “My son is nine years old and I’m constantly telling him the importance of education,” she says. “As much as I preach this, I didn’t want to tell him that I hadn’t finished. I needed to complete it for myself, while setting a proper example for him.

“It hasn’t been easy going back after ten years. It’s a lot of work but I strongly believe that if you want to, you can make it happen. Although I’m about 15 years older than many of my fellow students, they are always asking me questions about the jobs I have had. I enjoy being able to help them and I feel blessed with everything I’ve been able to do. Finishing my degree will be like completing a puzzle.”

Zandi has plans to also complete a master’s degree. And, in between working for Angel Management Group (a nightlife, lifestyle marketing, and event management company), where she books today’s top DJs at numerous Las Vegas clubs, it’s a goal she’s sure to follow through on. ■■■



A sampling of alumni working for the LVCVA: (from left) Terry Jicinsky, Doreen Hoffman, Ericka Aviles, Ken Haas, and Jamie McNutt.

# Alumni Work Behind Scenes to Keep Vegas Vibrant

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida, '00 MA

Wherever you are in the world, the familiar Las Vegas-themed “What happens here, stays here” (WHHSH) branding campaign has probably caught your attention. The edgy ads have garnered more notoriety than just a fleeting instance and have received a remarkable following.

However, not everyone is as familiar with the organization responsible for the identification of Las Vegas as an entity unto itself and for putting those catchy ads out there. Although the campaigns have put Las Vegas on the

tips of many people’s tongues who might not have thought of the desert oasis as a top vacation pick, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) does much more in its everyday role as a bustling, integral association that is the official destination marketing organization of Las Vegas. Due to the work of the LVCVA, the Las Vegas brand has been the second-most recognized in the United States, following the search engine Google, since 2007.

In addition to its marketing duties, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority also operates the Las Vegas

Convention Center and Cashman Center/Cashman Field. Its 14-member board is appointed by various elected governing bodies in Clark County, Nev., and its funding is provided by a room tax on all hotels in the county and through revenue from its function space.

Rossi Ralenkotter, president/CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, holds an MBA from UNLV and was honored as the UNLV Alumni of the Year in 2008 and UNLV Distinguished Nevadan in 2009. “Tourism is the backbone of the Southern Nevada economy, so it is crucial to have a

program to develop the future leaders of our industry,” he says. “The William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration is the leading program in the country, and we are proud to have a number of graduates helping the LVCVA promote Las Vegas as the premier destination for business and leisure travel.” He continues, “Individuals who graduate from the program have a solid working knowledge of the tourism industry and are capable of making immediate contributions to an employer.”

What types of LVCVA jobs do those alumni hold? Senior Vice President of Operations Terry Jicinsky, '06 MS, says that his role includes “ensuring Las Vegas maintains its rank as the number-one convention and trade show city.” He continues, “Many people may not be aware of the fact that Las Vegas has held this official ranking for the past 16 years, per Tradeshow Week’s Top 200 List.

“The behind-the-scenes efforts that go into working with our convention clients and suppliers to set up trade shows are awe-inspiring,” notes Jicinsky. “The making of the sausage, so to speak, is very similar to what I imagine the movie industry to be — building scenery, setting lights, costumes, music, and entertainment — all rolled into a trade show booth. At the convention center, it’s all about delivering on the promise and creating a customer experience that meets the expectations of our convention delegates based on what our marketing and sales efforts promise.”

According to Jicinsky, who has been with the LVCVA for more than 18 years, “My favorite part of working at the LVCVA is marketing a destination that 99 percent of our customers simply love. The genuine excitement and enthusiasm that our customers express is a pleasure to be around. Whether they are here to attend a convention or for a vacation, the one-of-a-kind experience that Las Vegas provides to our visitors is infectious.”

Although the branding and advertising campaigns put out by the LVCVA have continued to grow tourists’ and conventioners’ interests in the city, it’s a never-ending challenge to keep perceptions fresh and new. “It’s great to be able to tell our customers what’s new and exciting in Las Vegas every year and even better when they come to our

city and always see or learn something new,” says LVCVA Sales Executive Ericka Aviles, '04. “No other destination can say that.

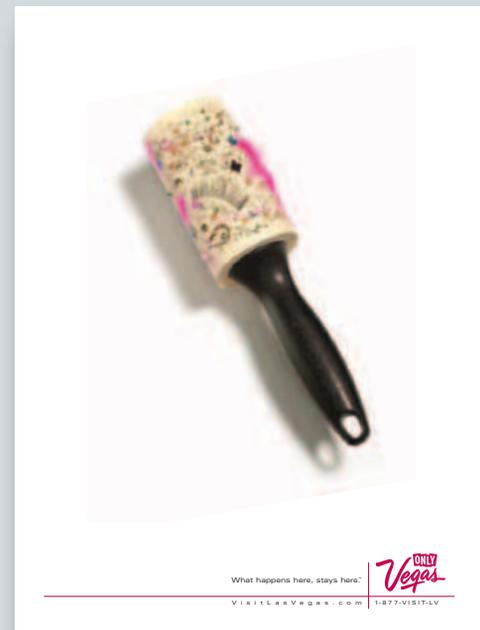
“We work with the hotel community and clients on a day-to-day basis, and voicing feedback is what helps Las Vegas stay on top of any other destination for both the business traveler and the leisure traveler,” says Aviles. “What is the perception of Las Vegas? What are their clients saying about Las Vegas? What are our hotel partners saying?”

It is this market research that guides the LVCVA and its Las Vegas-based advertising agency, R&R Partners, to produce those print and television ads that have received international attention and have garnered the awards that go with such notoriety. In fact, this past July, R&R won a Bronze Cannes Lion in the Travel, Transport, and Tourism category in the 57th annual Cannes Lion International. The competition drew 25,000 entries from 8,000 people in 90 countries, and Las Vegas was the only destination recognized in this year’s awards.

Earlier this summer, the American Advertising Federation announced that R&R and the LVCVA had won top awards in four national categories for the “What’s your excuse?” and “What happens here, stays here” campaigns. R&R won two gold and two silver ADDY awards for national television campaigns. The ads were presented in the edgy “What happens here, stays here” style that shows no gambling or resorts but leaves the viewer to read between the lines about the Las Vegas experience.

That famous advertising slogan, which was originally used in a 2003 campaign, was brought back last year due to the economic hard times that have hit Las Vegas so hard. It’s not surprising that the pop culture phenomenon of “What happens here, stays here” has been well received once again. Even though these are hard times, people still want to feel like they can have a fun getaway. As long as “What happens here” tests well and motivates consumers, R&R says the campaign could last indefinitely.

Although there’s no firm cause-and-effect relationship between the popularity of Las Vegas and the ‘What happens here’ campaign, there is this



correlation: While the campaign ran, tourism swelled and the Strip resorts posted record profits. And R&R's twice-annual polling of up to 20,000 Americans in major cities has showed that consumers know more about Las Vegas' high-end offerings, have more positive feelings toward Las Vegas, and are more likely to visit (*Las Vegas Sun*, Sept. 28, 2009)."

In addition to utilizing its WHHSH campaign to attract visitors, this past summer included the introduction of the LVCVA's Camp Vegas marketing campaign. A take on traditional summer camp festivities but with an adult twist, the campaign targeted adults with the message that kids don't deserve to have all the fun — visitors can be pampered with an array of summer activities that are just for adults.

Likewise, the LVCVA recently debuted a new strategic plan that promotes

the value of face-to-face business meetings in the city. Using a website, [vegasmmeansbusiness.com](http://vegasmmeansbusiness.com), the plan features talking points that refute and rebuff recent criticism from lawmakers and reporters who have used examples to characterize resort-based meetings as extravagant and frivolous.

Just as the conventions/trade shows and ad campaigns are important to the LVCVA, so are its employees and their wealth of experience and knowledge. One alumna employed by the LVCVA is Convention Services Manager (CSM) Jamie McNutt, '03 BS. "While it may seem that a CSM may not have a lot to do with the creative process of promoting our destination, it is critical for every tourism industry employee to ensure that Las Vegas lives up to the brand promise," says McNutt. "By continually living the brand and ensuring a great experience for my

show clients and their attendees, we will continue to attract business and promote Las Vegas.

"Our town has evolved so much already. We were once known only as a gaming town, and now we are a world-renowned destination that offers fine dining, shopping, shows, and many other activities. I see our town getting more involved in "greening" efforts and perhaps promoting the more natural side of the Las Vegas area," says McNutt.

Jicinsky believes that "the biggest opportunity Las Vegas has on the horizon is our ability to evolve into a world-class international destination. The potential for increased visitors from our traditional international markets, such as Canada, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, will pale in comparison to what our visitation from emerging markets, such as Brazil, China, India, and Russia, will be a decade from now." He continues, "But to meet those needs, we need to intensify our efforts to increase direct international air lift into Las Vegas and advance our customer-service levels. This includes expanding our work force's language skills and understanding of cultural nuances as well as things as simple as providing multilingual road signs and restaurant menus.

"Undoubtedly, the reinvention of Las Vegas is the most important advantage our local tourism industry has going for it. Whenever I interact with my CVB peers across the country, the conversation invariably includes a degree of envy, jealousy, and respect from them on our destination's ability to attract new customers and build loyalty from our repeat customers," says Jicinsky. "The ongoing reinvention of our destination plays a very big part of that success."

Echoing what might be the opinion of many, another alumni, Sales Executive Ken Haas, '75, says, "I miss the old Vegas, yet the progress has taken us to a global brand and made Las Vegas a worldwide favorite place to be."

According to LVCVA Buyer Doreen Hoffman, '06, "While keeping Las Vegas the 'Entertainment Capital of the World,' we still need to diversify. Ending the recession (nationwide) would be the best thing to happen." ■■



**On May 11, the Valley High School Academy of Hospitality and Tourism celebrated U.S. Travel Rally Day in conjunction with members of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and the Harrah Hotel College. Outstanding hospitality employees were awarded the designation of Hospitality Hero (including hotel college student Jeff Holloway) and four additional students (Michael Amato-von Hemert, Jill Sanbrotti, Adjovi Assiobo-Outja, and Gerardo Vela Meza) were recognized for their commitment to the industry. In addition, attendees were treated to performances by Valley High School's marching band, Australian singing group Human Nature, and ventriloquist Terry Fator.**

# Research Center Emphasizes Applicable Solutions

Gael D. Hancock

**I**n today's economy, casino managers must maximize income, making critical decisions on space utilization, capital expenditures, and comping policies. Sometimes those decisions are based on assumptions — such as the concept that restaurants and other amenities help stimulate casino visits and gaming.

As part of a recent study, Dr. Tony Lucas and Dr. Sara Tanford, Harrah Hotel College professors, developed a methodology for assessing the indirect contribution to gaming revenue of a restaurant or amenity, such as a pool. This methodology, and the results of the study, can help casino management make better decisions.

The study itself is exciting, but so is the fact that the funds to conduct the study were from the Harrah Hospitality Research Center (HHRC), awarded in the form of a grant. Since its inception in 2008 through an endowment from the Harrah's Foundation, the HHRC has awarded more than \$300,000 in research grants to nine teams of researchers around the world.

The HHRC, with guidance from its director, Dr. Seyhmus Baloglu, professor in the Harrah Hotel College, promotes hospitality research through five broad activities: providing grants, supporting researcher education, recognizing good research, recognizing excellent industry practices, and disseminating information throughout the academic and industry communities. Although the center is housed at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, it requires the commitment of people from many other universities to achieve its goals.

"It is an honor for the hotel college to host the Harrah Hospitality

Research Center and a humbling responsibility," says Baloglu. "We want the HHRC to support hospitality research in its broadest sense. To do this properly, we solicit grant proposals from researchers around the world and work with grant and research paper reviewers with a broad range of expertise."

This past June, the first Harrah Hospitality Research Summit attracted researchers from 12 countries.

The summit is a way for information to be shared among researchers and industry professionals. In addition to paper and poster presentations, a free 1 1/2-day workshop on ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data content analysis tool, was provided. This workshop was open to researchers and graduate students in support of their future research activities.

At the summit, the first Harrah Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award in Hospitality was given out. The recipient was Chih-Chien Chen, Ph.D., who earned her doctorate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her dissertation was titled "What Revenue-Optimizing Firms Can Do About Deal-Seeking Consumers: The Role of Price Patterns, Timing and Cancellation Policies in Travelers' Advanced Booking Decisions." This award is given to encourage outstanding research and carries a \$1,500 cash



The best paper award is presented by (right) Dr. Baloglu and (left) Terry Byrnes, vice president of customer satisfaction at Harrah's Entertainment, to EunHa Jeong and SooCheong (Shawn) Jang, both from Purdue University

prize plus \$500 for travel to the Harrah Hospitality Research Summit.

In 2009 and 2010, the Harrah Excellence in Innovation Award was given out at the annual Vallen Dinner of Distinction to Tapcode Inc, and MICROS Systems Inc. These awards recognize a person or business that has contributed significantly to hospitality industry excellence. Nomination packages are available on the Harrah Hotel College website.

"In the hospitality industry, research is not carried out in a vacuum," says Baloglu. "The goal of the research supported by the HHRC is to provide applicable solutions and information on best practices."

For more information on the Harrah Hospitality Research Center, visit the website, <http://hotel.unlv.edu/research/hhrc>. ■

# Alumni Taking Their UNLV Education to Other Institutions as Faculty Members

**A**s Emmett Steed, '03 Ph.D., was finishing his dissertation at the Harrah Hotel College, his classmate (now assistant professor) Clark Kincaid, '99 MS, '03 Ph.D., was searching hospitality management professorial openings on the Internet and found one at the school where he had played football as an undergraduate. Upon his recommendation, Steed looked into the Southern Utah University (SUU) position and was subsequently hired to launch the Cedar City University's Hotel, Resort, and Hospitality Management (HRHM) program for the fall 2003 semester.

"I was thrilled with the opportunity of starting a new program," says Steed. "I wanted to optimally combine three components: 1) my UNLV doctoral program; 2) my 25 years of industry experience; and 3) my being housed in the School of Business at SUU."

After three years' existence and a rapidly growing student enrollment that showed no signs of slowing down, there became a need for an additional professor. Steed recalled another UNLV cohort, Lisa Assante, '98 MS, and a Ph.D. graduate of Texas Tech University. He thought she would be a great addition, but he did not know where she was. He went ahead and posted the available position and was thrilled when she applied.

Assante, who had worked in the food and beverage industry for numerous years with such recognizable companies as Aramark and Sodexo, was teaching in Hawaii when she saw the job posting. "My husband and I had just adopted a baby who was born prematurely, and we knew we needed to be back on the mainland for her health care," she says. "I applied not knowing Emmett was there but thought it was a great opportunity. I absolutely love teaching and had experienced the best two years of my life while I was a grad student at UNLV. I wanted a job where I could ensure that my students would have that same kind of experience, and once I learned of Emmett's connection, it seemed like the perfect position."

Her addition to the department in 2005 added food and beverage expertise to the SUU program. "I think my years of industry experience really make a difference," says Assante. "I teach so that my students really understand the application of what they learn to the real world. When I was working in the industry, I really missed being in a classroom of eager students. Through the various jobs I've held, I feel that I can use my experiences to their advantage. I love coming to work, and it's such a great environment," she continues.

"It's always great to be in on the

development of a program and help grow the major. I spend a lot of time with students getting their feedback and a lot of time with those in the industry making sure I know which competencies our students need to possess."

Two years ago, SUU added a third professor. The program now has approximately 75 students with a declared hospitality major and about 225 students in HRHM classes each semester. Steed has partnered with a marketing professor to conduct research for the Utah Summer Games administrators and is also working with the Utah Office of Tourism to develop a Central/Southern Utah visitor profile. This past year, Steed received tenure and the department was renamed Management, Marketing, and Hospitality. Likewise, Assante was awarded the university's Thunderbird award for 2008 Professor of the Year, and both of these former UNLV students have been recognized as Outstanding Professors of the Year for the Management, Marketing, and Hospitality Department.

Another alumnus, Shane Blum, '98 Ph.D., was the Harrah Hotel College's first doctoral graduate, and he continues to set the bar high as Texas Tech University's chairperson of the Nutrition, Hospitality, and Retailing Department, which houses the Restaurant, Hotel, and Institutional Management Program. "I

came straight to Texas Tech from UNLV and have been here for the past 12 years," says Blum. "I decided to go into teaching while I was getting my MBA at San Diego State University. I was working full time at a hotel, which I had done for a number of years, and was trying to decide what I wanted to do with my degree.

"While working on my master's degree, I made presentations in all of my classes, and at work, I was responsible for training new employees at the front desk. I loved working in hotels but was getting a little burned out. I enjoyed presentations and training and decided to combine that with my love for hotels by going on to pursue my Ph.D. The timing was perfect because Dr. Bosselman had just joined the faculty at UNLV, and he had been one of my professors when I was an undergrad at the University of Massachusetts. Anyway, long story short, I spoke to him, got admitted to the program, and moved to Las Vegas in 1995."

In addition to his role as department chairperson, Blum currently teaches hotel operations and human resource management courses but has also taught various courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels over the years.

"There are two things that I like best about being involved in higher education in the hospitality arena. The first is the interaction with undergrads in and out of the classroom. Due to my administrative duties, I can teach only one course per semester, which I regret because I am not able to teach as many students as I had in the past. I used to teach each of the sections of a required course, so I would have contact, at one time or another, with every student in our program; that is no longer the case, and I miss it. The second thing I like is keeping in touch with students after they graduate and going to visit them at their work. I was recently in the Austin area and had the chance to visit with a number of alumni and current interns, and it was great to see their success. It



***I like . . . keeping in touch with students after they graduate and going to visit them at their work. I was recently in the Austin area and had the chance to visit with a number of alumni and current interns, and it was great to see their success. It helps me remember why I do what I do."***

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While many are aware that the hotel college places a strong emphasis on the practicalities of hospitality career preparation, they may not realize that advanced degree programs can prepare students for careers in research and teaching. The dual master of business administration/master of science in hotel administration program is designed for students who aspire to become business leaders in hotel administration and possibly continue on toward Ph.D.s. An executive online program enables an industry professional to pursue a master of hospitality administration (Executive Master of Hospitality Administration) at his or her own pace, and the doctorate in hotel administration is aimed at students who want to teach hospitality management at the university level. UNLV also offers a dual Master's of Science in Management Information Systems and Master's of Science in Hotel Administration (MIS/HOA) degree designed for those who seek career opportunities in the information technology sector of the hospitality industry. Alumni like Steed, Assante, and Blum are just a few of those who have chosen to inspire and instruct the next generation of hospitality executives. ■

**Here is a sampling of alumni and where they are teaching around the world:**

- Soyoung Boo, '06 Ph.D., George Washington University
- Natasa Christodoulidou, '06 Ph.D., Cal State Dominguez Hills
- Greg Dunn, '05 Ph.D., University of South Florida
- Bomi Kang, '05 Ph.D., Coastal Carolina University
- Sunny Kim, '06 MS, '09 Ph.D., Texas Tech University
- John B. "Brumby" McLeod, '08 Ph.D., College of Charleston
- Tom Schrier, '09 Ph.D., Iowa State University
- Eunju Suh, '02 MS, '06 Ph.D., Florida International University
- Nicholas Thomas, '02, '06 MHA, UNLV Singapore
- Hyewon Youn, '05 MS, '08 Ph.D., University of North Texas
- Tianshu Zheng, '02, '03 MS, '08 Ph.D., Iowa State University
- Dina Zemke, '03 Ph.D., Johnson & Wales University

# Thank You for Your Service!

## Hotel College Wishes Retirees Well

Robyn Campbell-Ouchida, '00 MA



GERI KODEY

### Kenneth L. Teeters

Faculty member Ken Teeters recently retired from teaching Facilities Management and Design and Green Hospitality and Sustainable Business Practices. Prior to teaching for the past 20 years, he spent the beginning of his career directly involved in the management of the “built environment” and has been engaged in all aspects of large hotel/casinos in Nevada. He holds a bachelor of science degree from the University of Oklahoma and an MBA from UNLV and has received awards for his expert knowledge in the areas of energy management and environmental protection. Teeters has directed hospitality engineering operations at both the local level and the national level for large corporations.



### Ellis D. Norman

Ellis Norman, MBA, CHE, is the founder and CEO of Hospitality Experts Consortium LLC and its subsidiary, The International School of Hospitality. At UNLV, he taught courses in human resource management, introduction to hospitality, lodging operations, customer service management, and lodging internships at the Las Vegas campus and in Singapore and Switzerland’s programs. Prior to embarking on a combined teaching and entrepreneurial career, he held management positions in food and beverage, human resource management, hospital administration, and hotel management. He has been a consultant for secondary schools, baccalaureate programs, private industry, and government agencies.



AARON MAYES

### Audrey C. McCool

Audrey McCool, Ed.D., RD, LD, was a faculty member for the past 20 years. During that time, she served as chairperson of the food and beverage management department and associate dean for research. She has held both the Michael D. Rose Distinguished Chair and the Claudine Williams Chair. She also contributed significantly to the college and the Food and Beverage department through the development of new courses, materials, and innovative programs that provided students with career-enhancing real-world experiences. She was one of the college’s first faculty members to develop distance education courses, and she went to Singapore to teach the initial courses when the new UNLV campus opened there, helping set its educational standards. McCool has been actively involved in research and publication and since her 1990 arrival to UNLV has published 37 peer-reviewed articles, presented 36 papers at professional conferences, has written two textbooks and numerous industry-related articles and reports, and has collaborated on more than \$700,000 in funded grants. She is currently involved in research projects concerned with childhood obesity.

***I’ll miss the day-to-day contact with her (Annette), as she has become a good friend. But even more than my missing her, the college will miss her. She was always looking out for the best interests of the college. Her UNLV connections and goodwill cannot be replaced. The hotel college will miss her capability to just simply get things done.”***

**Stuart H. Mann, dean emeritus,  
Michael D. Rose Distinguished Chair**



## Claude Lambertz

Working as a chef instructor for the past 26 years, Claude Lambertz has taught numerous students in food and beverage classes. In addition, he also taught many of the college's instructors before they were given their own classes. He enjoyed catering special events and working with students during meals held in the Boyd Dining Room. He says that students offered him a new challenge every semester, as no two groups were ever the same.

Lambertz has served on many charity committees and has judged a number of food competitions. He was able to take a team to a gelato competition in Italy, and in 2004, he chaired a Las Vegas team that brought home nine silver and two bronze medals from the Culinary Olympics held in Erfurt, Germany. He received the Chef of the Year in 1989 and was installed into the Las Vegas Chefs Hall of Fame in 2007. In addition, he has received two Presidential Medallions for his dedication and work for the American Culinary Federation.



## Annette Kannenberg

*... the glue that held it all together!*

*Annette was the administrative assistant when I began as dean in August 1998. She and my wife, Doreen, hit it off immediately, as they have very similar personalities. We all joked about "poor Stuart" — he can never get away from a wife, either at home or at work. The great difference between Doreen and Annette is that Doreen is "directionally challenged." When we first moved here, she was on the phone with Annette constantly asking for directions to help her out of her lost situations. The question, "How do I get there?" hasn't stopped to this day.*

*Annette is a person who can be trusted with every confidence. It was wonderful having such a person to work with, knowing anything that was discussed in private would stay that way.*

**Stuart H. Mann, dean emeritus,  
Michael D. Rose Distinguished Chair**

*I think Annette's great strength, and the one most difficult to replace, is her ability to forge and maintain relationships with co-workers on campus. In the '90s, we used to deliver homemade goodies*

*during the holidays to all of the offices on campus we worked closely with. Annette and I would bake for days at home, then bring it all to the office and fill large trays with the treats. We would spend a day taking trays around campus to the staff in the Registrar, Purchasing, Facilities, etc., just to let them know how much we appreciated working with them. We truly did care for all of the staff on our campus.*

**Sherri Theriault, director of advising**

*Annette and I both started at UNLV in 1986. She was the department secretary for Hotel Management, and I learned quite quickly, as did everyone in our department, that if you wanted something done quickly and efficiently, you asked Annette! Everyone is really going to miss her. You hear the old saying about everyone is replaceable; well, I think Annette is the exception to that. I have a great story. When we first began getting desktop computers (I was of the Royal typewriter generation), Annette was my "google" before that company was even formed. I remember calling and asking her where I put the ribbon in my computer, and she just laughed and said that there wasn't one. And when I asked her where to put the paper, she had to explain to me about printers! She was my technology guru and always there, always supportive, and never critical. I don't think I could have made it without her!*

**Vince Eade, professor**



## Kathy Bell

Assistant professor emeritus Kathy Bell began working in the food service industry as a 16-year-old waitress in Cleveland, Ohio, and ended her career teaching dining room service in Las Vegas. Although her undergraduate degree was in speech pathology and audiology, food and beverage has always been her true love. As a speech therapist/special education teacher and classroom teacher, she worked in Ohio,

Illinois, Michigan, and Nevada. Bell was hired by the hotel college in 1991 to develop an advising center, and once it was up and running, she was asked to co-chair the founding of the UNLV Academic Advisors Council. In 1999, she began to teach in the food and beverage department, where many of her students gave her the affectionate nickname "Ma Bell."

## 2009-2010 Donor Honor Roll

### UNLV William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

This year we pay special thanks to the loyal donors who have demonstrated their support to the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. During the past few years, we have all felt the repercussions of our country's economic challenges, yet alumni and friends have continued to pledge their commitment to support today's students as they prepare to become tomorrow's leaders in the hospitality industry. This Honor Roll recognizes alumni, friends and companies who make it possible for students to receive a premier hospitality education at UNLV.

We are pleased to share that thanks to the support of all the people listed on these pages, the college received \$2,571,226 in cash, pledges and in-kind support from 646 donors. Additionally, through scholarship endowments and annual giving, the college awarded \$590,620 in scholarships to students during the 2009-10 academic

year. The college also recently announced that \$480,585 has been awarded for this current 2010-11 academic year. This outstanding support allows the college to provide much needed scholarships, professional development funds, and faculty enrichment programs, to name just a few.

Gifts from alumni and friends play an integral role in helping the college maintain the highest standards of excellence so that the faculty can respond to shifting academic priorities. Annual donors are the foundation of the college's development program. Please know how much your contribution is appreciated and valued. On behalf of the entire college, we recognize and are grateful for your past, current and future support. It is with gratitude and heartfelt thanks that we acknowledge the following benefactors listed in the Harrah Hotel College Honor Roll.

#### Recognition of the Dean's Associates July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

The Dean's Associates program provides unrestricted donations to fund priority projects and activities within the college. Most importantly, this includes supporting student professional development so that students may represent UNLV at national and international academic conferences, meetings and industry events. Our students are the future

of the industry and they are truly a worthwhile investment. We wish to thank the Dean's Associate members for their annual support through unrestricted gifts, which is vital to continue setting the bar as a premier international hospitality program.

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# Meeting Expectations

There are more than 30,000 meeting planners in the United States, and all of them are looking for a deal. These days, they are likely to find it in some pretty unusual places, like university ballrooms, conference rooms, theaters, and museums. Universities rent unused space to maximize facility usage, for example, booking dorm rooms and meeting spaces for summer sports camps, business conferences, and even weddings.

Since the economic downturn, entities as diverse as government agencies, youth groups, local firms, and national corporations

have changed the way they do business. But despite the shift to convening electronically via teleconferences and webinars, event planners and the business community still recognize the value of bringing people together face to face. So event planners are stretching their budgets by finding new, different, and less expensive venues. Their challenge is to find the right meeting place — one that has the location, staff, service, and space to host events but is not as expensive as a traditional hotel or convention venue.

UNLV has the right places at the right time. “We call them ‘unique sites,’” says

Curtis Love, associate professor in the department of Tourism and Convention Administration. “We have everything on campus you need for meetings: classrooms that are built for education (as opposed to multipurpose space in hotels), computer labs, A/V equipment, theaters, sleeping rooms, dining commons, food courts, and even gourmet kitchens,” he notes.

Hotel college alumna Michele Nichols, '83, is a pioneer in this segment of the meeting and event market. She's the founder of the company called Unique



Venues, which got its start in 1986. “We’re the matchmaker for both the professional planner booking space for thousands and the one-time planner putting together a wedding (family reunion or gathering for their church or club). We match the facilities to the needs,” says Nichols.

Locations register with Unique Venues and pay an annual marketing membership fee. Facilities are easy to find on the company’s website and are included in the industry’s *Bible, Unique Venues’ Annual Planner’s Guide*, which goes out to 30,000 professional meeting planners. “We also go to trade shows where we present our venues to 4,000 planners face to face, and every month, our website logs more than 20,000 searches,” says Nichols. UNLV’s Student Union facilities have been affiliated with Unique Venues since 1990. “Meeting planners are very interested in Las Vegas, and UNLV is our only campus option in the city. The university conference space and its 1,800 beds are very important to us.”

UNLV is blessed with a number of unique venues that have caught the eyes of event planners locally and nationally, including the Stan Fulton Building, operated by the Harrah Hotel College; Student Union and Event Services, which rents space in the Student Union, the Recreation and Wellness Center, residence halls, and campus green spaces; Tam Alumni Center, with its Grand Hall and smaller meeting rooms; the Thomas & Mack Center, Cox Pavilion, and Sam Boyd Stadium, which have smaller, more flexible spaces in the arenas; the Marjorie Barrick Museum’s exhibition hall and smaller spaces; and the Performing Arts Center’s halls and theaters. While rental activity varies by locale, most report an increase in bookings, revenue, or both.

A recent article in *USA Today* identified a national trend of businesses contracting with more nontraditional venues. Nichols’ experience confirms this trend. She has seen a 101 percent increase in sales leads in the last year. At UNLV, Elaine Richards, assistant director for scheduling and conferences, agrees that more businesses are looking for less expensive locations. “People are interested in booking events in the student affairs facilities, and it’s obvious that folks are trying to reduce costs.” Her clients have consolidated multiday sleepover camps and

conferences to one-day sessions, requested one large room that could be reconfigured for breakout sessions, and ordered buffets rather than plated meals.

The same is true over at the Thomas & Mack, Cox Pavilion, and Sam Boyd Stadium. “We see a lot more local companies booking our facilities. They may want to hold employee events without the perceived distractions and higher prices in a hotel-casino complex,” says Cheryl Sgovio, director of catering and convention sales.

“We also can book with shorter notice than large operations. Our smaller venues can be more flexible than ones that do a lot of convention business. If we’re booked, we’ll refer business to other campus facilities. Best of all, we’re also less expensive,” says Sgovio.

Calculating the savings from reserving space in a traditional venue compared with a university facility is difficult because hotel and convention rates can vary depending on the number of rooms blocked or the

## Campus Venues Available for Rent

The **Marjorie Barrick Museum**, located in the center of campus, rents its **auditorium, lobby**, and the **exhibit hall**, which can accommodate up to 500 people. Its patio and **Xeric garden** area are also available for small receptions and events in an unusual outdoor setting.

Performing Arts Center facilities (**Artemus Ham Concert Hall, lobby**, and **Green Room**; the **Judy Bayley Theatre** and **lobby**; and the **Black Box Theatre**) are heavily booked with university; school district; and professional dance, music, and theater performances. **The Performing Arts Center** rents primarily to arts groups and private schools when space is available.

The **Stan Fulton Building**, the home of Hotel College Catering, has a vast array of meeting space, including a large hall, smaller reception and conference rooms, and its own bar and bistro. Located on the northwest corner of campus at Flamingo and Swenson, some of its meeting spaces have great views of the Las Vegas Strip. The building is equipped with a full restaurant kitchen and offers everything from light refreshments to gourmet meals. A professional catering staff and chef John Gremo supervise student interns, who have helped the Stan Fulton Building earn a reputation for a creative menu and attentive service.

Student Union & Events Services offers a wide range of event space in the **Student Union** (ballroom, meeting rooms, theater), the **Wellness and Recreation Center**, and campus green space (amphitheaters) and also provides conference and individual lodging in residence halls. ARAMARK, UNLV’s contracted food service provider, offers a full range of catering options. The staff handles event coordination, including audiovisual, registration, and security requests.

**Thomas & Mack, Cox Pavilion**, and **Sam Boyd Stadium** are not only the homes of UNLV’s men’s and women’s basketball teams and football squad, but they are also successful events venues, hosting everything from the National Finals Rodeo to rock concerts, monster truck rallies, ice shows, and more. What many people do not realize, however, is that these venues are also equipped with several smaller meeting spaces perfect for conferences or special events. These facilities’ professional catering and event staff can arrange meetings for 40 people to 40,000. According to Venues Today, the Thomas & Mack Center is ranked eighth internationally and fourth nationally for venues with 15,001 seats or more, evidence of the quality of its services.

**Tam Alumni Center** is a well-known locale for campus and alumni receptions. Members of the public can also rent its main meeting rooms (the **Marietta Tiberti Grand Hall** and the **William Trent Lounge**) as well as additional smaller spaces. Alumni Relations staff help off-campus clients coordinate events. ■

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amount of food and beverage services contracted. Still, campus experts estimate expenses are anywhere from 30 percent to 50 percent lower than costs at a major strip hotel and closer to 10 percent or 15 percent less than small, off-strip properties.

One of the biggest draws for booking a business conference at UNLV is the credibility it lends to an event. Clients like the serious, purposeful tone set by hosting a meeting in an educational environment. Entities like Xerox, the Clark County School District, and KLAS-TV have all held business meetings at TMC's facilities. And UNLV can also benefit from the recognition that comes from staging such prestigious events as a presidential debate, political rallies, and national energy conferences.

"University venues are ultra affordable. And people really enjoy being on a college campus. Some haven't stepped on a campus for years. It's nostalgic and refreshing, and the student recruitment factor is incredible," says Nichols, whose company got its start helping market university spaces before expanding to include mansions, museums, and even racetracks.

But there are some challenges to booking space at a university, including decentralized services, no-frills accommodations in the residence halls (where are the flat-screen TVs and the mints on the pillows?), multiple contacts, and additional paperwork. The most common drawback cited about booking events at UNLV is parking, especially since Las Vegas visitors are spoiled by the free parking offered at major Las Vegas hotels. Lots of paperwork and special campus regulations can also be tricky to navigate, but UNLV venues are continually looking for ways to ease these concerns. Clients are willing to work with these constraints because of the affordability, technology, and quality of UNLV staff and campus facilities.

While reserving space at UNLV saves businesses money, it's also a revenue generator for UNLV and Las Vegas. "The revenues that off-campus guests generate allow us to offer those services to the UNLV campus free of charge or at a highly discounted rate," says Richards, who notes that registered student groups and UNLV departments can book Student

Union meeting space at little or no cost. According to Deborah Blom, executive director for the Association of Collegiate Conferences and Events Directors-International, "Campus-based conference and event activity produces economic benefits that extend far beyond the offices charged with producing or coordinating those activities." Her association's 2010 Campus-Based Economic Impact Study indicates that an event held on campus will, on average, generate additional revenue for the local economy estimated at \$137.50 per participant.

Some off-campus customers, especially local ones, like doing business at UNLV because it also helps the university financially, says Frank Vitucci, director of sales and marketing for the Hotel College Catering, which operates out of the Stan Fulton Building. "It feels like a win-win. Our customers like that they are having their event in the country's largest school laboratory for food and beverage," says Vitucci. The fact that students provide the services at the Stan Fulton Building, directed by catering professionals, makes this unique venue even more special.

"We hosted our 'Institute for Sales and Marketing' conference for 72 collegiate conference professionals at the Stan Fulton Building," says Nichols of Unique Venues. "Some extra pressure came with that — hosting your peers. Curtis Love gave the keynote, and several faculty addressed the group. It was a great fit for our group ... very professional, higher end than a lot of places, yet affordable. And the food was terrific," she adds.

Hotel alumni board member Christopher Smith, who was married at the Stan Fulton Building, agrees. "We shopped several places, in and out of the state, before choosing it. Ultimately, it offered the best location and best price value, and most importantly, we felt that the staff took care of us right from the beginning. We never felt like a number."

Event planners have gotten more creative in their search for the perfect location at a reasonable price. With the combination of venues, services, and staff on campus, UNLV is more than meeting expectations. ■

# National Society of Minorities in Hospitality

Led by chapter president Taryn Fontenette, the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) is an organization that stresses professional development for students. Integrating social and cultural backgrounds can lead to a wealth of unique perspectives and ideas addressing diversity and multiculturalism, which in turn helps students with career development.

“NSMH opens doors into the hospitality industry for individuals who are ready for careers in hospitality but haven’t attained degrees or worked in the field,” says Fontenette. “NSMH prepares a student professionally and socially on landing an internship or a job while developing the skills to become successful. My experience with the club has brought me a great deal of leadership skills and networking opportunities. When a company is interested in you for being part of such a great organization, it creates a feeling of importance.”

Each year, the club hosts a number of events for members, and they also attend a regional conference in the fall, allowing students to become acquainted with industry professionals and participate in mock interviews, resume critiques, round-table discussions, and seminars.

February’s annual national conference lets the students take their newly gained knowledge and apply it to real-life situations. Assistant Professor Clark Kincaid serves as the organization’s chapter advisor. ■■



## Faculty and Alumni Gather at 17th Annual IHITA 2010 Conference

The International Hospitality Information Technology Association (IHITA) is a global association of educators and practitioners whose mission is to advance the use of information technology in the hospitality industry through education and research. The association’s annual conference was held in June in Orlando, Fla. Dr. Mehmet Erdem, who also serves as the president of the association, co-chaired the event.

“The conference was a great success, as hospitality and tourism

IT/IS scholars from 16 institutions were present,” said Erdem. One of the founders of IHITA is the hotel college’s Dr. Pearl Brewer, who is an active member and continuous supporter of the group. “She has been instrumental in identifying the needed financial support and growth of the organization,” said Erdem.

Current officers include Thomas Schrier, ’09 Ph.D., and Tianshu Zheng, ’02, ’03 MS, ’08 Ph.D., of Iowa State University. Natasa



Christodoulidou, ’06 Ph.D., of California State University, was one of the previous officers. UNLV faculty and students have always been active participants of the association and have presented research at each conference. “This is a testament to the hotel college’s dedication to technology and innovation,” says Erdem. ■■



# In the Kitchen

**K**halil Tiner's lesson in preparing fine Italian cuisine from top chef Geno Bernardo during last spring's Chef Artist Series came with much more than instructions on how to perfect anolini di Parma in Brodo. (Tip: To cook the dumplings inside and out, don't cook them all together.)

For Tiner, a UNLV hotel college graduate, hospitality lessons came with life lessons in the kitchen with Bernardo, executive chef of Nove Italiano at the Palms. Bernardo was a guest chef of the hotel college's Chef Artist Series, an event that gives students opportunities to learn culinary techniques from professional chefs as they work together to create a gourmet dinner adapted from the guest chef's restaurant. Each semester, a guest chef and students prepare a four-course dinner for more than 100 guests at a reception of hors d'oeuvres, wine, and entertainment that is open to the public. The event also raises money to fund students' scholarships and help pay for training and professional development needs for food and beverage professors.

"Geno wanted us to learn. To see him and his sous-chef understand that it was a learning process meant a lot. They took more time to help us understand what they were doing and wanted to help everybody in the kitchen," says Tiner, who has twice participated in the event.

Now in its seventh installment, the Chef Artist Series has raised more than \$20,000, and each semester, four high-achieving students are awarded \$500 to use at their discretion.

Tiner, who twice received the scholarship, says the awards helped him with the costs of tuition and books.

In addition to Bernardo, the teachers have included Guy Fieri, a UNLV hotel college alum and Food Network star; Kerry Simon, chef of Simon Restaurant at Palms Place; and Eric Klein, executive chef at Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurant. This semester, for the first time, the Chef Artist Series featured four chefs: Matt Seeber, executive chef of Tom Colicchio's Crafsteak at MGM; Steve Hopcraft, executive chef of Seablue at MGM; Claude Le-Tohic, executive chef for L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon and Joel Robuchon; and world-renowned French chef Joel Robuchon.

Robuchon, declared "Chef of the Year" by Bon Appetit magazine and "Chef of the Century" by the French restaurant guide Gault Millau, has received dozens of accolades for his restaurants located around the world, including in Las Vegas at MGM. (See attached recipe for Robuchon's mashed potatoes.)

Before students meet with the guest chef, they spend half a semester in Chef Artist Series class preparing to transform the Stan Fulton Building's banquet room into an elegant restaurant and honing their skills in event planning, restaurant management, food preparation, and fine dining service. Students are in charge of everything — from budgeting, marketing, menu design, and table settings to managing the front of the house and organizing entertainment. The class has become so popular (now up to 18 students) that students from food and beverage management



courses line up to volunteer.

"It's been amazing to watch young students develop strategies to coordinate the event. They're working on things they never did before," says Donald Wood, assistant professor and director of operations for the food and beverage department and Chef Artist Series. "The huge undertaking of the event has helped students improve managerial, teamwork, and communication skills," Wood says.

The latter half of the semester, guest chefs and their staffs spend ample time instructing students, often in the guest chef's restaurant kitchen.

"The majority of the students could have done the amount of work to pass the class, but all the students went above and beyond," Bernardo says. "The students did an unbelievable job as far as taking direction very well and understanding the menu."

For example, Tiner was executive chef under Bernardo and assisted with prepping ingredients, adjusting recipes to accommodate the large group, and overseeing the coordination of kitchen and wait staff responsibilities.

Ryan Wieczorek, a food and beverage management major, prepared sauces, scaled fish, and helped other students prepare vegetables as a sous-chef under Kerry Simon. Wieczorek says working with Simon showed him the importance of supporting the community through food — whether it's supporting local farmers and using local ingredients in dishes or sharing tips of the trade with aspiring chefs and restaurateurs.

"They were in your shoes years before. This may be you 20

years from now doing the Chef Artist Series," says Wieczorek. "I want to give back to UNLV. People help you get to the place you are, and it's important to give back."

Students are exposed to professionals in the hospitality industry who've been in students' shoes and aren't afraid to dispense advice — no matter how hard it is to hear.

"I always believe that you have to be honest with the students. It's going to be a long, grueling career. You may get frustrated, but you can't give up," Bernardo says. "Working with students is a passion of mine. Seeing them succeed is the most rewarding thing as a chef."

While some of the students learn the ropes inside the kitchen, others try out their customer service skills in the dining room, greeting guests, mingling on the patio, or waiting on diners.

Guests of the event include local hospitality executives who have been supportive of the student-run event and are eager to have their restaurant chefs participate in the event and work with students who could one day work in their hotels and restaurants.

"When you come here, you're coming together to eat food and learn about the chef's preparation and the ingredients in the dishes and to interact with students," says Pat Moreo, professor and food and beverage department chair. "It gives dining guests a way to interact with a chef in a way they normally wouldn't at a restaurant." ■■

### Fall 2010 Chef Artist Series

**WHAT:** Chef Artist Series dining event featuring renowned French chef Joel Robuchon; Claude Le-Tohic, executive chef for L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon and Joel Robuchon; Mat Seeber, executive chef of Tom Colicchio's Craftsteak at MGM; and Steve Hopcraft, executive chef of Michael Mina's Seablue at MGM.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, November 16, 2010 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**WHERE:** Stan Fulton Building at UNLV, off of Flamingo Road and Swenson Avenue.

## Joel Robuchon's Mashed Potatoes (puree de pommes de terre)

Serves: 6

Preparation: 15 minutes

Cooking: 35 minutes

Ingredients:

2 pounds potatoes, preferably Yukon Gold, Yellow Finn, rattes, or BF 15 (French potatoes), scrubbed but unpeeled

Coarse salt

2 cups whole milk

2 sticks butter, diced and kept well chilled until used

Salt

Pepper

Directions:

1. Put the potatoes in a saucepan with 2 quarts cold water and 1 tablespoon coarse salt. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook until a knife slips in and out of the potatoes easily and cleanly, about 25 minutes.
2. Drain the potatoes and peel them. Put them through a potato ricer (or a food mill fitted with its finest disk) into a large saucepan. Turn the heat under the saucepan to medium and dry the potato flesh out a bit by turning it vigorously with a spatula for about 5 minutes.
3. In the meantime, rinse a small saucepan and pour out the excess water, but do not wipe it dry. Add the milk and bring to a boil.
4. Turn the heat under the potatoes to low and incorporate the well-chilled butter bit by bit, stirring it in energetically for a smooth, creamy finish. Pour in the very hot milk in a thin stream, still over low heat and still stirring briskly. Keep stirring until all the milk has been absorbed. Turn off the heat and taste for salt and pepper.
5. For even lighter, finer potatoes, put them through a very fine sieve before serving.

New Innovations Rule at

# Annual NRA Show



Robyn Campbell-Ouchida, '00 MA

**T**his year marked the 91st annual installment of the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show. For both newcomers and those who have attended previous shows, the industry and educational offerings available at NRA seem endless.

Open to anyone directly involved in the food service or lodging industry, the NRA show featured more than 1,800 exhibitors and proved to once again be a hotbed for the newest product and service innovations for kitchens and technology integration. According to a poll of those in the restaurant industry, the top restaurant menu trends for 2010 are sustainability, local sourcing, and nutrition — and all of these ideals were well represented.

In addition to food and beverage samples from nearly every ethnicity, it was hard not to be amazed at what else was there: carpeting, menus, check presenters, sanitation systems, ceiling fixtures — every single aspect of building a restaurant business. Attendees saw the latest trends throughout the exhibit floor as well as in special pavilions, at hands-on demonstrations, and during free education sessions all four days of the event.

Keeping in line with the sustainability message, this year's show organizers developed an initiative to present one of the nation's largest conventions in the greenest fashion possible. Those steps ranged from providing separate containers

for recyclable plastics and paper throughout the show floors to turning off escalators when they weren't needed. Biodegradable straws, utensils, and cups were provided, and the restrooms were stocked with recycled paper products. In addition to an extensive network of free bus service to and from the show, McCormick Place formed a Green Action Team to identify the ways next year's show can be eco-friendlier.

The top-five trends for the food portion of the industry include locally grown produce, locally sourced meat and seafood, sustainability as a culinary theme, mini-desserts, and locally produced wine and beer. Rounding out the top-10 list are nutritious kids' meals, half/smaller portions for smaller prices, farm-branded ingredients, gluten-free/food-allergy-conscious meals, and sustainable seafood.

In addition to local wine/beer, the top trends in alcohol are culinary cocktails, artisan liquor, organic beer/wine/spirits, food-beer pairings, craft beer, bar chefs/mixologists, gluten-free beer, specialty beer, and organic cocktails. In the preparation methods category, liquid nitrogen freezing/chilling was ranked number one, followed by braising, sous vide, smoking, and oil-poaching/confit. The chefs also rated environmentally friendly equipment as the top kitchen equipment trend, and the hottest restaurant concept in 2010 was restaurants with gardens. ■■

# Faculty Studies Ambient Noise in Restaurants

Jean Hertzman, '06 Ph.D.; Dina Zemke, '03 Ph.D.; Carola Raab, '93 BS-BA, '96 MBA, '03 Ph.D.; and Dipendra Singh, '06 MS, recently conducted an exploratory study on servicescapes (the physical environment in which a service is delivered) by examining the total noise environment in restaurants. Their goal was to gain an understanding of restaurant customers' expectations and preferences for background noise and to determine whether demographic variables, especially age, affect these preferences.

By surveying guests at one casual restaurant in the southwestern United States, they learned that guests were satisfied with the overall noise and music levels and that the levels were in the acceptable range as measured by decibels. There were significant differences in guests' perceptions of

noise in both typical restaurants and this specific restaurant based on age and education level. Restaurant managers can now use these findings to determine the noise levels most appropriate for their target markets.

Studies have shown that servicescape can have a direct impact on guests' service expectations and perceptions of service quality (Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece, 2000; Reimer and Kuehn, 2004). The majority of work to date targets ambient sound in the form of the "musicscape." However, music is only a small portion of the overall ambient noise level, and few studies have looked at noise as a whole.

Most ambient noise research in hospitality environments has been conducted in restaurants. It includes background music; conversations among people in the space; and

"physical" noise, such as furniture movement, building equipment (heating/cooling, kitchen equipment, cash registers), and exterior and street noise that infiltrates the space. One area of ambient-noise research has focused on establishing baseline levels of ambient noise and comparing it with noise standards set by occupational health and safety groups. What is considered typical noise levels (measured in decibels) for restaurants is often exceeded. Sustained noise exposure above 80 decibels can result in permanent hearing loss. Many jurisdictions require employers to provide employees with hearing protection in environments that are too noisy, including hospitality businesses. However, either due to blatant disregard for the laws or lack of knowledge, hearing protection is rarely provided.

## Research Team Develops Food Safety Belief Model

Three years ago, researchers at UNLV and the University of Missouri-Columbia undertook a multidiscipline, multistate research project titled "Improving Food Safety Through Systematic Need-Based Training." The study was funded by a USDA grant of nearly \$600,000. "With Latino(a)s comprising 22 percent of the food service work force, it is important to develop training programs that incorporate culturally relevant examples and cater to their particular learning styles," say Drs. Mehmet Erdem and Jean Hertzman.

The first objective of the project was to determine the needs areas for food safety training among Latino restaurant employees. This included conducting focus groups and restaurant observations as well as surveys regarding their food service knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. The initial findings of the study were presented at the 2009 American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences and were later published in the *Journal of Business*

and Behavioral Sciences, titled "Identifying Training Needs of Hispanic Food Service Employees: A Qualitative Inquiry Approach" (Erdem, M.; Hertzman, J.; Kitterlin, M.; and Cho, S.; 2009).

The assessment instrument developed also incorporated questions based on the Health Belief Model, which asserts that perceived susceptibility, perceived severity of a condition, perceived benefits and barriers of treatment, cues to action, and self-efficacy guide individuals' attitudes toward and practices of health behaviors. The researchers used structural equation modeling to analyze the data collected, resulting in the formation of a Food Safety Belief Model. These findings were recently presented at the 2010 International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE) conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"The next phase of the study includes the development of a computer-based food safety training program that is based on the Food

Safety Belief Model," says Dr. Erdem, the principal investigator of the research efforts at UNLV. The computer-based training program will use video clips and computer animation to deliver the customized content for Latino(a) employees. In August 2010, Dr. Hertzman traveled to Columbia, Mo., to serve as content specialist for the filming of 17 restaurant kitchen scenarios showing proper and improper food safety practices. Information technology specialists, graduate hospitality and journalism students, and hired actors all participated in the filming of the video clips. After editing the videos and producing the customized training program, the final stage of the project, testing the effectiveness of the training program, will occur in spring 2011. Researchers believe the final product will provide the proper support needed for the Latino(a) food service employees in our communities. ■

# UNLVino®:

## A 36-Year Success Story

The College of Hotel Administration was only five years old. Southern Wines and Spirits was growing in Las Vegas. Dean Jerry Vallen of UNLV and Larry Ruvo of Southern had some creative conversations with each other. Out of that grew the first UNLVino® in 1974. It was an exciting grassroots wine exhibition and tasting affair held in the Southern Wines and Spirits warehouse. The aisles were framed by the inventory of cases of wine. Word spread. Students of the College of Hotel Administration would benefit tremendously. Jerry and Flossie Vallen ran the cash box at the door, and Larry Ruvo managed the floor, where guests were hosted in their growing appreciation of fine wines.

The affair grew beyond all expectations. By the time Thomas & Mack Center was built, it was time to move it over to that venue, where it stayed for several years. Finally, it outgrew Thomas & Mack and had to go to hotels on the Strip where there would be enough room for more than 6,000 patrons.

For the past several years, the event has continued to evolve. It now consists of three different parts. On evening one, there is Bubblicious, a fabulous sparkling wine tasting and exhibition. On the second evening, there has always been something else exciting, such as an Australian, New Zealand, or South African tasting, or as happened most recently, a sake tasting. The third day, Saturday, is the grand tasting. Each of the three parts has been at a different hotel, each with a magical setting. There is appropriate food served at all of them.

UNLVino® has helped the College of Hotel Administration provide quality education to students in many ways. Most importantly, it has funded tuitions for hundreds of students over the years. An endowment receives funds from the event and, in turn, generates earnings used to pay direct student scholarships. Funds have also been used to provide sorely needed teaching labs and spaces for students, including the Southern Wines and Spirits Lounge and the Boyd Dining Room in Beam Hall and the magnificent Southern Wines and Spirits Lounge in the Stan Fulton Building.

The Beam Hall facility is used to teach beverage and bar management classes, old- and new- world wine classes, and the Capstone Café student-operated restaurant management class, which is open for lunch. The facility in the Stan Fulton Building is used as the teaching lab for students to operate the Bistro, which is run by a senior restaurant and



Southern Wine and Spirits' Larry Ruvo and Sidney Chaplin at one of the first UNLVino events

lounge management class and is open to the public. Additionally, it is used to service catering events where students learn and practice.

None of this would have been possible without the support of UNLVino®. Indeed, the motto — Take a Sip for Scholarship® — illustrates how this event supports not only individual student scholarships but also the facilities and faculty support necessary for student scholarships in general.

Universities are places of learning. UNLVino® makes a huge contribution to the education of both the patrons and the students. Guests at the events have an unparalleled opportunity to learn about and sample wines from throughout the United States and the world.

Such exposure is aimed both at industry professionals and wine enthusiasts. This is an extension of what UNLV and Southern Wines and Spirits do in and for the community. And for the students, this three-day event is a hands-on learning experience that could never be duplicated in the classroom.

Students and faculty of the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration work diligently every year to plan, organize, supervise, and run the event alongside the staff of Southern Wines and Spirits. In the early days of UNLVino®, students worked the event but did not get involved in the planning and organization of it. By 1999, the college realized it needed an elite team of students to take the lead on all management aspects of UNLVino®. Thus began FAB 366D — UNLVino® Management, a three-credit class in which 25 exceptional students work the entire spring semester to get ready for that one special day.

The class is divided into three teams: The Events Team recruits and trains all the students who pour wine and work the door as well as run the wine auction; the Marketing Team gets the guests to the door by securing radio and television air time and print and Internet impressions; and the Culinary Team solicits donations of all the food products served and works for days before the event to supervise the food production.

The students in this class are taught by faculty of the Food and Beverage Department, who handle all coordination among UNLV, Southern Wines and

Spirits, the event facility, and the ticket outlets. The faculty also supervise all food donations and production as well as handles all the academic administrative tasks. Staff from Southern Wine and Spirits also works with the class on all aspects of event marketing.

Of course, many more students contribute to UNLVino® than just the student managers. Each year, almost 400 students volunteer to pour wine, take tickets, and ensure that all those overflowing spit buckets get changed regularly. In addition, more than 200 students work at the kitchens at Paris or Bally's to prepare all the food, make the food platters, and ensure the buffet tables are always stocked. So, in total, approximately 600 students work for UNLVino® each year.

Why do so many participate? Because it is one of the best educational experiences available for hospitality students, especially for the managers. How many other students can say they managed an event attended by more than 6,000 people? These students are the future of the hospitality industry and UNLVino® shows them what running a world-class event is all about.

In the past 36 years, UNLV's College of Hotel Administration and Southern Wines and Spirits have built an enduring legacy for the students, the faculty, and the hospitality industry they serve. Each year, the amount of the net funds moved to the endowment for student scholarships has increased. The

current agreement is for 60 percent of the net proceeds to go to student scholarships; 20 percent for building and equipment acquisition, repair, and replacement; and 20 percent to staff and faculty training and development.

This past year, the amount sent to the endowment was nearly \$60,000. Each year, earnings from the endowment pay for individual scholarships, which totaled \$50,000 for 2010. The endowment itself now has a balance of nearly \$1.1 million. All of this is a testimony to the shared governance of Southern Wines and UNLV creating the vision and bringing it to fruition each year.

The UNLVino® patrons make this all possible. The donor hotels, wineries, and food-supply companies have been most generous.

And, finally, the hard-working students and faculty of the College of Hotel Administration and the staff of Southern Wines and Spirits pull it all together. What a legacy!

The future will be even brighter. There are plans in the works to enhance even further the interaction of food, wine, and learning for both the students and the patrons. And the beauty is that the students and faculty of the College of Hotel Administration earn resources that are no longer available from normal budgets to support scholarships. It's a winner all the way! ■■



# The Magic of a College Degree

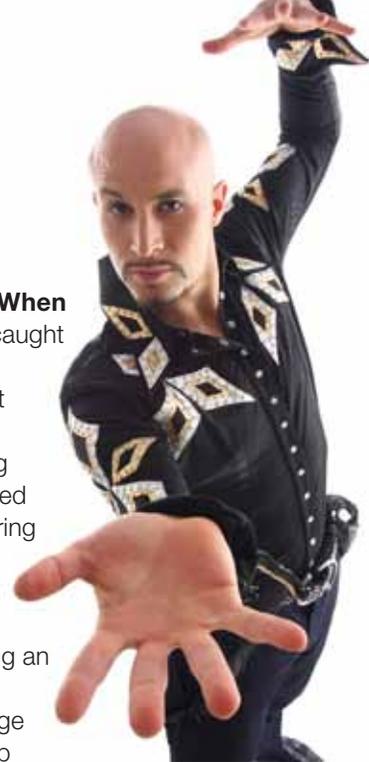
**F**or Seth Grabel, '05, it wasn't always a given that he would become a magician; in fact, he had dreams of some day opening a hotel/health spa. Growing up in Los Angeles with a belly-dancing mother and a Realtor father who enjoyed magic, Grabel didn't realize until college that he had a talent for sleight-of-hand trickery.

**At what age did you become interested in magic?** My dad dabbled in magic as a hobby, but it was his thing, not mine. He would teach me tricks, but I was more interested in wrestling and karate and gymnastics.

**Why did you decide to attend UNLV?** During high school, I became fascinated by the hotel industry and began looking into universities. I had researched UNLV and thought it was the right place for me. I enjoyed my classes, and became involved in student life. I was a hotel major but became president of the UNLV Real Estate Business Society and used what I had learned from my dad to promote the club. I liked my hotel marketing classes and learning about the business side.

**Now you work as a magician...When did you "rediscover" magic?** I caught the "magic bug" during my UNLV days. I started doing a few tricks at friends' parties, just for fun, and it grew from there — I started getting hired to perform at parties, which led to bigger, more profitable jobs. During my Caesars Palace internship, I incorporated magic into the room check-in process and learned that I really love performing and pleasing an audience.

Not many performers have college degrees so I feel like I have a leg up on my potential competition because I have the business and hospitality expertise to go with my entertainment skills. UNLV also provided me with great networking opportunities that are still coming into play today. ■■



# Recent Graduate Gives Back in Singapore



**L**iving in Singapore means that Sarah Umar, '09, has come full circle. She grew up in the country nicknamed "the little red dot" (due to its diminutive size on the map), got more than a taste of the Western world while attending UNLV, and is now back home working with Fairmont Hotels' Leadership Development Program at the Fairmont Singapore. She is also becoming

involved with the UNLV Singapore campus.

### **Why and how did you choose**

**UNLV?** It was fate! My mum moved to Las Vegas when I was 10, and after living on separate continents for a while, I decided to live with her and discover the glamour of Las Vegas. Upon leaving the airport, I saw how close UNLV was to the Strip. I knew immediately that it would provide me opportunities and experience like no other.

### **What would you tell others who are considering UNLV?**

UNLV is the premier global leader for hospitality, tourism, and leisure sciences learning, as well as discovery, social action, and innovation. If you're passionate and independent, UNLV is the right place for you. I've also enjoyed the fact that many UNLV students are from somewhere else. Some might complain about the transient nature but there's a positive

spin to that aspect — I have friends and industry leaders everywhere in the world, and in this industry, that's an asset!

### **How did your UNLV education lead you to your current position?**

Having to complete work hours and a mandatory internship is a great way to get your foot in the door and learn time management. UNLV keeps up with developing trends and equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills as well as career services assistance.

### **After graduation, you were chosen to become part of the Fairmont's Leadership Development Program.**

**... What are you doing in that position?** In my position with the rooms division, I'm working on an e-concierge-related project to tie in with our loyalty program. It's called Fairmont @ Your Fingertips, and I'm empowering our concierge desk with a Blackberry unit so that guests can reach them via text/Blackberry message and/or e-mail. ■■

# Special Event Guru

**A**s president and chief executive officer for Southern California's largest full-service incentive, meeting, and convention planning company, James G. Jalet III, '71, is one busy guy. He founded JNR Incorporated in 1980 after spending nine years in executive positions in the hotel and entertainment industries. The company remained in Las Vegas until 1983 when he moved it to Southern California. This marked a turning point, as the number of corporations located in Southern California provided a wider client base. This year, JNR celebrates its 30th year in business.



**Why did you choose UNLV?** As a member of the second graduating class, the program wasn't widely recognizable when you attended. I was born and raised in Albany, N.Y., and was considering attending a college in Ithaca. Before submitting my application, I visited with some students who advised that they were heading out west to a new school called Nevada Southern University. I had always been interested in Las Vegas, so I picked up the phone and placed a call to the hotel department. The first person I spoke with was Dean Jerry

Vallen — I think that gives some insight as to how new the school was at that time.

**What was the best part of your UNLV education?** I enjoyed the hotel marketing class where industry executives would lecture. My internship at the Dunes Hotel was a huge benefit to me as I gained experience in every facet of the property. Las Vegas also gave me valuable exposure to special event planning. JNR has a unique edge over others in the industry as the only incentive, meeting, and convention company with expertise in entertainment and special event planning.

**Did you hope to get something specific from the program? If so, what?** And were your expectations fulfilled? I hoped the UNLV degree combined with the work I'd done over the summers would lead to a desirable job opportunity. That came true when the Walt Disney Company came to interview during my senior year for positions at Walt Disney World, which would open the following October. I was hired and felt privileged to open Disney World and became its first director of tours and travel.

I eventually moved on to the original MGM Grand, and opened that property. Next, I became vice president of sales, then joined the Aladdin as the assistant general manager, before starting my own business.

**What would you tell others who are considering the Harrah Hotel College?** I continue to tell those looking to enter a school for hotel management that the Harrah Hotel College offers the best training of any university due to its affiliation with the Las Vegas hotels. ■■

# Culinary Researcher

**A**lthough Seth Handley, '06, has had the opportunity to work with celebrity chefs, becoming one is not his goal. As Gobo's corporate chef, he uses his UNLV education and experience to bring his clients' products from the kitchen to retailers. Gobo Enterprises provides consulting services, product marketing, and brand development and representation to client partners at all stages of business development.

**Why did you choose UNLV?** I'm from just outside Seattle and, after two years of college there, determined that hospitality was my passion. I knew of UNLV's reputation. My first instructor there was John Gremo, and I ended up working for him for three years. I was impressed with his knowledge, and he was a great mentor to me.

**What was your career path after graduation?** I wanted to get into

restaurant management but learned it's not that easy. You get either experience or an education, and I had gone the education route. Even though I had worked at UNLV as a kitchen manager and instructor for the banquet facilities (and was responsible for meal preparation for up to 750 people), I wasn't able to step right into management. I got a job as a food runner in a restaurant in the Venetian, then opened Dos Caminos at the Palazzo before the recession hit hard. I got a call from Gobo's owners (who are also family members) asking me if I could go to Savannah, Ga., with them for a meeting with The Food Network's Paula Deen. Little did I know that that trip would change the direction of my career.

**What are you doing in your career now?** I've been busy assisting Paula in the research and development of her new signature line of frozen cuisine,



Paula Deen Southern Dishes. I've helped her translate recipes from The Lady & Sons restaurant into frozen, ready-to-heat dishes. I also help develop and test instructions and ingredients for client products to ensure quality and consistency. I've served as sous chef for celebrities, including Iron Chef Morimoto and the Today Show's Al Roker.

**What are your future plans?** I'm working in a field that's kind of a weird niche, and I hope to continue finding unique projects. I'm curious to see where the future takes me! ■■

# Keeping it Green

**G**reener Vegas was born when Chief Executive Officer and Las Vegas Teamster Zachary Delbex became aware of the waste that occurs as a result of the large conventions and trade shows and decided to do something about it.

"I knew there had to be a better solution than throwing it away," says Delbex. "After some research, I established a resource center for the community in an effort to repurpose materials. It's all about post-production planning in collaboration with community associations."

The nonprofit was established in 2007 to collect nonrecyclable materials and repurposable items and distribute them to local public schools, community associations, and other local nonprofits. It has a mission to promote a green lifestyle in and around the city of Las Vegas by empowering local schools, businesses, and community involvement through education and facilitating environmentally friendly alternatives and recycling initiatives.

"Greener Vegas is here to benefit the community and the environment," says Delbex. "Our 'product' is corporate social responsibility with a byproduct of environmental responsibility. I believe that one day, Greener Vegas' 'pay it forward' approach will come back to us. Maximizing the investment made in resources from companies visiting our city, Greener Vegas works to provide the



**UNLV architecture students utilized Greener Vegas donations to build a 3D model of their senior project.**

time, space, and logistics to give these materials a second life."

In addition to already helping more than 40,000 people through 200 community programs, Greener Vegas provides Internet-based educational resources as well as extensive "green consulting" services to tradeshow contractors, private organizations, local sporting events, and local public schools. What does this have to do with the Harrah Hotel College? Greener Vegas has partnered with the college on a number of events and has also utilized students as interns. Associate Professor and Greener Vegas board member Curtis Love says, "I first became aware of the organization in January 2009 when Greener Vegas donated materials for the Graduate Student Conference in Hospitality and Tourism Research. We were able to repurpose convention-related materials, helping keep down registration costs while saving these

items from a landfill."

Love felt so strongly about the organization's mission that when he was asked to join its board of directors, he gladly accepted. "I strongly believe that every sector of the hospitality industry should support efforts to reduce the negative environmental impacts of our industry. I hope this grassroots effort will gain momentum not only in Las Vegas but will spread to other cities as well."

Greener Vegas funds its programs through the services it provides and public donations. Revenues are derived from cash and noncash donations. Noncash donations are either new finished products or recyclable materials. For more information and to learn how you can help, visit [greenervegas.org](http://greenervegas.org) or join its Facebook page at "greenervegas." ■■



## HotlinkHR Being Used to Teach Human Resources and Legal Compliance in the Classroom

Faculty and students in the Hotel College are now utilizing HotlinkHR in the classroom. Instructors, including professor Gail Sammons, use the HotlinkHR software program to teach students human resources and legal compliance procedures in a step-by-step methodology. Students have access to the system, which gives them experience managing daily HR responsibilities.

"I have used HotlinkHR the last three semesters," says Sammons. "I've found that the software provides a great exercise in the application process as well as online training. I've created three assignments — application, interview, and sexual harassment training — referencing a fictional property, the UNLV Rebel Hotel & Casino. I've seen the students get frustrated with the application process because the system tells them when they haven't completed the application thoroughly. This is an ideal learning tool because if it was a real-life situation, their incomplete application would never make it to a manager's desk.

"The sexual harassment training sessions are fantastic — they are up to date, and students have the opportunity to review the information they may have missed. The discussions that took place in class before the session versus afterward are extremely different. After the training, the students have an opportunity to revise their postings and usually comment on how their original postings were incorrect. They also comment on how much they learned during the training sessions."

HotlinkHR's founder, David Black, '96, says, "When I was a UNLV Rebel, my professors taught me the value of human resources and the role that the HR manager plays in the industry. UNLV gave me the foundation and really set the stage for me in the HR industry. I was able to take that knowledge to the marketplace. HotlinkHR software enhances the students' understanding of the correct processes and demonstrates how technology can solve HR challenges and labor law compliance issues." ■■



## Kathleen Nelson, Ph.D.

*October 31, 1948–July 11, 2010*

**H**er laughter. It could fill a room, a conference hall, or even an auditorium. Full-throated, passionate, unfiltered, and from the heart, Kathy Nelson's laughter embodied the way she embraced life and all of its quirks and eddies.

Kathy was known for making an impact — on the Harrah Hotel College,

on her students, on the events industry, and on her family and friends. She was always nodding, smiling, pushing, suggesting, supporting, and haranguing. Kathy Nelson was the quintessential change agent.

Raising her daughter, Chloe, and sharing a life with her husband, Dan, were two of Kathy's joys. She will be

remembered not only for her energy and enthusiasm but also for her many contributions to the event industry.

At the Harrah Hotel College, she developed the special event major and worked to push it and the entertainment minor through the UNLV curriculum committee. Kathy was one of a team of eight who worked tirelessly to

create the event management body of knowledge, or EMBOK, an internationally recognized framework of skills and knowledge for event professionals. Most recently, Kathy posthumously won the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education article of the year award at the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education Conference with her co-author Julia Rutherford Silvers. The paper was titled "Event Management Curriculum Development and Positioning: A Path Toward Professionalization."

Kathy found her calling in the classroom. According to Nancy Matheny, her friend for more than 35 years, she gave students her phone number, never screened her calls, and made herself totally available. Even students who would call 15 years after she had them in class would get Kathy's full attention. She simply enjoyed the students and their diversity. After Kathy's death, her family and friends received many phone calls and e-mails from students around the world. The comment was always, "I wouldn't be where I am today without the (choose one or more: support, help, encouragement, belief in my abilities, recognition) that Kathy gave me while I was in school." She impacted the lives of hundreds of students over the years.

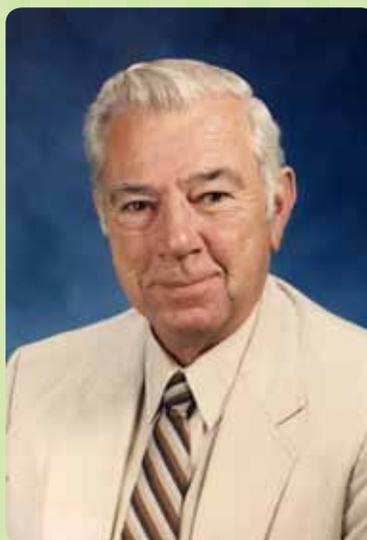
Kathy Nelson worked tirelessly to effect change. We thank her for her work and will always remember the look in her eye that meant there was another project, a new idea, another connection she could foster, or something she could change to make it just that much better. ■■

## John Sweeney

Founding member John Sweeney was the past chairman of the International Advisory Board for the UNLV College of Hotel Administration. He passed away August 3.

Sweeney served the board from 2000 to 2009 and was the chairman from 2003 to 2005. He was the principal partner in Global Resorts, a hospitality consulting company headquartered in Las Vegas. Originally a timeshare consulting company which branched into various other hospitality venues, Sweeney was known as the grandfather of the timeshare industry. He consulted in 47 countries with major companies in the hotel, investment, gaming, and other industries. He was named the 2003 Industry Leader of the Year by the college.

He was a frequent guest speaker at UNLV, where he loved to share his knowledge of the hospitality industry with students. ■■



## Gerald Goll

Distinguished professor emeritus and former hotel management department chair Gerald Goll died July 14. A professor emeritus in the hotel management department, he acted as department chair for six years before retiring in 2000.

After 28 years in the U.S. Navy, the native Chicagoan retired and moved to Las Vegas in 1986 to work at the university. Known for being outspoken, Goll brought his unique perspective and viewpoints to the UNLV lectern, challenging students to take their work, and themselves, seriously. Goll went out of his way to get to know his pupils, sometimes taking his graduates out to dinner to discuss matters of study

or socializing with students at Rebel basketball games – another of his many passions.

But he will perhaps be remembered most for his extensive contributions to the hotel school's graduate program. Goll served on and chaired the committees for countless graduates, a time-consuming task requiring much patience and even more attention to detail. During his tenure at UNLV, Goll repeatedly proved himself an empathetic mentor and superb professor, and he will be remembered as one of the university's most passionate educators. He is survived by his daughter Kari and sons Jeffrey and Daniel. ■■

# UNLV Global – Singapore Campus



## UNLV Singapore Celebrates Second Commencement

On June 11, 49 students received their Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration, nine students were awarded their Master of Hospitality Administration degrees, and two faculty members were awarded their Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Hospitality Administration. Visiting dignitaries from embassies, industry partners, and from the main campus attended the ceremony at the newly opened Marina Bay Sands Integrated

Resort's Convention Centre. The guest of honor, James Dean Leavitt, recently re-elected as chairman of the Board of Regents, Nevada System of Higher Education, spoke of the pride of Rebels and the support for the Singapore program. Also in attendance were UNLV President Neal Smastrek, Dean Stuart Mann, and other distinguished guests. ■

## UNLV Masters Degree in Hospitality Now Offered in Macau

On August 1, an inaugural class met for its first day of classes at the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) in Macau. This is the result of a partnership that has been set up between UNLV Singapore and IFT to offer a master's degree

in hospitality administration to those working in the industry in Macau. There are ten students in the elite group, representing the hotel properties of the City of Dreams, Grand Hyatt Macau, L'Arc Hotel Macau, MGM Grand Macau,

and the Venetian Macau. To further their education, the group of students will visit Las Vegas for Seminar Week in December 2010. ■

## ICES Provides Valuable Learning Experience

UNLV Singapore student Alvin Peh served as the conference manager for the ICES (International Convention and Expo Summit) 2010 Conference held in March in the National Library Building of Singapore. Working with a committee of five members, plus an additional 12 members serving on sub-committees, Peh and his team were enthused about the conference's success, which brought together industry professionals and academics to discuss their research and current industry practices.

Because of the conference's sustainability theme, the sessions revolved around exploring ways that academics and industry professionals can work together to create and run green events. The students were excited to apply the concepts they have been learning to real event planning.

Approximately 60 delegates from Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, and the United States attended this year's conference. ■■



**ICES Student Managers in front of New Integrated Resort Marina Bay Sands. Left to right: Leonard Tham, Sherly Gunawan, Alvin Peh, Joy Kang, Bryan Tan**

## Main Campus Experience Excites Singapore Students

**Gaylene Levesque**

From May 8 – 26, twelve students from the Singapore campus visited the main campus in Las Vegas to take part in a special events management course organized by Drs. Nick and Lisa Thomas. Although many students from UNLV's Singapore campus have successfully transferred to the main campus (and a few students from the main campus have spent a semester or two in Singapore), this was the first time that a group of undergrads officially visited Las Vegas on a study program.

While students enjoyed site visits to hotel casino properties, ate at a variety of restaurants, and attended shows, it was not all fun and games. Students were required to do research, make presentations,

and alternate leadership roles. They handled the logistics of the visit and organized a UNLV Singapore appreciation event for main campus students, where they handed out Singapore Sling mocktails and pamphlets about Singapore. They also planned a barbecue for faculty and student leaders. Exhausting? Yes, but the students enjoyed every minute.

When asked why they decided to take this module on the main campus, one student's response was echoed by all of the students involved: "I wanted to experience Las Vegas. As a UNLV student and hospitality major, I thought I should visit Las Vegas — the world's greatest hospitality city." Another student

added, "By visiting Las Vegas, I found out what hospitality is all about."

Students agreed that nothing beats personal experience and that this was "a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see Las Vegas behind the scenes." They also paid attention to details, such as how to make Singaporean properties more handicap-accessible.

When asked what the highlight of the trip was, one student discussed having met so many managers of hotels and casinos who were UNLV graduates. "This makes me really proud of our school," she said. The students were grateful to the Thomas' for organizing this learning experience. ■■

One of UNLV Singapore's students was chosen to assist with the April 27 opening of the \$5.5 billion Marina Bay Sands, Singapore. It was an honor for Joy Kang, a UNLV Singapore student, to lead a team of students, staff, and faculty members who helped open the new resort.

Kang, a senior in hotel administration, was able to work as the manager of the Marina Bay Sands Ambassador Program Management Committee. During this project, students from Singaporean institutions of higher learning worked under Kang and her committee's supervision — greeting people, answering questions about the property, and generally welcoming the crowds to the new experience. "There were 12 committee members, including me, and 157 ambassadors, which included students, faculty, and staff of UNLV Singapore and 140 ambassadors from other institutes.

"I was able to learn more than any textbook or class could teach. After the five weeks of hard work, I am a stronger person mentally, emotionally, and even physically," she continues. "Along the way, a friend shared an analogy that, as a leader, you are just like a captain of a ship. As a captain, you are expected to steer the ship in the most stable manner possible despite the big waves. However, no matter how professionally you strive to steer your ship, there will unquestionably be some passengers who will get seasick. One of my biggest



**Joy Kang (right) with co-workers at Marina Bay Sands.**

lessons is that you can never please the whole world, but you can choose to focus on those who are appreciative and positive."

Kang truly enjoys event management. "I simply adore the sense of satisfaction one gets from having put together a good show after months of preparation. For the longest time, I had my eyes fixed on joining the MICE [Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions] division of a hotel. However, now I find that I am enticed by international marketing. The only difference will probably be coordinating all aspects for an individual instead of

an event."

What's her advice to others who have similar opportunities? "Go for it! Don't start wondering if you can do it. This is an adventure unlike any other. So often, I felt inadequate and as though I was walking on thin ice. Each step was made after much thought had been put into the decision-making process. Nevertheless, believe in yourself. These baby steps will eventually see you through the project. Of course, get yourself a good mentor who will sound the danger alarm whenever you are about to make a bad decision." ■■

## More Students for Singapore Campus

The new partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) began this fall semester when 180 people joined UNLV Singapore's student body. Established in 2009 by the Ministry of Education, the SIT aims to provide industry-focused degree programs for polytechnic graduates to hone talent for growth sectors in the economy.

The collaboration allows Singapore citizens and permanent

residents the opportunity to attend UNLV while paying highly subsidized tuition fees. This opens the doors to those who were previously unable to attend and carries with it the prestige of being part of the Singapore university system. This year's students were selected from a pool of over 500 applicants. ■■

# ◆ Alumni Updates

Submit your updates to [Robyn.Hadden@unlv.edu](mailto:Robyn.Hadden@unlv.edu)

## 1970s

### Jayne Garrett, '79,

has a new book, *Know Your ZOWN & Make It Your Own: Creating Life Harmony* which helps readers deal with life's highs and lows in their personal and professional lives. Garrett, a self-dubbed Recovering Serious Person®, is a firm believer in finding moments of joy and harmony. In her latest booklet, she shows you how to choose to live and thrive on positive energy. This concise guide to finding moments of joy contains reflective questions that tailor the booklet to each individual and offers tools and techniques for creating a life of harmony. Garrett notes, "Life is made up of experiences. Feelings are felt, thoughts are realized and energy is either replenished or depleted." The booklet is designed to help readers keep their energy up. Accordingly, one of the lessons, titled Life Triage™, provides three options for dealing with any situation that comes along: give it to prayer, create an action step, or let it go and move on. Garrett comments, "By following the Life Triage™, you train yourself to make a choice in every situation and maintain your life's harmony." Friends can contact her at [jayne@jaynegarrett.com](mailto:jayne@jaynegarrett.com).



## 1990s

**Dennis Gradillas, '91,** was promoted to general manager of the hip and trendy Platinum Hotel & Spa, rated one of the top five hotels in Las Vegas. He is very excited to welcome the addition of Madison Gradillas to the family, joining his two boys, Preston and Peyton. Gradillas has been at the Platinum for three years and was formally the director of operations at the Las Vegas Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

**Scott Harrison, '99,** originally from Bloomington, Ill., is a professional red carpet celebrity, special event, music, and model photographer in Las Vegas. His photos are published worldwide through the London and New

### Michele, '83, and Jerry Nichols, '83,

have built successful careers with a strong entrepreneurial bent. The couple met at UNLV, married, then moved to Colorado after graduating. They worked in hotel sales and marketing for the Renaissance, Ramada, and Westin organizations.

Michele is the founder of Unique Venues, "a marketing and membership organization committed to bringing together one-of-a-kind event venues with meeting planners who are ready for something new." She was approached by the University of Denver in 1985 for advice on how to market its campus facilities to groups in the summer, and the next year, she published her first Guide to Convening on Campus featuring 140 schools. She still publishes an annual guide, which is now distributed to 30,000 event planners around the world.

After 10 years at the Westin, Jerry founded his own firm, InternetWorks, which specialized in designing and building resort and hospitality websites. He sold his company but recently created a new one, Nichols Interactive, serving resorts internationally.

The couple lives in Vail, Colo., with their three sons. They remain avid skiers who continue to create and develop their companies. Future plans include transitioning the annual guide to a magazine format and helping colleges and universities go even farther to maximize their meeting potential by enhancing their operation and sales plans.



York photo agencies he shoots for. Harrison has been covering celebrities and concerts in Las Vegas for 16 years. He invites alumni to visit his website at [www.HarrisonPhotos.com](http://www.HarrisonPhotos.com).

**Tyra Bell-Holland, '94,** is a proud Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE) and instructor at The International School of Hospitality and founder of the Art of Concierge program. A member of Les Clefs d'Or since 2002 and past president of the SNHCA, she is currently the chef concierge at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, due to open December 15. She invites friends to contact her at [Tyra.Bell-Holland@cosmopolitanlasvegas.com](mailto:Tyra.Bell-Holland@cosmopolitanlasvegas.com).

## 2000s

**Shauna Lederman, '01,** CPCE, is the director of catering at Aliante Station Casino & Hotel and has been with Station Casinos for 9 years. She was previously the



**Shauna Lederman**

director of catering and catering manager at Santa Fe Station Hotel & Casino. Lederman recently earned her CPCE and is the fundraising co-chair for the Las Vegas chapter of the National Association of Catering Executives (NACE), the oldest and largest professional society that addresses all aspects of the catering industry. Friends are invited to contact her at [shauna.lederman@stationcasinos.com](mailto:shauna.lederman@stationcasinos.com).

**Marco Benvenuti, '02,** is on the move. After founding a revolutionary team at Wynn Resorts called Enterprise Strategy that earned him a reputation as one of the most innovative strategic marketers in the industry, he left Wynn to start Duetto Consulting ([www.duettoconsulting.com](http://www.duettoconsulting.com)). The company will provide him the opportunity to leverage what he learned in academia at UNLV and Cornell University, and in roles at prestigious companies, including Four Seasons, Expedia, Harrah's, and Wynn. Rather than focus his efforts on one company, he will be applying cutting-edge principles to companies throughout the gaming and hospitality industries. Duetto

Consulting may even broaden its focus beyond hospitality as Benvenuti sees opportunities to solve persistent problems faced by owners of multi-family housing, self-storage facilities, theaters, amusement parks, and a number of other businesses that face strategic challenges posed by inventory that perishes each day that it is not sold. If you would like to get in touch with him, please email [marco@duettoconsulting.com](mailto:marco@duettoconsulting.com).

### Ricci Shiplett, '04,

joined the sales team at the Hofbräuhaus Las Vegas in 2009 as their event sales manager. She works to create memorable experiences for corporate and social groups at the only licensed replica of the original "Hofbräuhaus München" found in Munich, Germany. The Hofbräuhaus Las Vegas is located just across from the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino and can accommodate groups from 10 to 1000 people. She invites friends to reach her at [RS@HofbrauhausLasVegas.com](mailto:RS@HofbrauhausLasVegas.com).



**Ricci Shiplett**

## ◆ Alumni Updates

**Erin Kneesel, '05**, is the product development manager at Baskow & Associates, one of the top destination management companies in Las Vegas. Kneesel has worked in the DMC world for more than five years and enjoys all aspects of event planning. Friends are invited to reach her at erin@baskow.com.

**Brumby McLeod, '08 Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor in the School of Business at the College of Charleston. McLeod earned his Ph. D. at UNLV while working at Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts. He spent the last two years as an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina's School of Hotel, Restaurant, & Tourism Management in Columbia, South Carolina. His teaching and research focuses on the commercial accommodation sector. McLeod and his wife Jamye have three children: Abigail (6), Madeline (3), and Weldon (2). He can be contacted via email at mcleodb@cofc.edu.

A few months after graduation, **Carmen (Alejandra) Morin, '08**, and her husband welcomed a little boy to their family. After his arrival, they moved to San Diego, Calif., where she started her own business, The Marshmallow Studio, which creates custom marshmallow designs for all special

occasions. Her business has been featured in *Special Events Magazine*, and in the upcoming issues of *Meetings and Conventions Magazine*

as well as *Candy Industry and Retail Confectioner Magazine*. They are quickly receiving orders and shipping across the United States. Visit the website at themarshmallowstudio.com.

**Megan Selnick, '08**, is the owner and event planner of Megan Selnick Events and Design as well as Luxe Rentals and Design. Prior to starting both companies, she was the catering coordinator for Thompson Hospitality at Procter and Gamble's general offices in Cincinnati, OH. Selnick has recently joined several philanthropy groups, such as Starfire and The Freestore Foodbank, Cincinnati, sharing her event planning expertise and contributions. Feel free to contact her at megan@meganselnickeventsanddesign.com.

**Lori Whitelaw, '09**, is a wedding and event coordinator with Simply Weddings by Brit Bertino in Las Vegas. Simply Weddings



**Carmen Morin**

specializes in full wedding coordination services, as well as day of wedding coordination services. Whitelaw is excited to be a new member of the Alumni Association and she invites friends to reach her at lori.b.whitelaw@gmail.com.

**Ayo Akinsete, '10**, is the inventory manager for the new Gansevoort Park Hotel, recently opened in midtown Manhattan. He is also a manager in training at the front desk when not working on the pre-opening activities. Akinsete loves his job — working with the general manager on a daily basis and gaining invaluable knowledge and experience by working with the pre-opening team of the 249-room boutique hotel.

**Michael Amato-von Hemert, '10**, recently joined Station Casinos as an operations analyst. He wants to learn more about gaming analysis and operations in the real world while applying the knowledge, skills, and experience he gained at UNLV. He invites friends and fellow alumni interested in networking to contact him at amatovon@gmail.com.



**Amato-von Hemert**

**Miranda Kitterlin, '10**, completed her dissertation, "Illegal Substance

Abuse in the Full-Service Restaurant Industry: An Evaluation of Pre-Employment Drug Testing" in May, and is now an assistant professor in the School of Hospitality, Sport and Recreation Management at James Madison University. She invites friends to reach her at mkitterlin@hotmail.com.



**Miranda Kitterlin**

**Rachel Nelson, '10**, accepted a position with The Mirage as a catering coordinator in March 2010. In August, she was promoted to catering sales manager. Nelson is part of a small team focused on building the wedding business at The Mirage. She says, "I absolutely love my job! I feel at home at the Mirage. I hope to continue my career here and grow the wedding business to monumental proportions."

Since graduation, **Stephanie Tabbah, '10**, has worked for Four Seasons Houston, Mandarin Oriental, Las Vegas (opening team), and now, Crowne Plaza near Reliant in Houston as social catering manager, with over 50,000 square feet of meeting space to sell.



**Stephanie Tabbah**

## ◆ Congratulations

Congratulations to the faculty members who received funding for Strategic Plan Graduate Research Assistants (SPGRA). The hotel college was the recipient of three such awards, which will assist with the following research projects: 1) Yielding employee behavior via technology based training (**Mehmet Erdem**); 2) Development of best practices in energy and water reduction in foodservice facilities (**Christine Bergman, Mehmet Erdem, and Carola Raab**), and 3) the continuation of the Nevada Problem Gambling Project (**Bo Bernhard**). The approximately 50 state-funded research assistantships

(RAs) have been established as a part of a broader reorganization of the Graduate Assistant program. The purpose of funding of these positions is to carry out academic work that advances UNLV's research mission and strategic plan.

**Christian Hardigree, '93**, was named chair of the Hotel Management Department. She and husband Chris Brown welcomed a daughter, Anderson Brown, on July 20. □

Assistant Professor **Jean Hertzman**, a member of UNLV's culinary team since 1994, was awarded entry into the Las Vegas

chapter of the American Culinary Federation Chefs Hall of Fame during its awards dinner in early June. The Hall of Fame honors members who have made a commitment to the success of the organization over the years. Members are nominated and voted on by past presidents of the chapter. Nominations are based on a member's years of commitment to the association, both locally and nationally. Hertzman joins former UNLV instructor Claude Lambertz, who was entered into the Hall of Fame in 2008. Hertzman holds a special honor as she is the youngest person and the

first woman to receive this entry. She was featured in the July 12, 2010 issue of UNLV's student newspaper, *The Rebel Yell*.

The Graduate & Professional Student Research Forum, co-hosted by the Graduate College and Graduate & Professional Student Association, took place on March 20. Congratulations to students **Miranda Kitterlin, John Farrish, and Toni Repetti** who were selected as finalists in the 2010 UNLV Graduate and Professional Student Research Forum. □



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