

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPI Georgia Phoenix Awards Celebrate Exceptional Leaders Advancing the Meetings Industry

*19th Annual Event Bestows 11 Top Honors to Members and Partners for their
Innovation, Leadership, and Creativity in the Field*

(Atlanta – June 23, 2022) Meeting Professionals International Georgia Chapter (MPI Georgia), one of the oldest and largest chapters of the world’s largest meeting and event industry association, announces its 2021 Phoenix Award winners. Presented at a the MPI *Voyage to Paradise* live awards ceremony on June 16, the 19th annual Phoenix awards recognized excellence among members and partners in 11 competitive categories.

“The MPI Georgia Phoenix Awards honor the volunteers, members, and sponsors who are advancing our industry and contributing to the ongoing success of the Georgia chapter,” said Sharon Collins, CMP, CMM, DES president of MPI Georgia. “Coming out of one of the most dynamic times in our industry, it is thrilling to be able to recognize the tremendous contributions and exceptional work of these winners for delivering on MPIs mission to learn, innovate, collaborate, and advocate.

The Phoenix Awards are held each year, following an extensive nomination and selection process. This year’s winners are:

- The President’s Award, selected by MPI Georgia President Sharon Collins, CMP, CMM, DES to recognize the work of an exceptional chapter volunteer, was awarded to Melissa Legaux, CMP, Director of Trade Show Sales at Cobb Travel & Tourism.
- The **Committee of the Year Award**, recognizing the MPI Georgia volunteer committee that made a significant contribution to the chapter, was awarded to the 2022 Spring Summit Committee, and presented to committee chairs **Angie Nanoit Ahrens, CMP**, Director of Marketing & Events at MRI Software, and Curt Johnson, Director of Sales at Four Moon Productions.
- The **Chapter Leader Award**, recognizing the member who has served in a leadership role and whose work has made considerable contribution to the growth of the chapter, was presented to **Carla Jean-Thomas Carroll, CIS**, Director of Global Sales with Salamander Hotels & Resorts.
- The **Supplier of the Year Award**, recognizing a supplier member whose unwavering volunteer service provided a valuable impact on the chapter, was awarded to **Ted Basco**, Director of Sales & Film Liaison at Visit Roswell

- The **Planner of the Year Award** was presented to **Kareena Bakhsh**, Virtual Conference Medical Planner at MedscapeLIVE!, for her unwavering service and commitment to MPI Georgia.
- The **Creative Concept of the Year Award** recognized **Lance Hornecker, CMP, CMM**, Global Sales Director with Davidson Hospitality Group, for his effective marketing of the MPI Georgia 2022 Spring Summit.
- The **Sponsor Impact Award** is presented to a sponsoring company that uses innovation and creativity to impact MPI Georgia’s membership and showcase their company. This year’s award was presented to the **Jekyll Island Authority** and accepted by Sales Manager Maria Trammell.
- **Curt Johnson** of Four Moon Production also received the **Rising Star of the Year Award**, which spotlights a member with three years or less tenure with the chapter who has made the most notable contribution of volunteer time.
- The **Lorraine Powell Influence Award**, named in honor of an extraordinary past president, is given to an MPI Georgia member who has influenced the path and the future of an MPI member and or the chapter. The 2022 Planner of the Year, **Kareena Bakhsh**, also received this honor for embodying the spirit of MPI and what the association means to the industry.
- Awarded to a long-standing member who has committed at least five years of service to the chapter and made substantial contributions, **The Hayward C. Cox Jr. CMP Continuing Quality Award** was presented to **Jeff Whitney**, owner of Event Transportation/Atlanta.
- Awarded to a long-standing member who has committed at least a decade of service to our association. This member strives to make the industry a strong force of education and personal achievement. The **Lifetime Achievement/Hall of Fame Award** was presented to **Kathi Kelly** with KSL Resorts.

“Congratulations to our well-deserved winners and all of the nominees in each of these categories,” continued Collins. “These members tirelessly give their time to support each other, grow our chapter, and champion the unmistakable value of the meetings and events industry on business locally, nationally, and across the globe.”

###

About MPI Georgia:

Chartered in 1978, MPI Georgia is the seventh largest chapter in the global MPI organization with more than 350 members. To serve its membership of meetings and event professionals,

MPI Georgia offers opportunities to learn, network, celebrate, and give back to the Georgia community and industry.