



Summer 2014

# Hotelie



NSMH extends hospitality  
to a new generation



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Two generations of NSMH,  
Penni Urquhart '92 and  
Stacy Delapenha '14.  
Photo by Jesse Winter



Hotelie

**Summer 2014**

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# Hotelie



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# New opportunities in China





We held an excellent panel discussion in Washington, D. C. in March titled “Predicting the Game Changers in the Global Hospitality and Travel Industry.” Much of that discussion, which we have adapted as this issue’s very engaging installment of “Insights from Innovators,” focused on the ascendancy of China. As the panelists noted, tourism is surging in the region; 150 million Chinese will be traveling next year. With only 1.5 hotel rooms per capita in China (as opposed to 15.5 in the United States), the country still has vast development potential.

This school has long been interested in establishing a meaningful presence in Asia—and in China in particular—in order to learn from that culture while bringing our educational leadership to bear in preparing the region’s future hospitality leaders. We have exciting plans in the pipeline to further these goals and increase our global impact.

First, an extraordinary opportunity has opened up for us to establish a “home base” in Shanghai. With the help of Teddy Zhang ’97, president and CEO of HUBS<sub>I</sub>, SHA has entered into an agreement with Shanghai Gushan Investment Management Company and Aman Resorts to develop the Cornell SHA Shanghai Center on the site of Aman Resort Shanghai.

The Cornell SHA Shanghai Center will serve as a combination SHA and Cornell retreat and education center for students, faculty, and alumni. This beautifully situated base of operations will allow us to foster the development of global hospitality leaders in the growing Chinese hospitality industry. More broadly, the facility will be used as a meeting place for SHA and Cornell for the purpose of building our academic and industry relationships in Shanghai and greater China. We anticipate that multiple academic programs at Cornell will be interested in using the facility.

Among its many potential uses, this program house will provide a base for offering our executive education programs, whether taught by our faculty onsite or by a combination of onsite teaching and remote transmission from faculty in Ithaca.

In another international initiative, we have been working for over a year to develop a model for a dual MMH/MBA degree program in cooperation with a world-ranked business school in Shanghai. Once established in Shanghai, we envision translating this concept into similar agreements with other leading business schools in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Online learning is a powerful means to extend our educational offerings to an exponentially greater number of people than we can teach in the classroom. This school has always been a leader in online learning; we continue to expand our online offerings with MOOCs, certification programs, and other non-credit courses. Some of our courses are now accepted for credit within other degree programs, and Cornell recently began to accept a limited number of online course credits from approved programs at other universities.

Like Cornell in general, this school has a tradition of establishing international partnerships. We have worked hard to find ways to extend our reach and influence and build our global platform. As the leading program of our kind in the world, we have important contributions to make to the development of expanding hospitality markets. As the initiatives I have described come to fruition, we will gain the means to take our global involvement to a significantly higher level.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Johnson  
Dean and E. M. Statler Professor

Jon Reis





## Promotions and appointments

**Laura Benner '87** has joined HVS Asset Management as senior vice president of their asset management division in Newport, Rhode Island. Benner has more than twenty years of experience in hotel asset management, value creation, contract negotiations, strategic and branding analysis, acquisitions, dispositions, and highest- and best-use assessments. She has worked within the hospitality divisions of Host Hotels and Resorts, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, PwC, RFR Holding, and HVS's consulting and valuation office in New York. In addition to her SHA degree, she earned an MBA from the University of Southern California.



**Laura Benner '87**

**Cheryl Boyer '87**



**Cheryl Boyer '87** was appointed in January as COO of Fulcrum Hospitality, a boutique operating partner, asset manager, and transaction advisor in the lodging and gaming space. Prior to this move she was president of Lodging Advisors, where her work covered hotel asset management, institutional advisory and litigation support, and property acquisition diligence and underwriting. Boyer earlier held senior leadership positions with PwC's hospitality and leisure financial advisory practice and with Hotel Partners, and was a consultant with Landauer Associates and with Laventhol and Horwath. Boyer is also president of WX New York Women Executives in Real Estate and a member of the President's Council of Cornell Women.

**Marc Bruno '93**



Aramark announced in March the promotions of Hotelies **Marc Bruno '93** and **Carl Mittleman '97**. Bruno, who was president of sports and entertainment, became chief operating officer for sports, leisure, and corrections. Mittleman moved from regional vice president, central, to Bruno's former position.

Bruno was recruited as a student at SHA and joined Aramark upon graduation. He has served in a variety of sales and operations roles and recently was instrumental in bringing new business to the firm with a number of professional football franchises. He has been Aramark's driving force for athletes and officials participating in the Olympic Games.

Mittleman also joined Aramark right out of college. He has been an award-winning leader in numerous sales and operational roles, including vice president of operations for Harrison Lodging, district manager for the Pacific region, and resident district manager for Dodger Stadium. He was an architect of the company's repeatable business model.



**Carl Mittleman '97**

**David Udell '82**





**Mark VanStekelenburg '03**  
and his fiancée

**Colgate F. Holmes '56** has been named chairman of Glow Holdings, a Nevada corporation diversified into retail packaged foods, hospitality services, franchising, wellness and alternative health therapies, and technology and mobile marketing development. Holmes will also serve as chairman of the company's hospitality division and as chairman of Ambezz, a Glow subsidiary that operates its retail packaged foods business.

A former president and COO of Hyatt International and founding partner, president, and COO of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Holmes recently completed a four-year consulting engagement in China as chairman of United International Hotel Group. Other corporate assignments included chairman of the Biltmore Hotel Company and president and CEO of Rockresorts. Holmes was an expatriate for ten years, managing Hilton International and InterContinental hotels in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, the Philippines, Brazil, and Indonesia. Independently, Holmes and associates operated luxury properties including the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Wigwam Resort and Country Club, Grand Wailea Resort and Spa, the Biltmore Los Angeles, and the Palace of the Golden Horses and Mines Beach Resort in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Hyatt Hotels Corporation has promoted **David Udell '82** to group president of their Asia-Pacific region. In his new role, Udell will oversee all of Hyatt's activities in twelve countries with 61 managed, franchised, and owned properties and more than 26,000 employees.

Udell most recently served as SVP of operations in Hyatt's Global Operations Center. In the eleven years prior, he led Hyatt's operations in the ASPAC region from its Hong Kong office. Other leadership positions included general manager of Grand Hyatt Hong Kong and opening general manager at Park Hyatt Tokyo. He has worked for Hyatt since graduation from SHA, when he joined the Grand Hyatt Singapore as a member of the corporate training program.

**Mark VanStekelenburg '03** was promoted in May to senior vice president of PKF Consulting and practice leader in their New York office. VanStekelenburg has worked for PKF since 2004, based in Los Angeles. Before joining PKF, he held operational positions at the Palmera Plaza Grand Hotel in Spain and the Ritz-Carlton Lodge at Reynolds Plantation, Georgia.

## Recognitions and awards

**Karim Abouelnaga '13** was named a winner in the New York Young Entrepreneur Challenge in New York City in May. He presented a live business pitch during the event, sponsored by FrontStreet Facility Solutions in partnership with Capital One Bank and Sprint. He received 10,000 dollars in start-up funding plus mentorship and additional support essential for his business. Abouelnaga is a founder and the CEO of Practice Makes Perfect, a nonprofit organization that partners with communities to create high-quality summer learning opportunities for inner-city youth from elementary school through college matriculation.



Abouelnaga was also one of fifteen entrepreneurs nationwide named as an Amex Ashoka Emerging Innovator in March. As such, he was selected to attend the Ashoka Changemakers and American Express Emerging Innovators Leadership Boot Camp in June in New York City.

**Michael Fishbin, MPS '84** and his wife, Dori, were honored in March by Rock and Wrap It Up, a nonprofit organization that collects unused food and toiletries from 160 bands, 75 sports teams, and hotels, hospitals, and schools for redistribution to agencies fighting hunger and poverty. The Fishbins, longtime volunteers with the organization, were presented with the Lena and Joseph Mandelbaum Humanitarian Award





Jeffrey Lizotte '04



for their work to expand the reach of the charity to hotel chains, professional sports teams, and schools. Michael Fishbin is Ernst and Young's global leader for hospitality and leisure and an adjunct faculty member at NYU's Tisch School.

**Jeffrey Lizotte '04** was one of ten New England chefs nominated for *Food and Wine* magazine's 2014 People's Best New Chef competition. The magazine's explanation of "why he's amazing" was "because he's cooking exquisitely refined, European-influenced food on the twentieth floor of an insurance company building in downtown Hartford." The restaurant where the self-taught chef has made his mark is ON20, in the Hartford Steam Boiler Building. Since being named executive chef there in 2012, Lizotte has been recognized as the state's Best New Chef by *Connecticut Magazine* and one of the Hartford region's most influential chefs by *Hartford Magazine*.

**Brad Tolkin '80** and his brother Jeff were inducted in April into the Cruise Industry Hall of Fame as Cruise Sales Innovators. The Cruise Lines International Association honored the two, who are co-chairmen and co-CEOs of World Travel Holdings, one of the world's largest cruise distributors. Before founding World Travel Holdings, Brad Tolkin served as co-president and CEO of Travel Impressions, a travel wholesaler that he went to work for upon graduation from Cornell, and Empress Travel, a chain of retail travel agencies that his company acquired in 1992. He sold both companies to American Express in 1998, continuing to head them for American Express as CEO.

investigations desk to the business beat and is interested in focusing on hospitality and gaming. If you have any story tips, let her know.

## Upstarts

*Hotel Business* has its eye on **Mike Cahill '84**, and so should we all. Cahill, CEO of HREC Investment Advisors and co-chairman of the Lodging Industry Investment Council, was profiled in January as one of the magazine's "Ten to Watch in '14." HREC, which Cahill and his wife, Jill, founded in 1994, has grown to have fourteen offices and "a strong national platform both in brokerage and consulting," Cahill told *Hotel Business*. Cahill was quoted as saying that HREC has become "one of the few independent brokerage firms considered to be top-of-the-line institutional." The company, which has sold or financed about fourteen billion dollars so far, is considering opening a few more offices in key markets.

Cahill earlier founded Hudson Hotels Corporation, a full-service hotel ownership, management, and development company and a joint venture partner with U.S. Franchise Systems in the worldwide franchising of Microtel Inns (which he also co-founded), and he co-founded HVS Executive Search, both while serving as senior vice president of HVS International. Oh, and he was named an Academic All-American while playing offensive tackle for the Big Red football team in 1983.

## FYI

**Rebecca Ruiz '08** has been winning awards for her team investigative reporting for *The New York Times*, and several of her articles have landed on page one. She is currently reporting on the faulty ignition switches in General Motors cars. Here's a heads-up for all of you Hotelies: she is transitioning from the

Mike Cahill '84





**Lazy Dog's Mission Valley restaurant**

Every dog has its day, but every day is dog day at **Lazy Dog Restaurant and Bar**, a chain of somewhat sophisticated casual dining establishments with a timbered lodge vibe, a doggie décor, and a serious selection of locally brewed beers. Founded in 2003 by **Chris Simms '97**, Lazy Dog's CEO, the chain recently opened its thirteenth restaurant in California, with plans to open three or four more in the state this year. Simms is also eyeing expansion into more eastern parts of the Southwest.

Besides offering diverse and delectable brunch, lunch, and dinner menus with something for every human, Lazy Dog has a menu for the family pet. Dogs can join their humans on the patio, wolf down their choice of brown rice, grilled chicken, tofu, a hamburger patty, or steak, and wash it all down with a few good slurps of ice water. Lazy Dog's website, [lazydogrestaurants.com](http://lazydogrestaurants.com), features a portrait gallery of satisfied canine customers.

## Authors

**Myron M. "Mike" Eicher '60**, who retired from a career that included stints as president of Hickory Farms of Ohio, the Indiana/Technical College System, and the Design Institute of America, has published a travel guide, *Travel for Seniors Made Easy*. The book is aimed at older folks who have decided that traveling is too much trouble, and new retirees who have never before had time to travel. For both groups, the message is to get out there and do it, and Eicher, who spent much of his career overseas, provides lots of advice for avoiding hassles and having fun. The book is available at [tatepublishing.com/bookstore](http://tatepublishing.com/bookstore).

The Financial Management Committee of the American Hotel and Lodging Association has just released the eleventh revised edition of their *Uniform System of Accounts for the Lodging Industry*, aka USALI. Eight alumni and one SHA faculty member took part in the revision. They are **Jeff Carter '67**, **Chad Crandell '83**, **Michael De Nicola '80**, **Robert Mandelbaum '81**, **Ray Martz '93**, **Craig Mason '85**, **Louis Petruzzelli '80**, **Michelle Russo '87**, and Gordon Potter, associate professor of accounting.

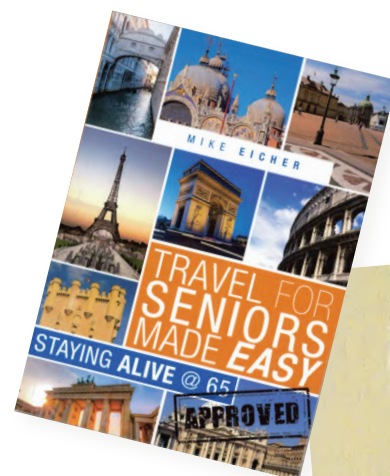


**Chris Simms '97**

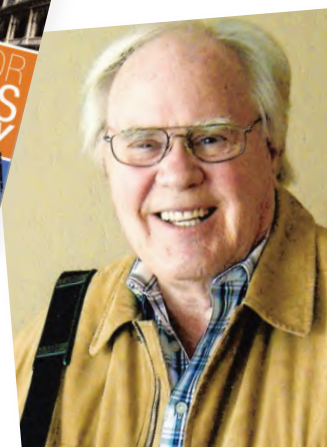


USALI's first edition appeared in 1926 with the title *Uniform System of Accounts for Hotels*. Not only did this publication represent a major step forward for the hotel industry in its efforts to improve management and operations, but it was one of the first documents of its kind for any industry. Hotel accounting to that point had been a highly individualized practice, with the result that comparisons and compilations of data across multiple hotels were, at best, difficult to produce. USALI standardized account definitions and structures, affording the industry a management tool and a universal format for operating statements. Most industry contracts reference the document.

Academic researchers have used USALI's accounts as a way to compile and compare operating data for hotels. The eleventh revised edition reflects the industry's changing practices relating to technology, sustainability, and globalization, among other areas.



**Myron M. "Mike" Eicher '60**







## Predicting the game-changers in hospitality and travel

*The following conversation is excerpted from "Predicting the Game Changers in the Global Hospitality and Travel Industry," a panel discussion co-presented by Cornell and the American Hotel and Lodging Association on March 31 at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D. C. Meg Hardie Keilbach, CALS '88, SHA assistant dean for alumni affairs and development, asked five women in senior leadership what's coming around the next corner for the hospitality and travel industry.*



*Joining in the discussion were Ellen Brown '88, executive vice president of acquisitions and development at Denihan Hospitality Group; Kristin Campbell, JD '87, executive vice president and general counsel for Hilton Worldwide; Debbie Marriott Harrison, P'14, global officer of culture and business councils, Marriott International; Kate Henriksen '96, senior vice president of investment and portfolio analysis at RLJ Lodging Trust; and Christie Hicks, senior vice president of Starwood Sales Organization, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide.*

Photos by David Bleckman





**Keillbach:** Let's talk about some game-changers—the good and the bad—that are most critical to the travel and tourism industry.

**Harrison:** Do you want the good news first? We did actually have a victory in 2010 when the Travel Promotion Act passed, creating a public-private partnership using no taxpayer dollars. As a result, people from the visa-waiver countries are not required to have entry visas for up to 90 days of travel in the United States. The act created a new organization called Brand USA. Our CEO, Arne Sorenson, is the treasurer of that organization; it is funded by a new ten-dollar fee that is collected with each visa application and by matching contributions from the private hospitality industry.

We are the only first-world country that has no marketing dollars to promote our country and the only first-world country that does not have a minister of tourism. This is helping us to be set up to market ourselves, which is really great.

The big sea change that I have seen over the last six or seven years is that the members of Congress are really taking up our cause. In 2012, a billion people around the world traveled. Last year, 1.1 million people came to the United States. For every 35 international travelers who come here, one job is created. Our members of Congress finally realize that travel and tourism is an economic stimulus. We are hoping to pass the Jolt Act of 2013, which reduces the visa wait time from 180 days to less than two weeks for people coming from Brazil and China, for example.



Meg Hardie Keillbach, CALS '88, SHA assistant dean for alumni affairs and development







Brand USA is targeting five or six countries right now in which to market the United States. They're also great at educating the traveling public on how to get their visas and on what to expect when they go to one of our consulates. That helps with some of the frustrations. To be frank, the government's websites did not do a very good job of explaining their expectations.

I will turn the talk about the regulatory environment, which is really the bad news, over to you, Kristin.

**Campbell:** You can really look at this both ways, because the legislative process is going to create some great movement for the industry. The entire industry is facing more and more regulations, both in the U.S. and outside of the U.S., in connection with operating our businesses. Among them, we will probably be facing some additional regulations in connection with

cyber-security. The federal government will likely provide regulatory overwrite on what is already a 42-state approach to regulating cyber-security. This will come at us at the same time that countries outside the U.S. are regulating the transport of data—guest data, employee data—overseas. Because of the recent concerns about, frankly, the U.S. level of surveillance, the E.U. is now proposing new regulations that will make it even more difficult to transmit data—data that we need for our businesses every day—across geographic borders.

Another one: Just last week, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union imposed new sanctions against Russia, and that is on top of sanctions that relate to Iran, Cuba, and



Kate Henriksen '96,  
senior vice president  
of investment and  
portfolio analysis, RLJ  
Lodging Trust





other countries. Certainly, sanctions may be necessary in certain instances, but they very much complicate the way we operate our businesses, because we have to harmonize all the different laws and requirements both inside and outside the U.S.

Last year the papers were full of new regulations around labor and labor rules. The new regulations in the Affordable Care Act, the potential for new minimum wage laws, and probably more to come will have an impact on business. There is Executive Branch interest right now in looking at the wage and hour laws and how companies define certain categories of employees. That will definitely have an impact from the highest levels of our corporations down to all the levels of our great employees who serve our guests every day. Regulation is inevitable, particularly as the world becomes globalized, but the key for us is to have a voice in shaping it and making it as productive for business as possible.

**Keilbach:** This next generation of millennials completely understands the whole thing with Twitter and blogging and other social media. Christie, can you talk about what that means for our industry?

**Hicks:** It is obvious that we are at a tipping point; the consumer landscape has changed so dramatically. The consumer market is controlled and influenced much more today by that technology and generational shift. Mobile today is responsible for 40 percent of services for accommo-

Christie Hicks, senior vice president of Starwood Sales Organization, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide

dations. That was 25 percent just a year ago. Over 53 percent of inspiring travel starts on a mobile device. That evolution absolutely has to take place, and quickly, because our business depends on it.

**Keilbach:** I would like to hear more about new business models as well, all the different levels of flags and now this Airbnb concept.

**Henriksen:** There has been tremendous consolidation in the industry over the years. The ownership model is changing. Back in 1993 when Marriott Corporation spun off Host Marriott, the management companies, the brands, were starting to move to an asset-light model. That trend continues to accelerate.

Who is taking the place of the hotel corporations in terms of owners? It's a wide, wide group of people. There's private

equity, big boys and girls like Starwood Capital and Blackstone, all the way down to smaller groups like Noble Investment Group, the whole gamut between buying one or two assets to buying someone like Hilton and then taking them public. Then there are also the publicly traded real estate investment trusts, which I am part of. Depending on where you are in the cycle might determine who is more active. Right now you are seeing a lot of activity from the REITs, because stock prices are fairly healthy right now. Private equity is buying more and more as debt becomes more available and interest rates stay low. You are also seeing increased interest from international buyers. Middle Eastern money has been very active over the last two cycles. This cycle, you are starting to see more out of Asia and China, so the picture is really changing.



Ellen Brown '88,  
senior vice president  
of acquisitions and  
development, Denihan  
Hospitality Group

**Keilbach:** Ellen, can you talk about Denihan's role within this changing model?

**Brown:** When I graduated from SHA in the late eighties, REITs didn't exist, and the industry followed an owner-operated model. In preparing for today's panel, I saw some stats from Jones Lang LaSalle that really floored me. In the late nineties, 41 percent of the top ten owners in the business were owner-operators, and today they are about four percent. Private equities were four percent, and now they account for 59 percent. Back in the late 1990s, Denihan owned all of their assets. Now we have an interest in about 65 percent of our portfolio. We have partnered with some of the best REITs, private equity groups, and long-term owners in evolving to this place while staying true to our core and a boutique, high-touch, very customized, personal approach to business.

**Hicks:** The Airbnb play is really challenging for all of us. These are people who add rooms like we just never dreamed about, and they are disrupting our industry in a way that frankly none of us saw coming five years ago. There will be someone after them, and then someone after them, and we really have to adapt and understand what is in the mind of the customer and who is satisfying that need. A brand company running a hotel is an expensive venture. Look at the market caps on some of these new entrants into the industry—we're all paying attention.

**Campbell:** They are taking a technology platform, not unlike what the OTAs did ten-plus years ago, and really changing the way that business operates as a result. They are disruptive in part because they position themselves in a way that exempts them from traditional hospitality-based regulations or requirements—anything from taxes all the way to just basic lodging

requirements for having somebody in your home. I think that if someone is going to play in the space, they need to participate on the same playing field as the rest of the players and the industry.

**Henriksen:** There are definitely some challenges, but I think that Airbnb realizes that they are going to have to face these issues. They recently announced that they are going to start paying taxes in New York City. They want to grow. They have a ten-billion-dollar market cap right now, and they have some big investors; they are not going to let this go. They are going to find ways to satisfy the regulators and continue to grow and offer their product. We can push back as an industry as much as we can, but at the same time, we are going to have to figure out ways to embrace it and incorporate it into our business model. I don't think it is going away.

**Brown:** With Chip Conley being involved with Airbnb, I think you will see added services and better personalization. He will change it quite a bit.

**Audience member:** What does hotel marketing look like in the future? Are you going to embrace those competitors? Are you embracing OTAs?

**Campbell:** I think we need to draw back a little bit and not just talk about all the tactical things we are going to do to address the disrupters and the different elements that are changing the game. We need to think about what we are selling. It is really critical that the guest have choices, have control over the experience. If we think about it as being all about the guest experience, that will drive the question around how to market it.





**Hicks:** I would agree. It ends up being about the guest, about the customer and what they want. I think everything comes down to personalization, and personalization changes based on the situation. So we have to be very flexible and adapt accordingly. I think the days of being afraid of everyone have to be over. We have to figure out what you want and how to give it to you, recognizing that we are not going to please everybody, and we've got to do it in a way that's financially viable.

Marketing has evolved pretty substantially over the last three to five years, but I think that's nothing compared to what it's going to move towards. I think there's a new move afoot when you look at distribution, marketing, sales, revenue management. The people who get it all—and there are about three of them in the world today, I think—they are the future.

**Keilbach:** There is a rising population of the middle class in China that is starting to really travel, especially here in the States. How do we market to those customers?

**Harrison:** By 2015, 150 million Chinese will be traveling. The problem is how to get them here. Our company is hiring a lot more Mandarin speakers for our hotels in New York and some other gateway cities. We are putting Chinese options on the menus, having Chinese buffets, because we see a huge increase in Chinese travelers coming to the United States.

China is not a visa-waiver country—and will not be anytime in the foreseeable future. If we could figure out how to get ten percent of Chinese travelers to come to our country, we would have to build new gates at airports, new infrastructure, and new hotels. It would be a game-changer for the entire country.

**Hicks:** China is Starwood's largest market outside of North America; we have 120 hotels open there, and 100 in the pipeline. A couple of our brands are better known in China than they are here. We also try to take advantage of a lot of cross-functional opportunities, recognizing that hotels in China are probably best run by native Chinese, because they know the market better. Having Chinese employees participate in our business in North America to help us cross-culturally has made us a smarter company and given us a little bit more focus on how to go after this particular market. Korea is not far behind—fewer people, but huge growth. India, same thing, so you have to take the



Kristin Campbell, JD '87, executive vice president and general counsel, Hilton Worldwide

premise and just adapt it to the culture. I think all of us are doing that.

**Harrison:** We have to get them to recognize our brand overseas, because they are not coming here; they are going to different destinations in Asia. And they are new travelers, so they are starting to make their traditions just like we do, when we like to go back to certain places again and again. For example, they love to go to Macau to gamble, not Las Vegas. They are starting to establish their travel habits, so it is critical for all of us U.S. brands to have them be able to recognize our brands overseas.

**Campbell:** I can add some facts to that. Right now, China has 1.5 hotel rooms per capita, whereas Brazil has 1.2, whereas India has 0.2. The U.S. has about 15.5 rooms per capita. There is tremendous opportunity out there, and that will be a game-changer.


**Keilbach:** What about Africa?

**Hicks:** Africa is, percentage-wise, our biggest for momentum. So we see tremendous opportunities, a lot of growth. Our viewpoint is that we're a global company that happens to be headquartered in North America, not a North American company that happens to have hotels around the world. That has changed our mindset, and it changed with our current CEO. Frits van Paasschen has taught us all that when you think about our development and our growth you think about the world, and you don't just think about it in pockets. This perspective has made a difference in how we go to market to get hotels and how we sell to customers. Where Russia is concerned, we are getting really big in the Stans.

**Keilbach:** So you are going into under-developed areas, right?

**Hicks:** In a lot of places, we all teach people how to live in a way that they are serving guests. We are often going into new markets where we are hiring people who need hygiene training and courtesy training and all the real basic human skills that we so take for granted here. When you are going into a developing country, into a third-tier market, all of a sudden there is this huge opportunity. That said, you make an investment and you don't always get your money back right away, but when you do, it makes such a difference. Being first is really cool. It makes a big difference and it changes people's lives. I think it is really awesome, and that is what I love about our industry. We can make a difference in a lot of people's lives.

**Audience member:** Christie, you mentioned earlier the importance of really understanding the customer's unique perspective. I am curious to hear your perspective on how you tie analysis of the data you have about your customers—your biggest asset in addition to hotel rooms—to some of the insights you have given.

**Hicks:** She who wins the data game wins the war. Not all data is important, but what you do with it is. You look at companies outside of our industry, and they get it. We are a little slower to adapt, but I think that we are all starting to come around. So I think it's a real opportunity. 

Debbie Marriott Harrison, P '14, global officer of culture and business councils, Marriott International





# In the Classroom

# Carnelian:

# The virtual color of money





Jack Corgel, the Robert C. Baker Professor of Real Estate



Alex Rosenblum '09 knew the deal looked promising before he walked into the real estate broker's office in Manhattan. Just a year after graduating from Cornell, he stunned the broker by offering a price to buy a Houston seafood chain restaurant on the spot. "They didn't know me," Rosenblum recalled. "They just saw this 23-year-old walk in the door, throw down a seven-figure offer, and negotiate their price down to the one he wanted."

Three years later, Rosenblum sold the restaurant, along with another one he had bought in Denver, to one of the largest real estate investment trusts (REITs) in the country. The investment brought his family's investment company, Alistar Resources, a 250-percent return on the sale of the two restaurants, realizing the exit strategy he had envisioned from the start.

Ask Rosenblum how his small, Utica-based firm was able to sell property to one of the biggest players in the world of REITs, and he will squarely credit a course he took during his senior year at Cornell,



By  
Sherrie  
Negrea



## In the Classroom

Alexander Rosenblum '09

Investment in Real Estate Securities and Funds. Taught by Jack Corgel, the Robert C. Baker Professor of Real Estate, the course not only exposes students to the operation of REITs but also allows them to make investments in real estate stocks in an artificial hedge fund created for the class. "I would never have been able to do it if it hadn't been for Jack's class," said Rosenblum, noting that he only vaguely understood REITs before he took Corgel's course in the spring of 2009.

Most of SHA's real estate courses teach students about lending, buying, selling, and renovating property, but HA 4271/6271—offered only to seniors and graduate students—focuses on the real estate companies that trade on the stock market. "The complicating factor here is that, not only do you have to pay attention

to the real estate fundamentals, but you also have to pay attention to what's going on in the stock market," Corgel said.

While there are two other universities that operate real estate securities funds—the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of Texas, Austin—Cornell's course is the only one to use a hedge fund. With the number of real estate hedge funds growing, Corgel considers his course "the modern way to run a student fund," because the students who understand how they work will have an edge in the job market.

"This is like icing on the cake," Corgel said. "This course gives students just that bit more of knowledge in this field, which allows them to be better than students coming out of other universities."

### A unique beginning

Many university courses develop from an interest of the professor, but HA 4271/6271 was the brainchild of five MBA students at





Damien Greenwood '01, MBA '09

the Johnson School: Damien Greenwood '01, MBA '09; Chad Russolillo, MBA '09; Brent Simon, MBA '09; Thomas Jencks, MBA '10; and Sarosh Porus Olpadwala, ENG '01, MBA '09. In 2007, they decided they wanted to launch a course specializing in real estate securities and began to look for a professor to teach it. Just as Johnson has the Cayuga Fund, a real, student-led stock hedge fund, the students wanted to create a fund focused on real estate.

"The genesis of the idea was to do something that would allow us to be exposed to direct investing in real estate," said Greenwood, who owns a real estate investment firm, Greenwood Investments, in Boston. "That morphed into assessing real estate securities—real estate stocks, not necessarily real estate assets. But in the long run, what underlies real estate stocks is real estate assets. So at the end of the day, you're still learning how to assess real estate."

Corgel, a widely published scholar and co-author of the textbook *Real Estate Perspectives* (Irwin McGraw-Hill, 1987), was a natural choice to teach the course. Some of the MBA students had taken his real estate courses and, when they approached him in the spring of 2008, Corgel said he had been thinking of developing a similar course.

"We were bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and we had all these great ideas of what we wanted to do, but we had never started a class," said Olpadwala, director of project development for SIGAL Construction Corporation in Arlington, Virginia. "Jack was the force who helped us start the class and turned it into what it is today."

Besides helping lay the groundwork for the course, Olpadwala made another key contribution: he came up with the name "Carnelian"—a red stone used in jewelry and Cornell's official color—for the course's fund. When the fourteen students completed the first offering of the class in May 2009, Corgel presented each of them with a special memento from the course.

"Jack very kindly got us all this piece of Carnelian," Olpadwala said, adding, "I've kept mine with me."

### A model of experiential learning

Though the course is now a semester long, rather than a full year, not much else has changed. In the first half of the semester, students learn the fundamentals of real estate securities and hedge funds; in the second half, they pitch real estate stocks to the class as potential investments in the Carnelian Fund.

"Even though it's not real money, the students treat it as such," Corgel said. "Instead of doing case studies and lectures all semester, this course allows students to get in and research some stocks and recommend investments to their peers."





# 20 In the Classroom

## In the Classroom

Every Monday and Wednesday, the class meets for 75 minutes in the brand-new Chartres Lodging Group Capital Markets Lab in Statler Hall, a 160,000-dollar facility donated by Rob Kline '84, the company's CEO and co-founder, that creates the environment an investor would see on a trading floor on Wall Street. Along one side wall, two tickers display the day's stock prices, allowing the students to monitor the indexes by the minute. Large computer screens to display class presentations flank the front and back walls. "Being able to hold class in this room has given a real lift to the course," said Corgel.

One morning in late April, Jonathan Reifler, MBA '14 and Alex Choe, MPS-RE '14 stood at the front of the room to

present their recommendation that the class take a long position and invest 210,000 dollars in SL Green Realty Corporation, a REIT in New York City, and to hedge 90,000 dollars against Mack-Cali Realty Corporation, a REIT in Edison, New Jersey. By pairing a long with a short investment, the class follows a market-neutral strategy, used in hedge funds to offset losses with gains.

"The main basis of our trade is that Mack-Cali invests primarily in suburban office, and SL Green is New York office, primarily central business districts," Reifler told his twenty classmates. "So therefore we feel bullish that, with the whole movement back to cities, it's much better to invest in REITs that are investing in core office properties in downtown cities, versus suburban office play."

Reifler and Choe reported that, while SL Green owns 70 office and retail buildings in New York City, where office jobs have

rebounded since the recession, Mack-Cali owns 169 properties in New Jersey, which has a 21-percent office vacancy rate. When Reifler admitted that analysts had called SL Green "a good stock, but not a killer great stock, because there's not huge top-line growth," Corgel interrupted with a question: "Excuse me for being rude, but why is this a good upside play?"

Reifler then revealed the underlying strategy behind the trade. "I think we'll be making the majority of our money off the short, because we really feel strongly that suburban office, especially Mack-Cali's portfolio, is a good short."

Two days later, the class cast their votes: fifteen yes, four no, and three not voting. The trade was then added to the Carnelian Fund, which is run on Google Finance, a



Jon Reis

free platform that hosts and keeps track of the stocks in the portfolio.

### Gaining lifelong skills

The popularity of HA4271/6271 reflects the growing interest in the real estate minor launched by the school in 2008. The number of students in the minor, which is open to any undergraduate at Cornell, has nearly tripled over the past five years. One hundred forty-four undergraduate students are graduating from the program this year. Thirty-eight graduate students were enrolled in the minor this year, with 27 graduating in May.

Corgel attributes the success of the real estate minor to a combination of factors: available job opportunities, broad course offerings, and a well respected faculty. "There aren't very many universities that have as many real estate faculty," said Corgel, one of six real estate professors involved with the program full-time. "We

all have a lot of experience, we are all published in high-quality real estate journals, we're all research-active, and we're all good teachers. We also turn out really good real estate analysts—so good that the Blackstones of the world keep coming back and hiring our students."

For students not in the real estate minor, the course offers an opportunity to learn skills they will use throughout their careers, from pitching stocks to assessing the value of real estate securities. Dylan Fonseca, MBA '12, who works for Woolbright Development, a real estate investment firm in Boca Raton, Florida, said he uses the strategies he learned in the course on a daily basis.

"This was the only class where you felt like you were pitching to an investment







Jonathan Reifler, MBA '14  
and Alex Choe, MPS-RE '14

committee," he said. "It's one of the more meaningful classes I took at Cornell, definitely."

Greenwood, who took the course the first time it was offered, remembers that when he and Rosenblum made their stock pitch, a hedge fund manager visiting class that day offered his feedback on the deal. Corgel is now creating a speaker series, funded by a gift from an alumnus who runs a hedge fund, to invite high-profile

real estate securities managers to the class at least twice a semester.

Melody Sin, MMH '13 depends on the information she learned about REITs in the course for her work as manager of corporate and strategic investments for the Wyndham Hotel Group in Parsippany, New Jersey. "REITs are one of the players in the hotel industry," she said. "They are major owners of a large number of hotels. Their movements are observed and monitored by people in this industry."

Dave Burbank





With the understanding of REITs that she gained from Corgel's course, Sin feels she can better analyze potential investments for Wyndham and discuss them with her colleagues. "It's important to demonstrate your knowledge," she said. "It differentiates us as Hotel students."

Many alumni of the course have remained in touch with Corgel since graduating, either to chat about the real estate stock they once pitched and are still following or to ask for career advice. Olpadwala recalled reaching out to Corgel two years

after he took the course to ask about career directions and receiving the guidance he needed.

"It's that kind of lifelong relationship," he said. "Even if you can't put your finger on it, it exists. It's very intangible and, at the same time, very valuable."



Ying Cheng, a graduate student in AAP, considers her answer to a question from the class.



Jon Reis

Lee Singer makes a pitch to the class



Jon Reis



# Self-discovery

Rachel Urquhart '15 goes over details with the banquets team before their guests arrive. At right is Tarina Derito '16.

Heather Ainsworth/Jon Reis Photography



By  
Sherrie Negrea





Zach Ruben '11

Sarah Wickham '11 at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, where she worked last year as a training manager

Sarah Wickham '11 arrived as an SHA freshman with visions of pursuing a career involving ski resorts. "My aspirations were pretty unguided when I got to the hotel school," she admitted. "I probably would have said I wanted to be a general manager, but I just wanted to be in and around ski resorts." That was before she went to work at the Statler Hotel and had her eyes opened to the whole spectrum of hotel operations. She decided to aim for a spot in the school's Hotel Leadership Development Program (HLDP), and the effort set her on an entirely different career track, food and beverage management.

## through service at the Statler Hotel

"I am always so grateful to HLDP for getting me into food and beverage at all," she said. "I never even considered food and beverage until I needed to get 200 hours of work experience to get into HLDP. I left housekeeping for Taverna Banfi just because I needed more and longer shifts, but it ended up being exactly where I belonged." At Taverna Banfi she discovered a love for managing and developing people, along with a passion for wine education, and ended up as the restaurant's student manager.

Following graduation, Wickham worked on the service team at Eleven Madison Park, Will Guidara '01's critically acclaimed Manhattan restaurant, before being hired as a training manager at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland. From there, she recently moved to Southern Wine and Spirits as a fine wine consultant. She gives the credit for her successful career launch to HLDP.

"It was the most valuable part of my undergraduate experience, hands down," Wickham said. "I would never have been able to get the position I have now," she said last fall of her position with Gaylord Hotels, "if I hadn't had that experience."



Daniel Leyva '14, Karishma John '14, and Chelsea Ball '14 talk with Stephen Walker '00, portfolio manager, during their visit to KSL Capital Partners.

Jensen Sutfra



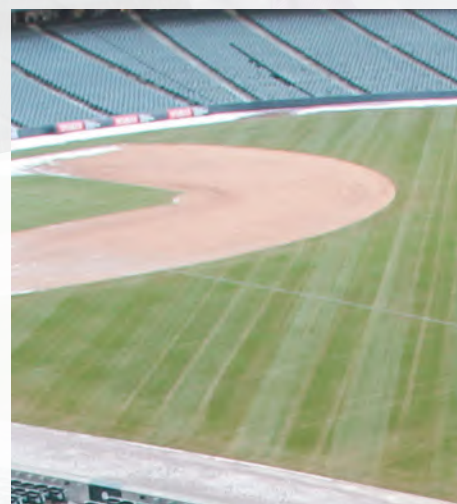
Industry practice, in one form or another, has always been a requirement for graduation from SHA, but the opening of the 50-room Statler Inn in 1950 created the first opportunity for students to interweave that experience with their classroom education. It would take quite a few more decades, however, for formal training benchmarks to be established. While supervisors always took their mentoring responsibilities seriously, the idea of tying a specific set of leadership experiences to academic and career placement goals developed only gradually and by fits and starts. Recognizing that SHA students needed a better base for experiential learning, both physically and programmatically, Jack Clark, who was then dean, had the Inn demolished in 1986 to make way for a new hotel.

The opening of the Statler Hotel in 1989—25 years ago this past April—set the stage for major change. With three times as many rooms as the Statler Inn, the Statler Hotel was built expressly to provide an outstanding learning laboratory for SHA students. The much greater complexity of operating what was

envisioned to become a world-class hotel raised the bar for service expectations and opened up many new leadership training opportunities. As the school's hospitality arm took this very ambitious step forward, it began developing more defined training protocols that mirrored the general state of industry practice.

Before HLDP was created, a certain number of students who started as bellhops, waiters, and telephone operators at the Statler did succeed in becoming student managers. Ben Cadwell '04, now vice president at Hotel Capital Advisers in New York, worked as a bellhop his freshman year. Over the next three years, he worked his way up to front desk agent, front office supervisor, and eventually student manager. "Working at the Statler

Jensen Sutta





Jesse Winter

Benjamin Cadwell '04, vice president of Hotel Capital Advisers, got his career start working the bell stand as a freshman.

helped me decide that I really enjoyed the hospitality industry," Cadwell said. "I really liked the people aspect of it, and it was where I wanted to spend my career."

When Richard Adie '75 arrived as the hotel's new general manager in 2002, following a 27-year hotel management career with Hyatt, he cast an experienced eye on the Statler's student employment landscape and saw that too many of the Statler's student workers were still being frustrated in their efforts to advance beyond entry-level positions. "I saw a lot of limiting thinking going on that said, 'Well, you can't have a nineteen-year-old responsible for this,' and my idea was, 'Why not?'" Adie said. "I took the cap off of that and said, 'Let's provide all the opportunities that the students can handle, and have them self-select what they want to do.'"

With the help of others, including SHA human resources director Richard Kuhar '86, Adie created HLDP in 2003, setting new standards for comprehensive training in each area of operations and clearing the path to higher levels of responsibility.

Instead of automatically promoting students after they had served in positions for a specified time, the program was revamped so that students would progress through different employment phases after completing a minimum number of hours and passing a certification process to demonstrate that they had acquired the skills for those positions. Paired with mentors at the hotel, the students were also required to complete cross-training

This year's HLDP Fellows visited Coors Field during their senior-year Fellows Industry Study Trip in January. The trip is sponsored every year by Steve Weisz '72, president of Marriott Vacations Worldwide, and his family. Starwood Hotels and Resorts provides many of the group's accommodations.

From left: Kayla Arsenie '12 of Aramark, who oversees food and beverage operations at Coors Field and Pepsi Arena; Bethany Larson '14; Michael Rotella '15; Kelsie Taylor '14; Austin Buben '14; Karishma John '14; Chelsea Ball '14; Michael Giebelhausen, assistant professor of services marketing; Stacy Delapenha '14; Matt Bernard '14; Daniel Leyva '14; Chris Villanueva '14; Richard Hesse, regional director for Aramark; and Tim Durnford, MPS '93, SHA associate dean of business affairs

Jesse Williams '15





Nala Holmes '12 began her Statler career as a telephone operator. She is now working in business development and acquisitions for Pyramid Hotel Group in Boston.

in two departments and work with managers on executive-level projects such as budgeting, staff training, or developing guest-management programs.

"We don't just turn them loose on the public recklessly," Kuhar emphasized. "They go through a great deal of training and practice before they are handed the walkie-talkie and the keys and put in charge. On any given night, we may have students who are right on the floor running the show, but there are professionals engaged in that experience as well."

In order to qualify for acceptance into HLDP, students must complete 200 hours of work in front-line positions at the hotel and apply to the program in April of their freshman year. Sophomores in the program work their rotations for certification and take the course Hotel Leadership Development Program. Taught by Tim Hinkin, the Georges and Marian St. Laurent Professor in Applied Business Management, the course covers everything from group decision-making to the legal aspects of supervision and

prepares the students to succeed in their first management position.

"When they get into these supervisory roles and they're managing their peers and people who are older than them, we try to help them do that more effectively," said Hinkin. "Knowledge of how the hotel functions is very important, but developing interpersonal and communication skills is also a major goal of the program."

HLDP juniors assume managerial roles in the hotel and attend Friday afternoon seminars that bring hospitality leaders from around the country to the Statler to discuss issues facing the industry. As seniors, student managers take on greater responsibility. They also take another course, Hospitality Leadership, whose goal, said Hinkin, "is to ensure that students hit the ground running in their roles as managers when they take their first 'real world' positions."

Industry involvement adds another critical dimension to the HLDP experience and career outcomes. Starwood Hotels and Resorts has been a particularly strong partner to the program, thanks to the advocacy of Simon Turner '83, president of Starwood Global Development and a former student employee of the Statler Inn. Turner was born twenty years too soon to be a part of HLDP, but he has become an enthusiastic champion. During the past four years, Starwood has committed very significant time and money to furthering the career develop-

Nicole Meneveau '15 helped the Statler Hotel launch a sustainability initiative.



Jason Koski/UPhoto

ment of the Statler Hotel's student leaders. Members of Starwood's leadership team travel to Ithaca every year to meet with HLDP students, and the company has provided many opportunities for winter externships and summer internships.

With their exposure to innovations in the hotel industry from courses and summer internships, the HLDP students have often suggested new strategies or programs to try in various departments in the Statler, from initiating new training programs to integrating sustainability into hotel operations. "The students go out into the world of hotels and restaurants through their externships, and they bring back ideas that we can readily implement in our day-to-day operations," said Thomas Gisler, the hotel's executive chef.

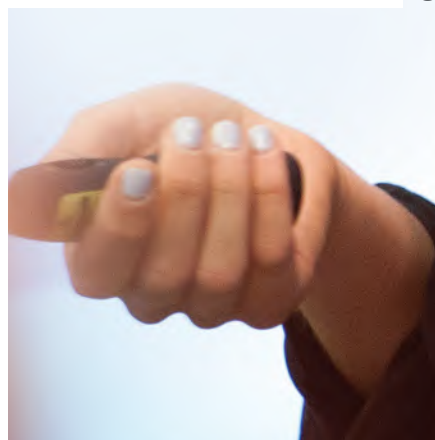
One student who brimmed with new ideas is Daniel Leyva '14, who was student director of guest services this past year. In November, Leyva launched the first recognition night for student hotel employees in the Statler's ballroom, treating them to a movie night complete with pizza, popcorn, and cotton candy. A few weeks later, Leyva implemented the practice of offering a complimentary welcome beverage to guests of the hotel every afternoon.

"Here at the hotel, we are definitely held to a higher standard than some of the hotels in the area," said Leyva. "We want to make sure our guests are happy and that they're receiving something personalized that's not typical for many hotels."

With his experience working at the hotel, Leyva was able to secure a position as a manager of a new restaurant owned by the Tacombi Group in New York. "When I became a manager at the hotel," he said, "I was twenty years old. You don't get that opportunity at many schools, and that's why I think I got a management position in this new restaurant company."

Another HLDP student, Nicole Meneveau '15, helped launch a sustainability initiative that involved purchasing 122 linen-less banquet tables for the hotel last October. As part of a six-member student team working on sustainability at the hotel, Meneveau calculated the return on

Hilary Widlitz '09, a manager in global development at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, is one of several Starwood leaders who visit SHA as HLDP guest lecturers.



Lindsay France/UPhoto







Jensen Sutta

Kelsie Taylor '14 was this year's student front-office manager at the Statler Hotel.

The students also met area alumni at a reception hosted by the Rocky Mountain chapter of the Cornell Hotel Society.

investment for buying the aluminum-top tables, which she estimated will save the Statler thousands of dollars.

"It's taken a lot of work, but I have learned so much from this project," said Meneveau, who hopes to work in the health and wellness area of hospitality after graduating.

A memorable high point for HLDP students comes in the middle of senior year. Seniors who qualify to become HLDP Fellows are invited to go on an expense-paid trip to visit hotel companies, restaurants, and product manufacturers in a selected city during winter break in January. In 2014, ten HLDP Fellows, associate dean for business affairs Tim Durnford, MPS '93, and assistant professor of services marketing Michael Giebelhausen traveled to Denver. Their packed, three-and-a-half-day itinerary included the Brown Palace Hotel, the Colorado Convention Center, Metro State College, Sage Hospitality and Sage Restaurant Group, Hillstone Restaurant, Exclusive Resorts, the Four Seasons Hotel Denver, the Starwood Sheraton Downtown Denver, KSL Capital, Stonebridge Companies, Destination Hotels and Resorts, HREC, Vail Resorts, STR Analytics, Beverage Distributors, and tours of Coors Field and Pepsi Arena, both of which are operated by Aramark.

The Fellows Industry Study Trip has been made possible since its inception by the financial support of Steve Weisz '72, president of Marriott Vacations Worldwide, and his family. Starwood Hotels and Resorts provides most of the group's hotel accommodations.

The five-day excursion, which has taken HLDP Fellows to major destinations from Los Angeles to Miami, can open doors to students based on the connections they make. While on a trip to Washington during her senior year, for example, Sarah Wickham visited the Gaylord National and met a hotel manager who would eventually become her supervisor.

"It's a capstone of their experience," said Adie, who accompanies the students on the trip every other year. "It's one thing for industry people to come and stand in front of a classroom, but it's another thing for students to be able to go into their companies and see what the culture is like."

Of the 200 students now working at the Statler, 66 are participants in HLDP. Two hundred students have graduated from the program and transitioned successfully into their chosen professions. Many are achieving notable success.

Nala Holmes '12 began her career at the Statler as a telephone operator her freshman year and progressed to front desk agent, housekeeper, front office

manager, student director of rooms, and finally to student general manager, shadowing Adie in her senior year.

"Your scope becomes bigger as a general manager," said Holmes, now on the business development and acquisitions team for Pyramid Hotel Group in Boston. "Your brain has to understand every single department and has to understand the key leadership of the hotel."

But even at more basic levels of employment, operations experience teaches important life lessons. For students who do not join HLDP as well as for those who do, understanding how to check a guest in, clean a room, or serve diners in the restaurant provides a foundation that can help them in whatever career path they follow. \*


For Holmes, learning the front-line operations at the Statler has been critical to her work managing hotels and acquiring new properties for her company. "There's a certain comfort level that you can provide when you are able to support your underwriting and say that certain strategies will succeed given your understanding of the operations from working on the property level," she said. "You can speak the operations speak and bridge that gap to help potential owners and capital partners understand your vision for a hotel."

\* See pages 58-75 for a rich compilation of reminiscences from Statler alumni.



Dave Burbank/Photo

Sandy Park '15, on right, leads Jorge Bouras '17, Gundeep Singh '17, and Aigul Jumabayeva '17 through a practicum required for the class Hotel Operations.

In every era and in whatever form it took, the training that students of this school have received in working at the Statler Inn and Statler Hotel has been welcomed by the hospitality industry, and Statler alumni have a long history of impressive career accomplishment as a result. "There is no other hotel in the world that has contributed to or been part of the foundation of so many hospitality leaders," said Adie. "Quite a few presidents of major corporations had very, very humble beginnings working here in the hotel." 

Vernetta Kinchen, SHA's associate director of diversity and inclusion, speaks to the HLDP class about diversity in the hotel industry.

Jason Koski/Photo





## NSMTH:

Charles Harrington/Uphoto

Curtis Ferguson



By  
Olivia M.  
Hall



# A dream of belonging fulfilled

NSMH alum William Avitia '05 gets to know current member Stacy Delapenha '14 as he recruits for his company at an NSMH career fair.

Inset: SHA staffer Yariela Kerr-Donovan '89, MPS '00, NSMH's founding advisor, in 1991





Penni Urquhart '92

When members of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) gathered in St. Louis for the organization's twenty-fifth national conference this past February, it felt like a giant family reunion.

Several generations—from seasoned hospitality professionals to current students—came together to celebrate an idea, first expressed as an SHA-only student club, that blossomed 24 years ago into a national organization. NSMH now boasts more than 100 chapters and 2,000 members. It has become, according to its leadership, the second-largest student-run organization in the country.

NSMH's four founders—Alfred D. Watts '91, Evan Frazier '92, Michael Burkeen '92,

and Penni Wint Urquhart '92—were there at the conference to celebrate the thriving network that has grown from their shared desire to offer minority students with a love for hospitality a means to connect across campuses.

"It was a response to a dream, the dream we had to take what I believe was a gift at Cornell and expose it to other schools around the country," said Watts, who now leads a very large congregation and several international missions as pastor of the Cornerstone Christian Center in Milford, Connecticut.

That gift was the sense of belonging that the four SHA students found as members of the Society of Minority Hoteliers (SMH), the campus club that spawned NSMH.

SMH was formed in 1984, five years before Burkeen, Frazier, Watts, and Wint began transforming it into a national organization in the fall of 1989. The founders of



Alfred D. Watts '91

SMH were Clyde Robinson '89, who is now deceased, Michael Liburd '86, and brothers Felix '86 and Luis '88 Laboy.

"One of the main reasons we started the SMH was because we minority students were looking for summer internships and career networking," explained Felix Laboy. "Many students at the hotel school had family or business connections in the hotel or travel business, and we felt like we didn't. A few of us talked about wanting a group that would help with career opportunities and developing industry mentors and really get the small number of minority students at the school feeling like they weren't alone and that there was a club they could go to and associate with."

When Frazier arrived on campus four years later, he was grateful that the group existed. "While the school was great in having resources and advisors for students, as a minority student on a campus that did not have a lot of African Americans at the time, I still had a very

strong sense of isolation. I remember how important SMH was to me in feeling connected."

The lack of minority representation in leadership positions in the hospitality industry was a topic of concern at the first annual conference in March 1990. David M. Sampson, Marriott's head of workforce diversity and one of the event's distinguished speakers, drove the point home. "He told us that about 75 percent of the industry consisted of minorities and women," Frazier remembered. "He said that if one percent of general managers at the 50,000 hotels in the country were African American, that would be 500. But the reality was that there were just fifteen African American general managers, three of them women—and two of those women were with us at the conference. It was a powerful statistic that characterized how far we still had to go."

### Beginnings

SMH provided such career development opportunities as visits to hotels and restaurants in other cities, which enabled contact with alumni and other local hospitality professionals who could share their experiences as minorities working in the hospitality industry. "These experiences were very, very powerful," said Frazier, now senior vice president of community affairs for Highmark Health, a leading integrated healthcare finance and delivery company based in Pittsburgh. "I kept thinking, imagine how great it would be if we were able to connect to other groups like this in our field across the country."

His SMH friends Burkeen and Watts, who had just been elected president of SMH for the following year, agreed. In



The four founders of NSMH at their first national conference in 1990 and at the twenty-fifth national conference in 2014



fact, Burkeen had already started mulling over the idea of a weekend conference to jumpstart networks with clubs from other universities. Joining forces and bringing Wint on board, the planners soon found that they were not alone in their endeavor.

"We were somewhat myopic when we started in on this national conference," Watts admitted. "We were just thinking, let's bring some students together and we'll hang out and talk about starting in the industry. But this being Cornell, SHA's administrators were always thinking four or five steps ahead, and they told us that this must be done extremely well. They really helped put the Cornell brand and spirit on what we were about to do."

But the four soon bumped up against a problem: not one of the 104 hospitality programs that Burkeen contacted over the summer sponsored a minority organization on campus.

While some schools simply lacked the diversity to achieve a critical mass, others had minority students but no special groups dedicated to them. "Often they did not understand why something like that was necessary in the first place," said

Burkeen, now director of organizational effectiveness at ConAgra Foods in Naperville, Illinois. "There were some schools that were just against the idea, because they were uncomfortable with minority folks getting together," Frazier added. "We continued to move forward and determined that the conference would be that much more important for people to attend."

Among their most important early supporters was Yariela Kerr-Donovan '89, MPS '00, herself a recent graduate who was working as director of minority programs and served as the quartet's advisor. "I was very proud of the students," she said. "They were really doing the heavy lifting. Of course they had our support, from faculty and staff alike, but nothing was imposed upon this organization. Truly every aspect of it was decisions led by these four."

Thus buoyed, they pulled off what would be the first of many annual conferences

to come. Sponsored by such businesses as Marriott, the Four Seasons, and Harvey Hotels, the first conference, themed "Unity: A Key to Success," took place at Cornell and attracted 75 participants representing seventeen schools from as far away as Las Vegas.

"The conference was a terrific success," the organizers concluded in *The Bulletin*—despite the fact that they had lost their guest accommodations to another event at the last minute. Forced to improvise, they moved rollaway beds into their own dorm rooms, and the personal nature of their hospitality turned an impediment into an advantage. "The visiting students really got to be part of the campus for those couple of days and build strong relationships," Frazier said. Those bonds formed the foundation for a national organization.

### Going national

A planning team separate from SMH focused on structuring the nascent organization, which they began to call the National Society of Minority Hoteliers. For the time being, its leadership would remain at Cornell. "We knew how difficult it was communicating right on campus, let alone more broadly across the country," Frazier explained. "This was before internet and email."



They looked to the large, well established National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) as a model for NSMH's constitution and bylaws. "NSBE has always kind of been our big brother," said Watts. In fact, a former NSBE national chair, along with several industry leaders, formed an advisory committee to NSMH, which acquired 501(c)(3) legal status and held its third conference in 1992 as a constitutional convention.

Over 130 students representing 27 universities attended to ratify the organization's framework and to form the first dozen chapters, at schools including Howard, Michigan State, Chicago State, Morris Brown College, and the University of Maryland.

With the fourth conference, finally, NSMH completed its bid to go national, electing a board from across its membership, not only from Cornell. NSMH has since grown into a professionally managed organization with headquarters in Chesterfield, Virginia.

#### NSMH today

While the annual conferences—today held at conference centers and often attended by over a thousand participants—are the highlight of the year, it is the local chapters that form the foundation of NSMH. Here, students find a home away from home, organize local events, and begin to hone their leadership skills. They also meet at regional conferences held each year in the fall.

NSMH requires all chapters to produce several types of events. Every NSMH chapter hosts Hospitality Week, which celebrates and brings awareness to the hospitality industry, and the Pre-College Outreach Program, which promotes the value of secondary education among high-school students. As partial fulfillment of their community service requirement, Cornell's NSMHers put together the annual Hilltop Jamboree, a family-friendly carnival held in Barton Hall, and donate the proceeds to charity.

Stacy Delapenha '14 joined the Cornell chapter of NSMH as a freshman and has been active, both locally and on the national board, ever since. "I volunteered to be one of the freshman representatives, and [then-chapter president] Brea Gardner '11 asked us to put together a presentation for one of our founders, Evan Frazier," she said. "After that, Brea said, 'You did that well; why don't you take charge of the NSMH newsletter?' So I did, having no prior experience with publications. Our chapter ended up winning Newsletter of the Year at the conference! That really showed me my capabilities. Throughout my time in NSMH I've been able to learn more and more about myself, which has given me the confidence to do other things.

"At NSMH, there were people like me, other people of color who had similar experiences," she continued. "I got this family feeling, and I felt like these were people I'd be comfortable around and could talk to."





Michael Burkeen '92

In addition to that vital sense of belonging, NSMH is fulfilling the original SMH vision of helping underrepresented minority students form connections and relationships with alumni and other supporters in key positions within the hospitality industry. The organization's Hospitality Industry Professional Extension, or HIPE, for example, has been created to provide an online community for industry professionals "with a focus on the continued advancement, retention, and recruitment of minorities within the hospitality industry," according to the NSMH website. "Corporations look to NSMH as a hub to which they can go and from which they can pull the best and brightest students in hospitality education right now," said Watts.

By advancing to the seventeen-member national board as programs director during her junior and senior years, Delapenha was able to take advantage of the special training given to NSMH's national

leaders. In addition to an annual leadership retreat, where officers practice skills such as public speaking, they benefit from the constant feedback of a four-member advisory board composed of David Corsun '83, MS '96, PhD '99, associate professor and director of the hospitality school at the University of Denver; Laura Kornegay-Gilham '96, vice president of people strategies at Club Corp; Janice Taylor, manager of human resources for Delta Dental Insurance Company; and Orr Rivero, a regional vice president of human resources at Hilton Worldwide.

The national advisory board was put in place early in NSMH's development to address a serious concern among the founders. "We were worried that, because the leadership of the organization changes every year, it would always be taking two steps forward, one step back," Burkeen



Ahmad Sandige

said. "Plus, you've got nineteen- to 21-year-olds handling a huge budget. We wanted to assure that they would always have professional guidance."

"We provide institutional memory for decisions being considered," Corsun explained. "We can say, 'That's been tried; this is what happened.' But ultimately it's up to the students on the board to make decisions." In addition, a small team around executive director LaCresha Lightfoot-Newman and a management company that handles logistics and finances keep NSMH on a steady path.

The NSMH board members appreciate this guidance from their elders. "The advisory board members really take care of us," said Delapenha. "They mold and develop us, trying to take us to the next level, because at the end of the day, we're representing the organization. Aside from that, they just want to make sure that we're entering the industry in the best way possible."

### Network

Thus groomed for leadership, national board officers are particularly sought-after by potential employers. The two years that William Avitia '05 spent on the NSMH board helped him land his first job at Starwood, where today he is director of human resources at the St. Regis Aspen Resort. "I went to all the conferences at Cornell and NSMH and built rapport with the recruiters," he said. "But I feel that I was able to stand out more through NSMH, where I had the opportunity to shine. I don't think I was offered any jobs through Cornell career fairs—it was all done through NSMH."

Now Avitia himself attends the national conference's career fair as a recruiter for Starwood—a sign that NSMH has matured enough to bring its alumni full-circle.

Especially in its earliest days, NSMH was able to share the Cornell advantage with its members from other, smaller schools.

### Evan Frazier '92

"Cornell was always very effective at getting employers to come to Cornell to recruit, whereas they wouldn't be going to all the 130 colleges and universities that were out there at the time," said Frazier. "By connecting to NSMH, they opened an opportunity for their students to get interviews, summer jobs, permanent placement jobs. NSMH became an important career enhancer through its career fairs, and a very efficient way to recruit."

"I would like to think that the programs, the leadership preparation that students get as part of NSMH, is helping to change the perceptions of minority graduates entering the industry," said Burkeen.

NSMH's professional training has had what Corsun called a "smoothing effect" between better prepared Hoteliers and students at some other schools that do not



always have the same level of resources. “Tapping into the resources of the alumni is one of the biggest opportunities NSMH offers at Cornell and nationally,” said Jelissa Toro ’08, a former board member now working as director of revenue management at the Crowne Plaza Times Square Manhattan Hotel. “Alumni should be even more involved by contributing financially and offering mentoring, job shadowing, guest speaking, and internship opportunities.”

Recently, NSMH has been ramping up its efforts to keep alumni in its fold once they graduate. Although HIPE has always been written into the bylaws, the national board only last year appointed a two-year alumni board to oversee it, and alumni leaders have begun organizing happy hours and other outings as part of growing city networks in major urban areas across the country.

Through these efforts, Urquhart hopes, the founders’ dream will continue to flourish. “It’s building a ladder that’s ideal for any group if you want it to progress,” she said. “You need people at the top to help those coming up. That’s the long-term vision, having people at different levels who can help.”

Though the sense among many older and younger alumni is that even more can be done, the network is already poised to assist its members with everything from career advice and job leads to help with apartment hunting in a new city.


Three-year national board member Phillip Cooper ’10, for example, was able to turn to Burkeen with questions about graduate school. “Some of the older members I’ve come in contact with, they’ve never been shy about reaching out or responding to me, even though I know they’re busy,” he said, adding that he would never have known about the most recent job he applied for had it not been for another NSMH member looking out for him and alerting him to it.

The ever-growing web of relationships extends well beyond the professional realm. “NSMH has been my life,” said Kornegay, who has never had to apply for a job, thanks to connections made through the organization. “It has given me my friends from college and literally every single job I’ve gotten in eighteen years.”

Surely it cannot hurt Kornegay’s enthusiasm for NSMH that she also met her husband through the organization. “That’s the best argument,” she laughed. “I truly attribute my personal happiness—from my best friends to my husband, and now my family—to NSMH.”

Mingling with the generations of NSMH members that followed in their footsteps at the twenty-fifth annual conference, the founders were delighted and deeply touched to hear this. “I had several students come up to me at the twenty-fifth conference to say, ‘Thank you for starting

this organization,’ or ‘It changed my life,’” said Urquhart, a communications consultant in Pelham, New York. “It’s a bit heady for someone to say something like that, but founding the organization was definitely a highlight of my life, and the fact that I could help somebody that much means that all the hard work was really worth it.”

“I can hardly explain the gratification that you feel,” Watts added. “To hear students talking about how NSMH and their chapter were there to pick them up when they were down, to see the spirit of what was happening in SMH at Cornell 25 years ago now happening nationally at all of these schools—that was a true blessing.” 

The Cornell contingent at the 2014 national conference. National advisory board member David Corsun ’83, MS ’96, PhD ’99 is at lower right. Advisory board member Laura Kornegay-Gilham ’96 is third from right in the second row.



Whitney Wilson '12 enjoys a networking luncheon at the national conference.

Curtis Ferguson







On right: The Flumserberg Cable Car descends toward the Walensee. Inset: The Glacier Express crosses the Landwasser Viaduct in Canton Graubünden.



One girl's guide to

Switzerland





By  
Deja Rose  
Penev '03

Christof Sonderegger for Swiss Tourism

Franziska Pfenniger for Swiss Tourism

# erland



There comes a time in many people's lives when they need to reinvent themselves in some way. Moving to Zürich, Switzerland allowed me to grow into my own skin in ways I never could have planned...or even imagined.

I was in my last semester at Cornell when my life's path opened up before me. I was on the telephone, interviewing for my dream job—working for a spa development company based on the East Coast—when I heard a little voice in my head insisting, “Come to San Francisco with me,” and I decided to listen. My now husband, Peter Penev '03, and I loaded our belongings into our rented SUV, shared our goodbyes with our dear family friends George '51 and Ann Bantuvanis, and drove into the sunset for what continues to be an incredible adventure.

Regardless of the career paths we choose, Hoteliers share one common denominator: the hospitality industry runs in our blood. My passion was for the spa industry, and I was fortunate enough to be hired as spa

director at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco. My new position allowed me opportunities to work with some of the top medical and day spas in San Francisco and Chicago and take part in opening The Spa at Trump International Hotel and Tower—the property was recently awarded five stars by the Forbes Travel Guide. Among many exciting projects, I took great pride in co-authoring my department's associate training manual, interlacing excerpts from Mobil's five-star standards to underscore our spa guest service protocols, a standard that has since been adopted in spas across the country.

For me, it has been a blessing and a curse to challenge the norm, question the status quo, and think outside the box. I have always preferred to take the road less traveled, so Peter and I could not refuse the opportunity we were given to transfer with Hyatt International to Zürich. Once there, Peter immediately immersed himself in his job, while I quickly realized that my inability to speak German was

FREITAG, 22. JULI 2011 / WWW.

«Wir erle  
Einstieg

...Läden zu am  
...Raucher, wohin  
...sicht für Ehefrauen  
...bedeutet der  
...nach Zürich oft  
...Nun  
...Tipp

Penev in Zermatt, at the foot of the Matterhorn





# Leben in Zürich

going to limit my career managing spas in Switzerland.

Within a week of our arrival, however, this impediment inspired my next opportunity. A popular Hollywood movie hit the big screen in Zürich. I wanted to see it but had not yet made any friends to go with. I spontaneously decided to publish a "Girls' Night Out" invitation to a cocktail and movie night on one of the expat forums. Nearly twenty women I had never met accepted my invitation to meet at a trendy bar for Cosmopolitans and a viewing of *Sex and the City 2* on the big screen just next door. It was not long after this event that I found just the right partner, Angelica Cipullo, to brainstorm and launch our *Girlfriend Guide to Zürich*—an online magazine created especially for expatriate women living here. We promote local businesses via our invitation-only business directory, a gourmet guide, "Girlfriend Gossip" featuring interviews with local business "celebrities," an events calendar, "Girls' Night Out" events and annual marketing campaigns, such as Spa and Wellness Week and our 25 Days of Christmas Advent Calendar, and a daily

prize giveaway ranging from a beautiful bottle of wine to an overnight stay at one of our favorite hotels in Zermatt—all sponsored, of course.

It is no secret that Switzerland is a wonderful place to start a business, with favorable tax rates—despite double taxation—and a strong network of young entrepreneurs. However, doing business as an English media company in the German region of Switzerland is an interesting endeavor. Daily newspapers are filled with articles about expatriate reforms and, at times, a general distaste

for many expat families who appear to have troubles integrating; for example, driving their children to expensive international schools in luxury company cars instead of letting them walk independently as the local children do. As a new media company debuting in a very close-knit community, *Girlfriend Guide* did indeed make a splash in uncharted waters, and we were very fortunate to have found just the right formula that captured the interest of locals and expatriates alike.

With a little luck, our launch was featured in a daily newspaper distributed throughout the city and on all public transport. This attracted the attention of advertisers and partners, who were interested in working with us primarily because we focus on promoting business to women in such a unique, fun, and engaging tone. Our greatest compliment comes when locals tell us that we are helping them rediscover their own city! We have valuable partnerships with prestigious Zürich-based institutions including Swiss Tourism, which sends us on regular trips throughout the country to promote travel within Switzerland. Today,

Zürich





we welcome 25,000 monthly readers, with plans to grow our business model into other major metropolitan cities throughout Europe and beyond within the next few years.

Living and working in Switzerland is a dream come true. It is one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and even with four official languages—German, French, Italian, and Romansh—it is one of the best organized. While learning a local language is most desirable for residents, it is very easy to navigate in English, as it is widely spoken throughout the country. As

Neuchatel



it is one of the world's wealthiest countries, it is no surprise that one's time in Switzerland will be very expensive. Even so, tourism is strong throughout the year with must-visit destinations. Some of my absolute favorites include: skiing under the Matterhorn in Zermatt and under the Eiger in Wengen; driving through Interlaken and the Lauterbrunnen Valley while paragliders soar high above; sailing on Lake Zürich, Lake Luzern, and Lake Geneva in the summers; and hiking through pristine farmland, greeted along the way by beautiful Swiss cows, on the

way to the source of the Rhine River, to the top of Schilthorn (where the James Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* was filmed), or any of the many other peaks of the majestic Swiss Alps.

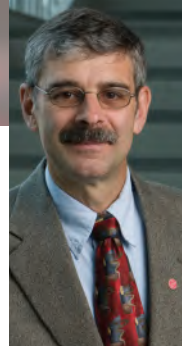
Admittedly, traveling as “media” to various destinations throughout Switzerland and beyond has many perks (dare I say, even more than I get from announcing myself as a Hotelier!) but I have not strayed from my roots in hospitality. I spend most of my days genuinely getting to know the needs of our guests, focusing on our competitive strategy, and delivering “...a little more, a little better service.”

*For more information about Girlfriend Guide, please contact Deja Rose Penev '03: [deja@mygirlfriendguide.com](mailto:deja@mygirlfriendguide.com).*



A contented Braunvieh (translation: brown cow) stands in a field in Appenzellerland facing the Kreuz Mountains of the Alps





By Glenn  
Withiam

# CHRS 2014

A conference  
*like no other*



Professors Cathy Enz and Rohit Verma have set out to break the conference mold—again—with the newest version of the Cornell Hospitality Research Summit (CHRS), set for October 12-14 in Statler Hall. The theme of this year's conference is "The Future of Service Innovation: The New Science of People, Organizations, Data, and Technology." But co-chairs Enz and Verma say that what sets this conference apart from all others is its novel goal of creating new knowledge on the spot—with industry and academic representatives working together to focus on solutions to industry issues.

The focus on creating instant knowledge is a natural evolution from the first two editions of CHRS. When CHRS 2010 was developed four years ago, its goals were to bring industry practitioners and academic researchers together to ignite and exchange research-based ideas. Unlike most conferences, CHRS was designed to balance attendance between representatives of industry and of academe rather than being aimed primarily at one group or the other. The first summit was a success: it was well attended and fulfilled its participation goals. It featured top-level keynote speakers, offered a full agenda of presentations, and provided time for questions and discussion.

CHRS 2012 sought to build on these key elements by presenting two plenary discussion sessions, one featuring industry leaders and one with a panel of hospitality management deans, along with another strong set of presenters. Once again, the summit was well attended and well received, with a tremendous flow of valuable information.

But Enz and Verma saw the potential to increase participant involvement and its value by emphasizing on-the-spot information creation. CHRS 2014's sessions will be structured to involve participants more



fully and to encourage greater interaction. To that end, CHRS 2014 will feature four major session types, all designed to elicit audience participation:

- “The Big Question”: Presenters will pose a “big question” and then work with participants to answer it as well as to identify other, related questions, large and small. The goal will be to spark community activity and develop a call to action.
- “Show and Tell”: Presenters will demonstrate a practice, idea, process, or program, and participants will be welcome to do the same. The group will then use these demonstrations as an opportunity to expand on an idea or theme, with a goal of developing a rich conversation among participants.
- “Presentation Plus”: Beginning from a prepared presentation of an idea, these sessions will turn interactive via a creative twist—to be determined.
- “Point/Counterpoint”: Participants will debate a topic of interest or offer alternative explanations or interpretations of new ideas. These sessions are intended to become free-wheeling forums for sharing opposing viewpoints.

Within these four session types, Enz and Verma are encouraging at least three “methods of sharing” for CHRS 2014:

- Flipping (reverse presentations): Participants will familiarize themselves with the session’s subject matter in advance by watching an online video. Once gathered together, everyone will be equipped to launch into a discussion with deeper interaction.
- Face-off: Various participants will stand face-to-face, perhaps to debate or perhaps to add to each other’s information through questions and answers.
- Do something, people: The audience will be brought into the center of the action to invent and improvise by means

of a polling question, group discussion, scenario analysis, or role-play.

“CHRS 2014 will go beyond presenting new knowledge, although that is essential,” said Verma. “We want to dig deeper. We want to learn about the process of innovation. We want to learn how to create that new knowledge. As expressed in our conference title, we seek to discover a ‘new science’ of service innovation.”

CHRS 2014 will also celebrate the best innovative practices by presenting an exemplary practice award. “We plan to build community around innovation by recognizing the best of innovative practices throughout the broadly defined hospitality and tourism industry,” Enz explained.

As the premier event of its kind, CHRS brings together industry and academe in a forum that promotes open dialogue aimed at developing and applying new knowledge to the hospitality and tourism industry. CHRS 2014 promises to bring important industry issues and answers forward in ways that will be uncommonly stimulating, meaningful, and memorable.



Robert Barker/Photo

Robert Barker/Photo





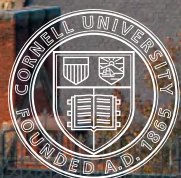
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# SHA





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# CHS president's message

Dear Friends,

It is both a humbling honor and distinct pleasure to serve as president of the Cornell Hotel Society. I am fortunate to have an amazing team to collaborate with, including first vice president **Deniz Omurgonulsen '00**, second vice president **Robert Mandelbaum '81**, secretary **Bill Minnock '79** and co-treasurers **Dexter '87** and **Susan Boyle '87 Wood**. We are proud to act as stewards of the society, and to strengthen our network for the generations to come.

Several years ago, the executive committee embarked on an ambitious journey to reimagine the Cornell Hotel Society and to ensure its relevance to our 13,000 alumni around the globe. The goals were to engage with our dynamic alumni, celebrate our collective passions, and continue our tradition of strength. Our global network has provided an unrivaled platform for Hotelies to connect, share friendships, and further professional endeavors. We also serve as a conduit to connect the school with the hospitality and tourism industries, to bring SHA faculty to the alumni, and to mentor students through our collegiate chapter.

Over the course of the next year, you will witness and have the opportunity to participate in our strategy to reignite interest in the society, which will be implemented through the following initiatives.

**New brand platform:** We are launching a compelling new brand platform for the Cornell Hotel Society that will position our alumni organization synergistically with the School of Hotel Administration. We have been working diligently with a stellar committee, including **Ben Davison '05**, **Tim Dick, MPS '88**, **Simon Turner '83**, Al Gonzalez, the school's executive director of marketing and communications, and Cornell associate vice president of alumni affairs James Mazza, CALS '88. In addition to a visual



Raj Chandnani '95

identity, we will be bringing the brand to life by introducing a microsite, a relevant platform for social media through LinkedIn, and a toolkit for our chapters around the globe to effectively deliver networking opportunities and the exchange of ideas through technology and compelling events. Our underlying goal is to deliver on our brand promise and reinforce the Cornell Hotel Society as a symbol of pride for our alumni.



**Investment in leaders and ideas:** One of the cornerstones of the Cornell Hotel Society is our embrace and support of the School of Hotel Administration. The society has consistently supported the next generation of Hoteliers by helping fund scholarships for the best and brightest. Since its inception, the Cornell Hotel Society, through our foundation and chapters around the world, has raised nearly one million dollars for scholarships.

We also recognize that a Cornell education gains significance through meaningful interaction outside the classroom and opportunities to connect with alumni and industry leaders. We continue to support the collegiate chapter in their activities and have also funded opportunities for students to attend events, including the Europe, Middle East, and Africa Regional Meeting in Verona, Italy and the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in Okinawa, Japan.

**Lifelong learning:** We fervently support the university's mission of promoting and encouraging educational opportunities after we graduate. We have expanded the funding for the faculty road show to bring more faculty to you and your chapters. This is a vital opportunity to highlight and share the notable research conducted by the faculty, and to provide each of you with the resources for professional development.

**Global reach:** SHA's sustained success lies in the remarkable accomplishments of our alumni. I recall the words of Ken Blanchard '61, who noted that "Hoteliers dream bigger dreams." Indeed, our alumni have not only shaped and transformed the global hospitality and travel industries, they have also carried E. M. Statler's credo, "Life is service," into their entrepreneurial endeavors and divergent industries.

We are collaborating with the school to co-host leading industry events around the globe that showcase SHA and our alumni to the industry. Ultimately, we are leveraging our respective strengths to maximize the potential for success by offering valuable insights and connections that genuinely matter to our alumni and the industry.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and thank Meg Hardie Keilbach, CALS '88, assistant dean; Julie Pizzuti, MPS '06, our new assistant director of alumni engagement and outreach; and Nickie Fredenburg, program assistant, all of whom support the society on a daily basis and work endlessly and devotedly to strengthen our connections to one another and our alma mater.

Thank you for your amazing commitment and enthusiasm thus far. I am looking forward to an adventure as our journey continues.

In service,



Raj Chandnani '95  
President, Cornell Hotel Society  
rchandnani95@gmail.com

# Chapter *events*

## AlpAdria

The AlpAdria chapter conferred honorary membership on Reinhard Schwarz (center) during their February event at Modul University. **Hani El-Sharkawi, PDP '13** (right) made the presentation. At left is proud Hotelie **Christophe Bergen '76**, who noted that the situation was reversed ten years ago when Reinhard presented the Young Hotelier Award to Hani on behalf of his company and the award's sponsor, Diversey Austria.



## Arizona



Arizona chapter president Bruce Sandground '84 and his wife, Kathleen, enjoy holiday brunch at The Phoenician.



The Arizona chapter enjoyed a holiday brunch at The Phoenician's Il Terrazzo restaurant on December 8. Thanks to **Todd Raessler '87** for putting together such a delicious event!



## Central Europe, the Gulf, and Africa

The Fairmont Dubai's outdoor Turkish pool lounge/restaurant, Dokuz, was the scene of a March get-together for SHA, Johnson School, and IMHI/ESSEC alumni. Among those attending were **Aditya Rajaram, MMH '11**; **Christian Krollig '05**; SHA professor of real estate **Jan deRoos '78, MS '80, PhD '94**; **Jaidev Menezes '04**; **Vikram Loomba, MMH '05**; and **Deepshikha Sinha, MMH '12**.



## Finland, Russia, and the Baltics

**Veikko Vuoristo '76** and **Juha Mahonen, GMP '05**, general manager, hosted the Finland/Russia/Baltics chapter meeting in April at the newly renovated Haikko Manor. Markus Kauppinen gave a presentation on Visualizer, a company producing 360-degree photo displays for hotel websites.



The Finland, Russia, and the Baltics chapter meets at **Veikko Vuoristo '76's** Haikko Manor in Finland: from left, front: guest presenter Markus Kauppinen, **Martti Palonperä '77, MPS '94, Mikael Swanljung, MPS '81, Deiv Salutskij '71, Veikko, and Jere Talonen, IMHI '97;** in back: **Pia Adlivankin '94, Esko Paalasmaa '76, Karl von Ramm, MMH '10, and Juha Mahonen, GMP '05**

## Georgia

The Georgia chapter held a reception and tour of the newly renovated Hyatt Midtown Atlanta for 26 attendees on April 2. SHA real estate professor Jack Corgel was on hand. Host for the event was **Steven Nicholas '92**, principal and EVP of Noble Investment, owner of the hotel. **Drew Wallace '12** organized the event.

On May 9, Professor Rohit Verma joined the chapter for a cocktail reception hosted by **Alan Leblanc '84** at his restaurant, White Oak Kitchen and Cocktails. During the reception, Rohit shared his recent research in the areas of environmental sustainability and social media analytics.



**Antonia Ciccolo '09, Drew Wallace '12, Tracey Yang '13, and Sophia Lin Kanno '05** enjoy the Georgia chapter's reception at the Hyatt Midtown Atlanta.



**Robert Mandelbaum '81, Rohit Verma, and Larry Hall '81** enjoy the hospitality of **Alan Leblanc '84** and CHS Georgia.

## Germany

February 12 was an enjoyable evening for the Germany chapter, whose members got together at the Hilton Square in Frankfurt. The group was treated to an interesting tour, wine from Villa Banfi, welcome cocktails courtesy of the Hilton, an introduction to the Frankfurt hotel market delivered by **Martina Fidelschuster, PDP '88**, and lots of good conversation.

**Mario Kiefer, PDP '74, Martina Fidelschuster, PDP '88, and Jeff Scott, MPS '91**, president of the Germany chapter, at the Hilton Square in Frankfurt



## Houston

The Houston chapter's all-star team of elders got together on December 18 at the Royal Oaks Country Club to discuss the revitalization of the chapter. Joining them was one youngster, **Morgan Naylor Bellows '08**. From left are **Dave Gilkeson '76, Jon Schultz '65, Darcy Todia '68, MS '74, Tom Lattin '66, MS '68, Josef Hermans '70, Ed (Robert Edgar) Smith '69, Dick Nelson '57, John Bowen '70, Clint Rappole '65, MS '68, PhD '71, Morgan, and George Stark '66.**



## Chapter events continued

### Korea

Twenty-seven Hotelies turned out when CHS Korea held its first annual gathering on January 9. **Stephanie Su Jeong Choi '10** organized the stylish catered event at a friend's art gallery.

### Madrid

FITUR presented the opportunity for a Cornell get-together on January 22 at the Posada del Dragon. **Eduardo Irigoras, IMHI '08** organized the reception, for which host Lars von der Wettern, owner of the Dragon, provided superb wine and tapas.

### Tokyo

CHS Tokyo combined business and pleasure at their management seminar and holiday party on December 16 at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo. **Yoshiharu Hoshino, MPS '86**, president of Hoshino Hot Springs Resort, and **Tomohiko Sawayanagi, MMH '98**, EVP of Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels, presented a panel discussion about hospitality and business development. More than 100 attended. Following the seminar, the audience enjoyed dinner and a drawing.

The chapter's annual general meeting took place on February 7 at the newly opened Tokyo Marriott, where general manager Antonio Alvarez and his staff extended "impressive and amazing" service to the group. The chapter was looking forward with excitement to the next Asia Pacific meeting, in Okinawa.



CHS Madrid at the Posada del Dragon

**Yoshiharu Hoshino, MPS '86**, and **Tomohiko Sawayanagi, MMH '98** treated CHS Tokyo to a discussion of hospitality and business development at the chapter's holiday event in December.



CHS Tokyo turned out in force for their gathering on December 16 at the Grand Hyatt Tokyo.





# Remembrance

June Miller McNeal '39	October 24, 2013
John Ogden '39	February 10, 2014
Joseph H. Moss '40	June 29, 2013
Louis J. Conti '41	February 14, 2014
Margaret Fegley Droz '41	September 8, 2013
Philip J. Parrott '41	January 11, 2013
Roscoe DuMond '42	August 31, 2013
David C. Baldwin '44	August 6, 2013
Charles D. Nottingham II '47	November 29, 2013
Lloyd P. Findholt '48	May 8, 2013
Robert L. Kersey '49	January 25, 2014
Lois Birrell Morrill '49	December 22, 2013
William E. Farrar '50	November 30, 2013
Thomas P. Hanzas '50	March 23, 2014
Donald A. McNamara '51	January 7, 2014
Terry Nash '51	November 18, 2013
Harry L. Sheppard '52	December 3, 2013
Joseph A. Thomas '54	November 26, 2013
Elizabeth "Hilly" McCann Dearden '55	May 23, 2012
Ronald P. Chandler '56	December 8, 2013
William F. Dearden '56	June 13, 2012
James S. Fahey '56	February 12, 2014
John W. Ewen '57	March 5, 2014
Joseph E. Honish '57	January 16, 2014
Donald Schive '59	September 2, 2009
Stephen K. Goldstein '60	August 25, 2013
G. Denny French '61	June 28, 2013
Russell Geiger '62	November 3, 2013
John L. Gillespie '62	March 19, 2014
Walter L. Geggis '63	August 21, 2013
Sonny T. W. Lien '68	November 11, 2013
Sunil K. Charnalia '70	November 30, 2012
W. Bruce Neil '73	September 18, 2013
James D. Bennett '75	February 16, 2014
John E. H. Sherry, Professor Emeritus (Hon.)	October 30, 2013
Maria Palacios-Hardes (Hon.)	February 2, 2014



# Statler memories

*In anticipation of the Statler Hotel's 25th anniversary this spring, we invited our alumni to share their favorite memories of working in the Statler Inn (1950-1986) or Statler Hotel (since 1989) as students. The 56 responses we received are not just interesting; they are also by turns funny, serious, surprising, and tender. They serve to remind us once again that the mind of a Hotelie nearly always operates in tandem with the heart.*

*The memories shared here have been condensed, with some slight alterations in wording to keep the pieces stitched together grammatically. All of the emails we received can be read in their original form in the online class notes at [www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/classnotes](http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/classnotes). Our thanks go to Ruth Devine for entering them all there.*

*Certain themes emerged in reading these memoirs, and they are sorted here into five categories: encounters with famous people; awkward moments in experiential learning; the mentors—usually hotel staff—who set a lasting example; the importance of the Statler experience to future career attainments; and reflections of, or on, a student's era.*

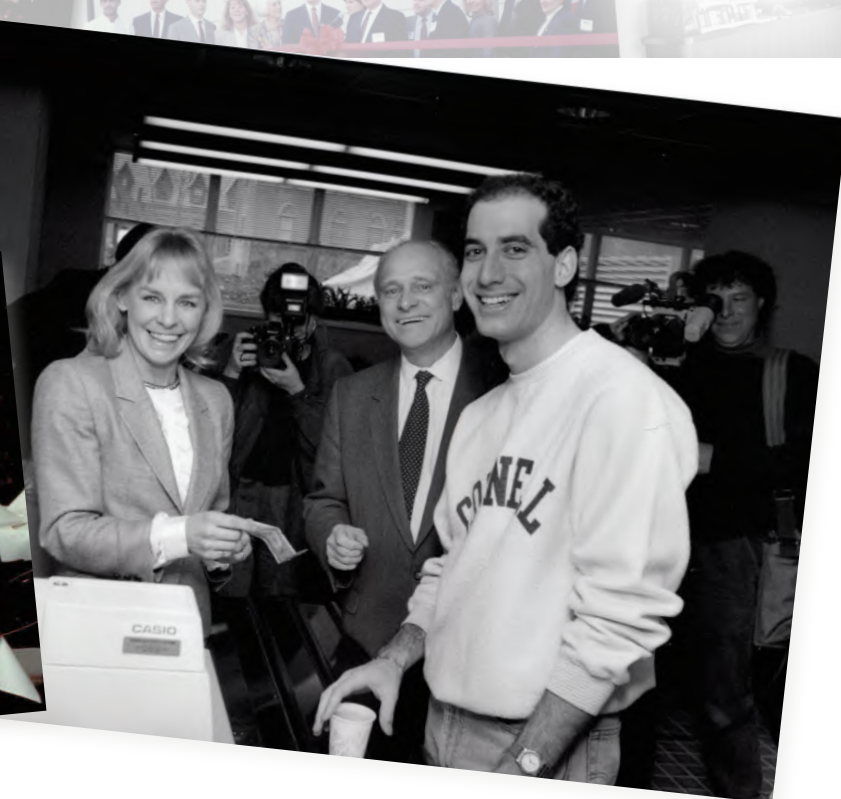
*Evident throughout these narratives is the spirit of generosity and openness to experience that is so natural a part of the Hotelie make-up. It is this spirit, of course, that has for 64 years delighted the guests of the Statler Inn and Hotel and made their stays so unforgettable.*

## Encounters with famous people

Raymond Goodman, MPS '75, PhD '79 had multiple celebrity encounters while working at the Statler, including "serving eggs most mornings in the Rathskeller to **Hans Bethe**, Nobel Prize-winning scientist; ditto to **Pete Carroll**, the then-Cornell head football coach who went on to the San Francisco '49ers, USC, and now the Seattle Seahawks; and serving famous professors and guests in the dining room, including **Carl Sagan** and **Julian Bond**." He had to turn down **Isaac Stern**'s request for a cup of coffee from the dining room when it was closed and the coffee urn cold. "Though I invited him to go downstairs to the Rathskeller, his publicist was incensed. 'Do you realize this is Isaac Stern?' she said..." Raymond also got dressed down by "one of Cornell's famous feminists when, as dining room host, I pulled out a chair for her as the last to be seated at an eight-top and was called, quite loudly, 'a male chauvinist!'"







**Lenny Stark '60** has a much sweeter memory of Isaac Stern. As the first of his crew of banquet waiters to report for work one afternoon, he was alone in the ballroom preparing to set up the tables when a middle-aged man entered from the kitchen end carrying a violin case. "He asked if I would be disturbed if he practiced for a little while... No one else but Isaac Stern, the greatest living violinist in the world, was practicing privately TO ME! He was giving a concert on campus, and I got a private concert! In my career I have never had more of a thrill!"

**Mark BIRTHA '94** was introduced to hotel operations as a bellman at the Statler in 1990. "There was nothing more exciting than being the first person guests would meet as I picked them up from the airport, welcomed them to the Cornell campus, whether new or returning, took them to their guest rooms, and made a buck or two in the process! It helped to build my foundation of what customer service was about and the importance of creating memorable guest experiences each and every step of the way during a person's visit. These were invaluable lessons I would not trade for anything."

Mark got the chance to drive cellist **Yo Yo Ma** from the airport to the hotel. He also had the honor of opening the door to the hotel for the **Dalai Lama**. "These great experiences (fond memories now!) translated into multiple operations and development roles for me in the hotel and gaming spaces, resulting in casino hotel president/GM roles, opportunities to design/build/open billion-dollar development projects all around the world, and a special place in my heart always for the Statler Hotel and the students and employees who make it successful each and every day. And an extra \$5 every once in a while! Congratulations, Statler Hotel, on 25 amazing years."

While working as senior clerk at the Inn, **Buck Laird '64** found **Harry Truman's** registration card from his stay in 1961. "That was special because, when my parents and I flew to Ithaca for my interview with **Dean Meek** in the spring of '60, President Truman (and his LONE secret service escort) were on our flight. He was so friendly and conversational with us, which befits what he wrote on his registration card. On the line that asked for occupation, his entry was 'retired farmer.'"

Nov. 22, 1963 weighed much more heavily. "I was not scheduled to work that day, but immediately suited up and raced to Statler Inn that morning when word of the Dallas tragedy began to unfold. I shall never forget the agony of announcing, over the Inn's public address system to several hundred anxious guests and diners, that the President was dead. Best wishes to all who have experienced the 'Life is Service...' commitment."

**Michael Turback '66** grew up in a restaurant family and worked in restaurants from the age of ten, but a novel experience awaited him at the Statler. "While manning the grill, an order came in for a Filet Mignon 'for a VIP.' I later found out that I had cooked a steak for **Jimmy Hoffa** (prior to his lecture at the ILR School). Indeed, work experience at Statler as well as hotel and restaurant jobs during the summers provided excellent preparation for my 30-year career in operations. (I was told that Mr. Hoffa enjoyed his steak)."

## Statler memories continued

**Paul Fishbeck '56** had a chance encounter with **Frank Lloyd Wright** while standing around in the Statler Inn lobby. "I saw a distinguished gentleman, and he started looking at the postcards on the rack by the desk. As I was the only one present, he said, directing his comments to me more or less, 'These buildings are so bad they are almost good!'"

**James Burr '63** worked the front desk for three years, progressing from bellman to desk clerk to assistant front office manager. "I especially enjoyed the interaction with some of the professors, trustees and celebrities. I recall telling **Eugene Ormandy**, who returned from his first concert the night I was working, that I had tickets for the next night's performance. His response: 'We'll be better tomorrow night.'"

**Jim Poffley '67** parlayed his experience making cocktails at the Statler Inn's kitchen service bar into a later stint as a bartender at the Hedges in East Hampton, for some years the summer encampment of Henri Soule's famed Manhattan restaurant, Le Pavillon. "I was making good Martinis, they say. But more exciting was waiting on **Jean Piaget** in the Statler dining room. His work on child learning and development set the standards of world knowledge in that area. He only had soup and a buttered roll."

Not all VIPs are famous. **Bill Cowley '61** furnished this example: "When I waited table at Statler, I was in the kitchen when I was told I had Professor **Myrtle Ericson** and a guest at one of my tables. She was a wonderful woman, but I have to confess that, as an undergrad, I was a little nervous to be serving her. I put on my best smile and approached the table, only to see that her guest was my mother. Double trouble! Silently, I hoped I wouldn't make any mistakes. Fortunately, all went well. After more than 50 years, this memory still brings a smile to my heart. Both women were a special part of my life and education."

**Naresh Khanna '69** worked in the banquet department for three years. "My boss was **Jacques Verhaak '68**. I thoroughly enjoyed the work in the Statler Inn. I waited on Senator **Jacob Jarvis** of New York and Governor **Nelson Rockefeller**. I wish all Hotel students worked during their school years. I ate the finest food served at the banquets. I had lots of fun, and if I had to do it again, I would do it with a smile on my face."

### Adventures in experiential learning

**Michael Chiu '66** kept his equilibrium in his three years as a banquet waiter. "A number of well-known personalities came through the banquet rooms. In particular, it was my honor and pleasure to serve then-Gov. **Nelson Rockefeller**, Vice President **Spiro Agnew**, and not least **Robert Kennedy** on head tables."







"I nearly had a mishap minutes prior to the start of a banquet in honor of Agnew. We were placing chilled silver milk pitchers on the tables before the guests arrived, and the bakesheet pan that I was carrying with about 36 pitchers on it nearly tipped over when my right foot got caught in the curled carpet edge. Somehow I managed to regain my balance and did a seesaw motion with the real heavy bakesheet on my left shoulder. Nary a drop of milk spilled onto the pan! What a sweat! The banquet manager and fellow waiters were absolutely amazed at my recovery."

**Gordon Watkins '74** was the Inn's student purchasing manager in his last semester. "I will never forget the time I was manager for 'Steak Night' in the cafeteria and we had hundreds of people showing up after a football game. We loaded up the grill and the smoke set off the overhead fire extinguishers. OMG, what a mess and nightmare! Right after graduation I went on to become the storeroom manager at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco, where our German head chef Stroedel would come down and shout, "Get me some meats!" While most of my career was in hotel real estate, consulting, and finance, I have owned and operated the Inn at 410 B&B in Flagstaff, Ariz. for the past ten years. We serve about 5,000 breakfasts per year, so I still use all the food and beverage education and experience I gained at the Statler Inn."

**Cheryl Wendel '85** had a couple of fairly spectacular mishaps in her four years as a banquet server. The first was a genuine wardrobe failure. "If you were a [female] server in the eighties, the uniform included a skirt attached with Velcro. One night, we had an event with over 100 people, which was large for us. The dessert was Cherries Jubilee, made tableside. I was carrying a large tray with 30 champagne glasses with one scoop of vanilla ice cream in each. As I was walking through the swinging door, a hook caught on my skirt and slowly tore it off. I never dropped one glass. I slowly sat on the floor until a co-worker took my tray, and then I ran out of the room. I still laugh about this with my best Cornell friend. She saw the whole thing, as did everyone else."

The second misadventure involved Cheryl's best friend and fellow server, with whom she had just had an argument, and **Christopher Plummer**, who was on campus to perform in a play. "He was a colorful gen-



## Statler memories continued

tleman with an unfiltered vocabulary. My friend and I remained very professional throughout the meal but we were both a little shocked—he was far from the character he portrayed in *The Sound of Music*.

“It was time for the dessert, and we rolled in the cart. He requested a piece of Linzer Torte. It was taking a long time to cut through the bottom of the torte. I could see that he was getting impatient, and I tried to help my friend. She jerked her arm away, refusing my help. The dessert went flying across the room and landed on the table in front of him. He screamed, ‘What the \*\*\*\*!’ We began laughing until the tears were streaming down our faces. We had to leave, and two new servers were sent in to finish service.”

One of Cheryl’s final memories is of a time when she got it all right. “My senior year I was the service manager for HEC. When I look back at the experience, the memory that stands out the most was the opportunity for my parents to attend the events. This was the first time that I think my parents understood what I wanted to do as a career and the first time that they were proud of that decision.”

By the way, Cheryl also had two opportunities to confirm **Gerald Ford**’s reputation for being accident-prone. The first came when he tripped on the riser leading to the head table in the Inn’s dining

room. The second came two years later, when she was the banquet manager at the Ritz-Carlton in Rancho Mirage, California, and he did the very same thing.

**Lianne Briggs, MPS ’85** learned the importance of occasional taste-testing while working as a bakeshop assistant. “The servers would fill up water pitchers with salt to refill the salt shakers on the tables. The servers mixed up the bins and emptied the remaining salt from the water pitchers into the sugar bin. We had all of our desserts done for the evening before anyone tasted them. They all got made with salt instead of sugar. Since there was no time to start over again, someone ran out to the grocery store and came back with Sara Lee.”

**Loucas Vrionides ’83** had a different mishap with sugar. “While in the Cafeteria course, I once had to prepare eggplant parmigiana. Eggplants had to be sliced and breaded. I had a real problem, because the egg and flour and then bread crumbs didn’t glue together. Since time was pressing, I just put them all together as well as they could get. After the cafeteria line service had finished and we were in the kitchen standing and leaning on the counters, I noticed under a counter a label on a bin that said ‘flour.’ Then I realized that I had used sugar instead. Anyway, during the dinner I remember two customers upon leaving saying to me that the eggplant parm was very, very nice.

“That old chef teacher was right: Baking is a science, cooking is an ART! To my professional life it gave me a strong knowledge base.”

**J. Peter Kline ’69** was put to the test early in his freshman year. “On November 9, 1965, the Great Northeast Blackout cut off electrical service to 30 million people for up to ten hours. Nighttime management coverage at the Statler Inn was pretty sparse, and as an 18-year-old freshman, I found myself in charge of comforting distressed guests and rescuing people from the elevators. Excitement, apprehension, and a great sense of achievement and self confidence were all part of that memorable evening. Many of these





things cannot be taught in a classroom; you have to experience the real thing to understand its significance. Looking back, I consider my job at Statler Inn part of my Cornell education. It was like an elective course that everyone should have taken."

**Larry Dornstein '60** learned to improvise on the spot. "I was scheduled to work as a busboy in the dining room of the hotel. It was literally my first time in that kitchen. It was a snowy evening (what else is new) and the waiter I was to work with did not arrive. I was hurriedly appointed to be the waiter. A very nice older couple was seated at my station and they ordered, among other things, a Caesar salad. It was a hallmark of the hotel that such a salad be made from scratch, tableside. I had never made a Caesar salad, nor did I know what the ingredients were, but the rolling table apparently had all the ingredients. I wheeled it to the table and began to put on a show, putting in a little of everything that was on the table, and proudly served it as if I knew what I was doing. When I returned to clear the salad plates, the woman diner looked at me and said, "that was the best Caesar salad we have ever had."

**Gavin Landry '86** took his lumps while serving mashed potatoes. "One day, Professor **Carl Sagan** asked me for mashed potatoes. I replied, in an effort to be humorous, 'Would you like billions and billions of potatoes?' The joke did not land, and he looked at me and said, 'No, just a scoop, thanks.' I felt two inches tall but learned a lesson about celebrity genuflecting. I worked all four years I was in college, as a TA, in the Rathskeller, and in the Main Dining Room kitchen. It not only provided me pocket change but also helped me get valuable experience in line-level positions that benefited me immediately upon graduation when working with individuals in similar positions."

### Mentors

**Carl Braunlich '74** has special gratitude for staff members **Roger Whitaker** and **Rhea Johnson**. "I put myself through school working banquets at night, the Rathskeller in the morning, and the cafeteria during the day. Roger and Rhea taught me how to cook, how to laugh, and how to be absolutely fanatical about food cost while still delivering high-quality menus. I went on to manage culinary operations in casino resorts in the Bahamas and Atlantic City and have never forgotten the two best instructors I had at Cornell University."



**Jim Coyle '87** worked in hotel engineering as an upperclassman. "While I have had many mentors in my career, **Carmen Meixell** taught me leadership lessons that have had immense value. The engineering department had to get things done, and there were many masters to please. Carmen not only handled the pressure with a continuous smile, but co-workers jumped through hoops for her when the rubber needed to hit the road. She was proof positive that you get more bees with honey, but that the honey had better be composed of sincerity and determined preparation."

**Marcia McPeak '86, MPS '93** fondly remembers "Mr. Ed, the gentleman who used to collect all the trash and use the big noisy service elevator. His name was **Eddie Dunn**, and he would never tell me exactly how old he really was. I would some-

## Statler memories continued

times have dinner with him downstairs in the Rathskeller, and he would take a nap right after dinner...on his dinner tray. I would make sure he was awake before going back to work. He would perk up and go about his regular duties. He was a true gentleman! And since I was a Townie, I knew all the other gentlemen who worked in the kitchen. They took care of me since I was a local and always helped me out and gave great advice about life in general. **Bobby Cooper, Claude Cook, Big Cookie, Mr. Welch, and Bunky Johnson**...great and wise men for sure. Most, if not all, of them have since gone on to a better place. Great memories full of fun, laughter, love, and respect."

**Gordon Watkins '74** recalls several mentors. "I had the pleasure of working with **Smittie**, the Inn's butcher, who was the most thoughtful and kindest person with whom I have ever worked. **Dean and Mrs. Beck** had many special dinners entertaining dignitaries, and procuring exotic food items like truffles or ostrich was a challenge. Professor **Vance Christian** was always ordering food and wines that were hard to find; he was very stern, but always a gentleman if I came through with his orders."

**Arnold Mok '01** worked as a prep cook, a job that sometimes seemed more compelling than his classes. Sometimes, as a banquet plating began, he would take a moment to take it all in. "I'd stop working and just look at other classmates and chefs at work. It's unbelievable that on a table that's about 16 feet long march out plates for hundreds for the ballroom. It's like an infantry of soldiers at a parade: an organized march with assembly lines on the table and the row of waitstaff lining up with the American-style service trays."





[illegible]

creations had won blue ribbons at the New York State Fair and his grandfather manufactured cake and other mixes in Boston. “I took the reins from **Brett Tollman Rq**, a legend in the Bake Shop. I also learned a lot from **Regula Wipl Rq**. Brett, Regula and I ran the Bake Shop every night and on weekends. On weekdays, we were in class. There was another legend in the Bake Shop, **Anna Faben**, who was in charge of making the classic Boston Apple Pie. I’ll never forget the day Anna taught me how to make the apple pie. It was a special day honored.

Early Saturday morn'g, I took all my doughs to the little dining room at the end of the house, and my production—about seven hundred—could be laid out, make any day, a splendid centerpiece, as marshmallows, scones, breads, and breads d'ore, and breads d'or, and high, low, and round, and round, and round, and round—hundreds of rolls, and scones, and breads—up early—very early—and back to the Bake Shop to make muffins, breads, and desserts.

“I had a lot of fun in the Bake Shop and have great memories of working with my classmates, including **Jim McGrath** '84, **Alan Hatfield** '85, **Patrick Campbell** '84, and **Scott and Doug McGregor** (both '85), to name a few. I also remember working with some great employees at Statler. There was **Oliver**, who ran the dish machine and was a great singer; **Anna Faben**, the queen of Statler Apple Pie; **“Toby” Lodbell**, who ran the stockroom, aka “Tobyland”; and many more who helped shape and guide this student, baker, chef, and restaurateur.

**Stephen Anderson '85** worked his way through school as a baker—not a surprising choice, considering that his mother's



## Statler memories continued



"From this beginning, I went off to spend a career in the hospitality industry. I have worked in hotels as an executive chef and food and beverage director, run independent restaurants as an executive chef and general manager, been a partner in a top restaurant in Los Angeles, and more as an executive for some of the largest casual dining companies responsible for marketing, food, beverage, and quality assurance. I continue to be a restaurateur and operator to this day."

### Career impact

**Ted Nordahl '50** was one of the first students to work in the Statler Inn, and the experience helped steer his career in another direction. "In 1950 I was elected to the HEC board that had the task and honor of holding the first HEC to be held in the newly opened Statler Hall. I served as executive steward, responsible for getting the kitchen ready for the various food functions that were the centerpiece of the 1950 HEC. I remember that I was so exhausted after the final banquet, sitting on the floor against a big cooler watching a parade of our prominent hotel guests

being escorted by our managing director and other front-office board members, that I didn't want to pursue a 'back of the house' career but should look for a front-office job upon graduation.

"I was fortunate to get a job offer from the famed Chicago hotel, the Drake, where I stayed for 31 years, rising to the position of VP and general sales manager, a member of the hotel's board of directors, and a part owner of the hotel. Our group sold the Drake in 1979 but retained ownership of the land under the hotel, which we still have. My son **Brian '84** is a board member of the company that is the general partner of the partnership that owns the Drake land site. So you must agree that my decision to focus on a front-office job after graduation was a good one. Now in my 87th year, that decision still bears fruit and still will for the Nordahl family for many years to come."

**Bill Eaton '61** was lured over from Engineering by his exposure to hospitality operations. "I probably worked more hours in the Statler Inn than any other student. My work commenced in May 1958 when, as an EP student, I took a job as bellman at the Statler, as there was not work for a freshman engineer anywhere during the recession. Professor **O. Ernest Bangs**, the original professor in food facilities engineering and on campus teaching in the summer, became a friend as I transitioned to the front desk. He convinced me to transfer to the hotel school, which I did. I built a career in the field, where I remain to this day [as chairman of the board of Cini-Little International]. Along the way during my three years in the hotel school and for eight months after graduation, I was essentially a full-time employee. I worked the front desk and then in the Main Dining Room, then as a banquet waiter and banquet manager, and at the end of my junior year became the full-time sales manager, a position I held for the rest of my college time and for eight months beyond."

**Mary Edson '83's** Statler Inn work experience led her to transfer to SHA from Hum Ec. "I started as a waitress in spring 1980 and stayed on as a banquet captain and bartender that summer. I held leadership positions in three venues that **Jack Halpern '81** had developed for the Main Dining Room, Café Rhea, and



the Faculty Club, eventually managing the Faculty Club the next summer and weekends that fall. I also held multiple positions as front desk clerk and cashier just as back-office and point-of-sale systems were coming into use. You could say I took the experiential learning aspect of SHA and put it on steroids!

“Working at Statler contributed to my professional life by operationalizing my decision-making and critical thinking skills. In class, we learned about decision theory—analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. In F&B operations, decision-making theories were put into practice. As a manager, it is critical to know when to be hands-on and when to step back, analyze a situation, and develop apt solutions.

“My experience at Statler, in concert with my SHA education, helps me “see systems” as a scholar/practitioner. More importantly, the people I worked with at Statler are dear mentors and colleagues who made indelible impressions upon me during that critical period of my development. If you are a student who wants to put classroom learning into practice, consider working at Statler. I highly recommend it.”

**Seth Bramson '69** had a somewhat traumatic initiation into food service after transferring to SHA from Miami-Dade Community College, but the experience helped determine his career path. “Although I had worked for the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach for four years and had done an internship there, I had never worked in food service. In fact, although I would spend most of my career managing great and famous restaurants and clubs, the last thing I wanted to do at the time was to be in the food and beverage business.

“After settling in at North Baker Hall in September of 1966, I sought work through Statler and was told to report to the wardrobe and get a waiter’s jacket. I got my jacket, put on my bowtie, and was sent into the kitchen, whereupon, much to my shock, with no training or anything else, I was put on a line of young men and women who were being given trays, upon which four stacks of five covers were placed. Because this is a family magazine, I cannot adequately describe the terror that was coming over me as my legs turned to rubber and I began shaking like the proverbial leaf. Suffice to say, horrific as it was, I managed to make two or three trips with the loaded tray, fearful that my legs would give way or that I would drop the whole damn thing.

“I was, from that day until the day I accepted my first job as assistant manager of the food division of the downtown Miami Burdine’s Department Store, bound and determined to avoid

the food business! As noted, I spent almost my entire working career in F&B, and much of the credit does go to the brutality of my initiation!

“Happily, by my last year in Ithaca, I was senior enough to be recommended to the Big Red Barn to serve as a bartender. Not only was I, by that time, adept at handling trays, but I learned how to mix drinks in a fair to middlin’ manner. And, besides actually getting paid, the folks at the Barn, knowing that, even then, I was a major railroad buff and collector, bestowed the Lehigh Valley Railroad’s East Ithaca depot sign, which had somehow made its way to the Barn, upon me.”

**Al Frost '66** lost his NROTC scholarship when he transferred from Engineering to SHA as a sophomore. “What the heck does the Navy need from a Hotelier?” was the logic. That meant giving up Cornell or working every free minute.

“I managed to secure jobs on the banquet staff, the kitchen staff, and eventually as a sous chef in the



## Statler memories continued

Rathskeller. I probably have made more watermelon baskets and wiener schnitzel than most folks alive. I'm trying without success to remember the Rathskeller's chef's name. He was a burly man with a very gruff exterior but a heart the size of the entire state. While I learned a lot in the many food prep courses I took, I learned how it happened in the real world down in that basement kitchen.

"During the many long hours there, I met and worked with some of the finest folks I'll ever know. We knew each other well, worked well together, had each other's back, and all made it through to graduation. I'm still in contact with some of them today.

"The conclusion is ironic. Received my draft notice in the winter of 1965, reported to Rochester for the physical, and was graded Prime. But before anything more could happen, that same Navy that tossed me out for transferring to SHA returned to recruit me to run Navy hospital food service departments. I took them up on it and retired 31 years later. It's interesting to note that Navy hospital food service had a long history of excellence, principally because of its wise practice of commissioning top-rate enlisted members and then sending a few of them to SHA every year. I learned a lot from those guys as well

and still regret being the one who finally gave Navy the idea that they could grab grads straight from school without having to pay tuition. Most of those Mustangs (Navy officers with prior enlisted service) have gone on to great things. Our annual reunions at the NRA Show in Chicago are things of which legends are made. Thanks for the opportunity!"

**Hank Hirschy '55's** service at the Statler Inn helped him take his Navy career to extraordinary lengths. Tending bar for the main dining room and in the Rathskeller, he worked with **Amory Houghton '55**, **Tom Knowlton '56**, **Bill Herbig '55**, and **Sally Zautner, CALS '55**. The friendships they formed have been lifelong.

"The summer of 1953 was spent at Navy Officer Candidate School. Summer of '54, Tom, Amory, and I took over the management of a summer resort, the Big Moose Inn. What a ball we had! Tom was manager, Amory bartender, and Hank chef. It was an unbelievably memorable experience.

"I returned to Ithaca, resumed my job as bartender, and graduated in February 1955. I then served as food controller at the Harvard Club in Boston (**Charlie Wallace '49**, manager), where my knowledge from Cornell was put to good use.

"My first assignment as a newly commissioned Navy ensign was to Port Lyautey, Morocco, where I was in charge of the officers' club and the bachelor officers' quarters. Two years later I received orders to Newport, R. I. to be an instructor at the Officer Communications School. While in Newport, who should I meet at the local A&P store but Sally Zautner Vanicek, married to Jim Vanicek, CALS '55. We remain very close friends to this day.

"Two years later I received orders to the USS Boston, the world's first guided-missile cruiser. As senior assistant supply officer, one of my duties was to oversee all food service on board. Due to this, my SHA degree, and an excellent military record, I was sent to the White House early in the Kennedy Administration as the supply officer to the naval aide to the Presi-







dent, and served as director of the Executive Dining Facilities, sometimes called the Navy Mess. In addition to these duties, I was responsible for supply and logistics support, including food, lodging, and other personal services at Camp David and on the three presidential yachts. During presidential trips away from Washington, I was responsible for the staffing and operation of the President's quarters. This included the planning, preparing, and serving of state dinners in the U.S., on ships, and overseas.

"In addition to the Presidential Service Badge, I was honored to be awarded the Navy Commendation Medal, which read in part, 'Selflessness, meticulous attention to detail, unstinting application of time and effort, and unrelenting pursuit of perfection were reflected in presidential support, which was unfailingly outstanding in all respects.' I was supposed to complete a two-year tour but was asked to stay on an extra year. Following the assassination of President Kennedy, I was asked to extend for another year, serving in the White House from May 1961 to June 1965.

"In 1974 I made captain and was assigned chief of the Vietnamese Navy Supply Support Branch. I was the last U.S. Navy supply officer evacuated when Saigon fell on April 29, 1975.

"I completed active duty in 1979 after serving for two years as commanding officer of the Navy Food Service Systems Command, responsible for all shipboard and shore station dining facilities worldwide.

"After retiring in 1997 from the Adams-Burch Company, a private food service supply and equipment business, we [Hank and Priscilla, his wife of 56 years] moved from Alexandria, Va. to Beaufort, N. C. We have three children, Brad, Sue, and Beth, and four grandchildren, Isabelle, Emma, Easton, and Brendan.

"Some may think that by working your way through college you miss much of the usual, expected college life experiences, but the people I met that did the same became and continue to be an integral part of my life, family, and career."

The advice that **Dale Colle '83** got from **Cheri Farrell** in Admissions—to get lots of hands-on work experience at the Statler Inn—had a dramatic impact on his life and career. "From 1979 to 1983 I was a member of the Beverage Department. It was great to really be a part of the back of the house and front of the house for so many banquet and catering events. With a lot of pride it felt like 'my hotel' at the best hotel school in the world!

"The hands-on experience led to a work-study semester at the New York Hilton as a fine dining room captain. After graduation, a hands-on year of corporate management training at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee eventually led to being a banquet manager and then a catering manager in Chicago. Successes at those properties truly were a testament to learning the business at Statler.



## Statler memories continued

"More recently, I have worked for the best company in the world for 14-and-a-half years, Marriott Vacations Worldwide (MVW). As a five-time Presidential Sales Executive, my career as one of the top producing agents in the company still holds its roots at Statler and the SHA. Even better yet, this career enables me to ultimately work for the president and CEO of MVW, Mr. **Steve Weisz '72**, and the senior vice president of sales and marketing, Mr. **Brian Miller '85**, both fellow alums of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration. From the Beverage Department at Statler Inn, Cheers!"

For **Ted Mandigo '66**, working at the Statler Inn "was key in gaining a foothold in the industry. I came from a small town with little experience in hotels. My first employment was at the front desk at Statler. I was intimidated by the experience to the extent that my boss (a fellow student, two years my senior) suggested that I get out in the industry and gain some experience, which I did in subsequent internships. I then moved to banquet service, where I wound up as banquet captain my senior year, providing both experience in service and the income to enable me to fund a share of tuition and housing costs. The service experience was great, and I did the majority of tableside preparation for small banquets and functions held in

the meeting rooms during my junior and senior years. I also was on the housekeeping crew, early shift, and sometimes would rush to the locker room and change from housekeeping to banquet service uniform because of scheduling of events. I found the experience and opportunity invaluable."

**Michael Oshins, MPS '85** now teaches what he learned at the Statler Inn as an associate professor at Boston University. "Back in the '80s, the MPS quantity food production class used to take over the Statler main dining room every Friday night. I loved that course for the experience and OTJ training! Each student was responsible for everything for that evening—concept, design, training, recipes, menu, uniforms, marketing, finances, etc... I still remember not my night with classmate **Don Ball** (James Bond 007...For Your Eyes Only), but several of my classmates' events—A night at the White House (**Cathy Schlosberg** obtained menus from White house dinners, **Bev Kay's** Alice In Wonderland, etc.). Having worked at the Waldorf-Astoria in housekeeping and operations in country clubs and the QSR segment, working at the Statler in the fine-dining market helped better prepare me for my work as VP of an operations consulting company after graduation."

**Scott Beahen '83's** student training also led to an academic career. "In those days you could actually bid on several operations and run the weekend operations at the Inn. My first gig was the "Wandering American,"







and we ran the Rathskeller for Friday dinner and breakfast/lunch and dinner on Saturday. My partner was **Sean Hennessey '83**. He had graduated from Johnson and Wales and I had graduated from the Culinary institute of America. I still remember **Carl Tremaglio '83**, **Tom Warren '83**, and **Jim Corbin** and I working together every weekend.

"I also had the pleasure of actually running a Mexican buffet on Saturday night through the Statler cafeteria for students. I remember running ads on the student radio station, with two Mexican accents, talking about the great Mexican food at the Statler on Saturday night, and you could actually use your meal card!.. Little did I know at the time that I would go on to have a great career as the assistant director of foodservice operations at the University of Buffalo! I would never have allowed a student group to tap into our student card program!

"I also took an internship in purchasing for one semester, which included a routine as a Statler Hotel weekend manager. We were required to stay overnight. If we sold out of rooms, one would have to sleep behind the stage of the Statler Auditorium!...on a cot!

"Needless to say, my experience at the Statler Hotel was directly related to my career success over the years. My first gig out of Cornell was as general manager of a Holiday Inn in Eldorado, Ark.; my background at the Statler gave me the experience in hotel ops that I needed. I teach full time now at the College of Hospitality and Tourism at Niagara University. As the professor/

director of foodservice operations, I oversee the kitchen/dining room operations similar to the same food production class we took back in the '80s at the Statler. I actually modeled the class on what I had experienced at Statler Hotel."

**Tom Pedulla '60** got so much out of his SHA experiences that he passed the joy onto his kids. "I matriculated in Feb. 1958 and immediately applied to work in the Main Dining Room as a busboy. The following night I was promoted to waiter, two months later I was dining room host, and in June I was dining room manager, working full time while taking Spanish during the summer months. As a result, I got all my meals free—a great benefit. In my senior year, I asked to do something else, because I couldn't continue working 40-plus hours while taking 18 credits in school. I started to do some statistical analysis on a more flexible schedule. I learned to efficiently use my time, pay more attention in class, take good notes, and graduate With Distinction. At Statler, I learned how to manage student and full-time employees. Overall, my experience was very positive and worthwhile. As a result, three of our four children attended and graduated from the hotel school with pleasant, worthwhile experiences. Hopefully, one or more of our five grandsons will want to attend the school."



## Statler memories continued

### Scenes from a place in time

Uniforms are one sure sign of an era. **Michael Avery '55** remembers the “ugly gray jacket” he wore as a bellman. Waiter garb for **Kent Nadbornik '69** included a red jacket and a cummerbund. Ten years later, **Patti Enggaard Betz '79** was bussing tables in a “gold-colored diner dress with a lace collar and hankie in the pocket—priceless!” The summer after Patti graduated, **Jim Keller '83** wore “a paper hat, black-and-white checked pants, and a white busser shirt” as a busboy in the Rathskeller. And let’s hope that the velcroed skirt that **Cheryl Wendel '85** carried off with such aplomb had a short run in Wardrobe.

Three years elapsed between the demolition of the Statler Inn and the opening of the Statler Hotel, so students of that era missed out on a year or more of this touchstone experience. “I am part of the lost generation,” wrote **Alan Tantleff '87**. “I do, however, have fond memories of the Sheraton Tripphammer. The kindly owner agreed to give free rein of the dining room to **Giuseppe** and his students to manage with the same enthusiasm as if it were the Four Seasons.”

Unfortunately, Alan was to be denied again—by the weather. “It snowed. And snowed. We did twelve covers. Even my friends didn’t come. In a class called

Quantity Food Service Production, Giuseppe took pity on us and gave us a grade based on quality, not quantity.”

**Jim Coyle '87** also witnessed the end of the Statler Inn. “My most vivid memory of Statler would be after my last MOD [manager on duty] shift my senior year. A classmate, **Peter Egan '87**, and I were sitting on the roof of the old building late one afternoon, having a beer, and looking down into the gaping hole where construction of the new Statler was started. Being the MOD, I had keys to the roof and enjoyed many sunsets up there (off the clock, of course!). With our legs dangling over the edge of the building, Peter said that our graduating class of 1987 was the ‘end of an era’ and that the hotel school would never be the same. Being restaurant guys, we lamented that the hotel school was becoming a business school and that students like us would be fewer and farther between. It hit me that my Cornell experience was coming to a rapid end, and that it would move on without me. Whenever I visit Statler, I marvel at what became of that ‘gaping hole’ and smile, knowing that the foundation of that building is at least partially supported by two empty cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon.”

**Rylan Winslow Hutzler '91** was part of the opening crew at the Statler in 1989, and she discovered that some kinks still needed to be worked out. “I was hired to work the front desk. We all had to learn the new building and systems together, which was a fun but stressful experience. No one was an expert in the software, so we all ended up learning as we went.





"Those first few busy shifts struggling to generate room bills or check in guests were quite a lesson in keeping calm under pressure! I will also never forget the first weekend when the hotel was full; I think it was graduation. We had no experience with this level of activity and were wildly understaffed in every area. I remember staying well past shift end to help park cars for all the guests coming in late, and running back from the parking garage by athletic fields (our tiny lot was full) in the freezing cold in my front desk suit and heels. Good times!"

**Ferg Jansen '67** worked as a bartender and wine steward in the main dining room and the Rathskeller. "I remember most that we were serving guests Chateau Latour 1959 for under \$10/bottle (and they often did not consume the whole bottle...which we took care of). [IF I HAD BOUGHT 20 CASES, I COULD RETIRE!!]

The drink for many women was Lillet. Sherries and German whites were big at Statler in the early '60s. Budweiser kegs were \$13.50/half (now \$60?), and you got one in ten free as a bonus.

**Bruno Klohoker**, the national Michelob sales representative, used to come to the Rat and drink Old Granddad on the rocks. The exposure to people like **Bill Shill** from Great Western, **Charles Fournier** of Gold Seal, and **Walter Taylor** of Bully Hill was a fantastic learning experience. I feel I definitely ended up in operations (still) because of my Statler work experience."

**Dick Fors '59** began working at the Statler his first day on campus. "My experience was invaluable, as were the earnings and the employee meals (the best food on campus). I worked in the dining room and catering departments. Once a week or so, a waiter was designated as the sommelier. This provided two additional advantages, tasting the wine and much better gratuities for the evening. I also remember that, in those days in the banquet department, cocktails were normally served as a choice on a huge tray of either Manhattans or martinis, straight up. Hope you don't think it is strange that my memories are only of alcohol. It really wasn't that way. I learned a great deal and was paid well."

**Richard Ahlfeld '68** worked the front desk as a freshman. "The telephone switchboard had cords to connect the calls...vintage! Remember that all of the guests were cordial, realizing they were meeting students. The Statler at that time was 'original,' feeling dated and with very small guest rooms."

## Statler memories continued

**Abbie Bookbinder Meyer '83** also remembers some vintage technology. "I worked at Statler my junior and senior years. I loved working there. I worked either the front desk or the boutique. I always worked front desk at night, and I still remember being so nervous hand-setting the clock that we had to set for all the wake-up calls the next morning. I was always afraid someone might not get theirs. The boutique, as it was called, was just a window where we sold candy, gum, and magazines, not an actual store like they have now. The job paid well for Ithaca, and I really liked that!"

**Ziggy Hacohen '63** "enjoyed every moment" of his four years at the Statler. "I worked in reception, as a waiter in Banquets and the dining room, in the kitchen, and in any other job they needed. I do hope the tradition continues. In 1963 I returned to Israel and managed various hotels. I am still managing the ABRATEL Suites Hotel in Tel-Aviv and still lecture in the university."

**Rachel Roginsky '79** tended the hotel bar one night a week. "I remember that I made a lot of Manhattans—this must have been the favorite drink for older hotel guests. Maybe the guests ordered this type of drink because they wanted to see if the hotel school taught me how to 'muddle' the fruit. My second memory is orange Goldfish crackers. As a student on a budget, I often came to work hungry. I think the nights that I bartended, I ate Goldfish for dinner."

**Ron Watanabe '69** got a rude welcome from one faculty member when he arrived at Cornell in the spring of 1967. "My most amusing and humbling memory of working at Statler was during the orientation class that had us working as waiters in the faculty dining room. I started school just weeks after I left the Pentagon as an Army captain. I had very short-cropped hair at a time when most men at Cornell sported long hair. One of the faculty members I was serving asked, 'Why do you have a crew cut?' My response to her was, 'Last week I was a captain, today I'm a waiter.' Working at Statler taught me how to deal with difficult, demanding, and interesting guests."





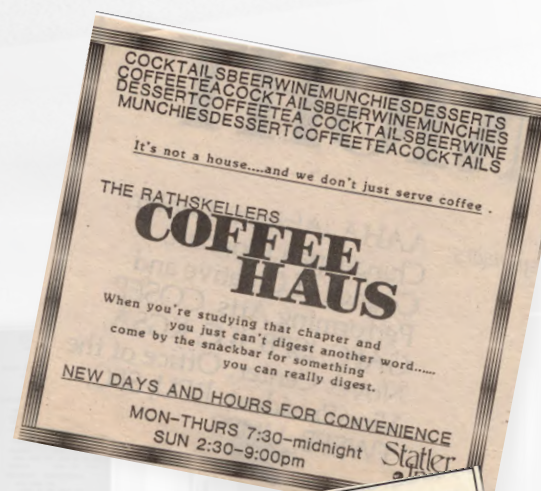
**Sean Alexander '94, MBA '01** is one of many respondents who appreciated the money they earned working at the Statler. "I spent three years working as a bellhop. This was, and probably still is, a choice job for a struggling student such as I was. The tips, especially after a home football game win, paid for rent, food, and, most importantly, pitchers of beer. At the time, a good tip was \$5, while the best I ever received was \$100. Besides the financial benefits, I remember waking up early on Saturdays or Sundays for a 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. start, which often involved a quick trip in the hotel van to Dunkin' Donuts to grab breakfast for the team! Shifts moved quickly, with an ongoing mix of valet parking, luggage delivery, and airport pickups. Speaking with Statler guests always provided a great opportunity to listen to alumni reminisce about their experiences at Cornell."

**Michael Avery '55** is another. "I started as a bellman in the fall of 1952 working for **Bill Conner** and really enjoyed meeting new people. At one time I registered one of the Hiltons, either **Conrad Jr.** or **Barron Hilton**, a big deal at that time. Also, the tips received gave me some pocket money, so it wasn't necessary to ask my parents for working capital during my undergraduate years."

the summer of 1955," he said, because by then he was no longer working the front desk and his schedule revolved around tending the service bar. "I would open a service bar at 11:00 a.m., close it around 3:00 p.m., go home to sleep, open the service bar at 5:00 p.m., close it around 11:00 p.m., then go to the front desk to do the night audit until 7:00 a.m., go home to sleep, and start the cycle over at 11:00 a.m. Of course, I got very tired but put a lot of money in my pocket."

"When I reflect on my experiences at the front desk and the service bars at the Statler Inn, I do it with a smile. I had a great time, truly enjoyed the people I met and worked with, and ended up with spending money, which always helped a young college student. Each time I return to the campus and stay at the Statler Hotel, I also smile and remember when this was a small, 32-room inn where I worked for almost three years."

"For my senior year as the room clerk, I did the night audit when the person who normally worked the overnight shift was on vacation. This resulted in an interesting logistical challenge for me during the two weeks when I was asked to do the night audit in



My home  
at the crossroads:

# Istanbul



By Deniz  
Omurgonulsen '00







# bul

When Ted Teng '79, my boss and CEO of The Leading Hotels of the World, realized that every business trip I was taking had a connection through Istanbul, he knew I was up to something. TK1 IST-JFK and TK2 JFK-IST had become my commuter planes.

The answer was simple; I had fallen in love. Yes, this strong-headed career woman who had no other aspiration than climbing to the top had now fallen head-over-heels for a Turkish man. The 5,000 miles between us did not keep us from tying the knot and waving good-bye to another fascinating city of the world, New York. As my best friend, Daphne Tan '00, got me into the yellow cab with a "Bride to Be" T-shirt and "I Love New York" playing on the radio, I knew I was off to another magical city.

A section of the vast Basilica Cistern, built during the reign of Byzantine emperor Justinian in 532. It is the largest of several hundred cisterns built beneath Istanbul.

For nearly three years now, I have been waking up to an incredible source of energy in Istanbul—in every sense a crossroads to Europe and Asia. Every day is full of magical surprises. From the hustle and bustle of the Old City, with its magnificent sites like the Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, and the Grand Bazaar, to the sophisticated destinations like Tarabya and Nisantasi—the city has many marvels to offer.

## A tourist at home

Noyan and I decided to skip a big wedding, so a celebration with Hotelies was a must for our first anniversary. Phil '83 and Yasamin Miller; Andreas '00 and Terri Scriven; Danielle '00 and Stephen, ENG '00, M ENG '01 Caldwell; Steve '00, Jamie, Max, and Jack Walker; Francesca Pedemonti '01 and her husband, Jason; and Daphne and her partner, Shawn, were part of our "Celebrating Life" week. We started our journey on the Aegean Coast in Çeşme me, at Turkey's western end, continued to Izmir—the ancient Smyrna—and then worked our way



through the magnificent ruins of Ephesus and then moved on to Kuşadasi and Cappadocia before ending up in Istanbul for the final three days. After spending sixteen years in New York, it was exciting to be a tourist at home.

The first two days we explored the Old City. For your first visit in Istanbul, you must save at least two days for this part of town, where a mosque, a synagogue, and a church stand side-by-side in peace. The Hagia Sophia, one of the world's great architectural masterpieces, has withstood earthquakes (with dome collapses) and invasions for nearly 1,500 years. It was inaugurated in 537, on the order of Emperor Justinian, as an Eastern Orthodox cathedral (for nearly a millen-

nium the largest in the world) and seat of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It was converted to a mosque in 1453 after the city was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, and then secularized and opened as a museum in 1935 by order of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic. Hagia Sophia was chosen as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985. It is one of the world's greatest examples of Byzantine architecture.

Down the street is the historic and magnificent Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet



Deniz Omurgonulsen '00 and friends visit the Blue Mosque. Standing, from left: Stephen Caldwell ENG '00, M ENG '01, Francesca Pedemonti '01, Terri and Andreas Scriven '00, Daphne Tan '00, Shawn Hill, Phil Miller '83, Danielle Chan, Yasamin Miller, Omurgonulsen, and Jason Roswig; in front: Max, Steve '00, Jack, and Jamie Walker



Camii), which was built from 1609 to 1616. In addition to its main dome, eight secondary domes, and six minarets, the Blue Mosque is fronted by a majestic courtyard bounded by a curving vaulted arcade. This huge edifice is named for the predominance of blue tiles in the elaborate mosaics covering its interior. As is common with mosques, it also contains a tomb of the founder as well as a madrasa and a hospice. It is still an active place of worship, so all visitors must remove their shoes, and women must cover their hair before entering.

We set aside half a day to see the Topkapı Palace, home of the sultans of the Ottoman Empire for about 400 of their 624 years in power. Following the end of

their reign in 1923, the Topkapı Palace was transformed into a museum of the Imperial Era. If you need further inspiration to visit the palace, search YouTube for *Magnificent Century*, a soap opera that tells the story of Suleyman the Magnificent and his glorious lifestyle, including the love of his life, Hurrem Sultan, his victories, and all the schemes of the court. You can see the impressions of the beautiful gardens along with the lavish courtyards, pavilions, harem, library, Imperial Council, bedrooms, kitchens, and the treasury! By far the most prized jewel in the treasury is the 86-carat, pear-shaped Spoonmaker's Diamond, which sits surrounded by 49 brilliant cut diamonds in two serried rows.

A few hours at the Grand Bazaar and the Spice Market are musts, especially for foodies! You will find all the spices that you require for any Middle Eastern recipe, including incredibly strong Turkish coffees and all sorts of teas. After visiting the sights, try a traditional Turkish bath (hammam). I must warn you, they will beat you up, but your skin will be as soft as a baby's once you are done with your "wash and foam."

In addition to the historical sites, the food experience in the city is exciting! There are a number of internationally recognized restaurateurs such as Morini,



The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque. Completed in 1616, it is still an active place of worship.



Zuma, and Papermoon. For me, however, there is nothing more authentic than a simple meze and fish dinner on the Bosphorus. Along the Bosphorus you can count on the “koys”—small villages such as Ortakoy, Arnavutkoy, and Yenikoy—to offer authentic cuisine. We had our meze and fish experience in a local restaurant in Ortakoy and followed it with a nightcap in Angelique—one of the hottest nightclubs.

The new and trendy part of town is called Beyoglu—a developing part of Taksim. Anytime I need some inspiration or a different perspective, I can count on a stroll through these streets to deliver that. It is common to see older men playing tavla (Turkish checkers) in traditional teahouses, while you will find young artists at work up and down the streets. A number of Beyoglu’s art galleries have become world famous for the painters they discover and represent.

The massive, 66.9-meter-high Galata Tower rises imposingly from the top of the hill in the city’s Galata/Karaköy quarter. Its high observation deck has long held strategic importance, as it affords a clear view of the harbor (the Golden Horn) and the Bosphorus beyond. Tourists today can take an elevator to the top and enjoy the magnificent view from the restaurant on an upper floor. A nightclub high in the tower features a Turkish show.

The tower was built by the Genoese in 1348 as the Christea Turris (Tower of Christ), 144 years after its Byzantine predecessor, which had stood at a nearby location for nearly 700 years, was destroyed by Crusaders during the Sack of Constantinople in 1203.

A favorite piece of Galata Tower lore has endured since a traveler noted it in a three-line journal entry around 1630. The story has it that a very determined aviator by the name of Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi managed to fly from the Galata Tower to Üsküdar, two miles away on the Asian side of Istanbul, using eagle wings, and thus to have made the first “transcontinental” flight. I guess the success of Turkish Airlines stems from our earlier ancestors.

Returning to the present, we Hotelies ended our weeklong celebration with a boat tour on the Bosphorus followed by drinks at Ciragan Palace Kempinski, a member of LHW. If you are inspired by this trip, I hope you will attend the CHS EMEA Annual Meeting in Istanbul next year. Save the date!

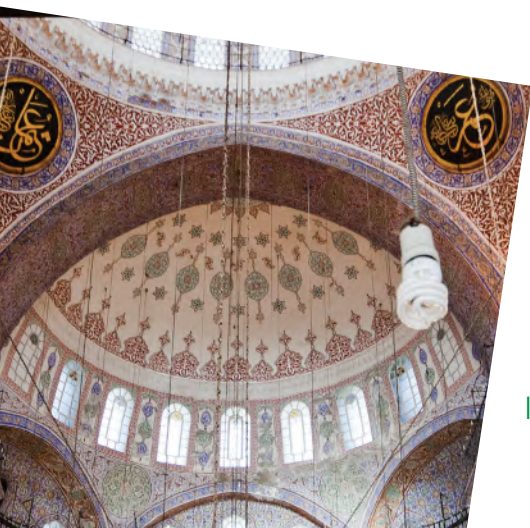
### Business at home

Despite the political unrest that surfaced in the “Gezi Park” protests of June 2013, Turkey has proven that its success in the tourism industry is sustainable. It still carries great potential for investment, but roving through this “emerging” market requires local connections and knowledge.

With nearly 35 million visitors in 2013—up ten percent from 2012—Turkey has maintained its position as the world’s seventh-most visited country. According to the International Monetary Fund, the Turkish economy grew four percent in 2013 while the GDP for Emerging Europe grew two percent, the Euro Area lost

four-tenths of a percent, and Advanced Europe stayed flat. These figures suggest that Turkey presents a strong economic outlook compared to other European countries. According to the Global Macro Outlook 2013-2015 report, published by Moody’s in November 2013, Turkey is expected to be the fifth-fastest emerging country among the top twenty world economies.

Although hotels’ average daily rate and occupancy declined toward the end of 2013—a reflection of the travel warnings—the first quarter of 2014 looked strong. Jones Lang LaSalle’s Istanbul office suggests that the published investment clock still indicates a position of investor interest in this market.



Koray Erayla

### Inside the Blue Mosque



Koray Erayla





Omurgonulsen and her husband, Noyan Altug

Taking advantage of this great market, we at LHW recently added three new members in Turkey. In addition to our long-standing members, the Çırağan Palace Kempinski and Swissôtel the Bosphorus, we welcomed the Grand Tarabya, D-Hotel Maris, and Golden Savoy Bordum as LHW members.

### Home at home

People believe that if they “have” something (more time, more money, more love) and they can “do” the things (take up a hobby, go on vacation, buy a home, get married) that they want to do, they will “be” something (happy, peaceful,

successful). For me it is the opposite. The be-do-have paradigm is a way of life for me. First I just “be” the thing called “successful” or “happy” (or whatever), then I start doing the things from this starting point of being and I discover that everything I do brings me the very things I always wanted to “have.” This is what success means for me—to just “be.”

### I am lucky.

I was born into an incredible family, in 1978 in Izmir. With both parents coming from hospitality backgrounds, I knew from early on that I wanted to be in the “people” business.

I remember watching my maternal grandmother, Suzan, baking all the time. She was the first to bring the patisserie culture to Izmir in the 1960s with Bonjour in Kordon. Integrity was a value I learned from her early on. She always suggested that we use the best of the best products to make sure that quality was never compromised.

Another inspiration was my paternal grandfather, Atif, who was at the time a legendary restaurateur managing hot spots like Atif Lokanta in Konak or Mogambo in Izmir Fuar. Kindness and

generosity were true to his being. I have learned that, no matter what you do in life, you have to be kind and generous, as life will be to you.

### I am successful.

I do the very thing I love to do. I serve. I lead.

In my role as vice president of The Leading Hotels of the World, I work with 430 hotels in 81 countries. I am surrounded by incredible stories that inspire me every day. Our purpose of being is to preserve, enhance, and invent the art of independent hotelkeeping, the very DNA I was born into. I travel the world to see the uniqueness of each culture and destination in our remarkably uncommon hotels, but also find there the commonalities of all human nature.

### I am happy.

I wake up every day to a supporting husband and a family who love me for who I am and the person I strive to be. There is a reason why we are all here in this world. There is one life to live. And in my life, to live my purpose of “being” is what makes me happy.



Galata Tower



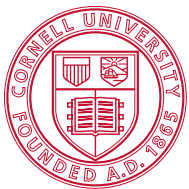
Koray Eray

# Where are the class notes?

The class notes are password-protected.  
To view them, click on the “Alumni version” link  
and log in here:

[www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/about/pubs/publications/hotelie.html](http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/about/pubs/publications/hotelie.html)





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