



CONTACT: Lisa Caliento, Communications Coordinator
Greater Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau
Tel: (413) 755-1345 or (413) 544-1827/E-mail: lcaliento@explorewesternmass.com

GSCVB NAMES 2019 HOWDY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Springfield, MA (May 20, 2019) — The Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau (GSCVB) honored 12 individuals (see list at end of release) from the hospitality industry on Monday, May 20th, during the 24th Annual Howdy Awards for Hospitality Excellence. The gala dinner, held at the Aria Ballroom at MGM Springfield, attracted more than 300 tourism industry professionals.

The awards, produced by the GSCVB, recognize front-line employees in the hospitality industry who go above and beyond in the performance of their duties and provide outstanding service to their guests and customers. By doing so, these hospitality professionals contribute to the economic vitality of the businesses they serve and the region overall.

The winners were chosen from among 57 finalists. The finalists were selected by the Howdy Awards Committee from more than 400 nominations among nine categories. The Committee also selected the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame to receive the Spotlight Award, which recognizes individuals or organizations for their dedication and outstanding contribution to the region's hospitality industry. The People's Choice Award which is driven by social media via the Howdy Awards Facebook page was also presented.

“We’re proud and happy to present the Howdy Awards to honor just some of the most important people in the hospitality industry, the frontline workers,” said GSCVB President Mary Kay Wydra. “They are usually the first person a visitor encounters, and if they’re especially nice and go above and beyond, that visitor is

likely to return to that – and other – tourism locations.”

The Howdy Awards program consists of a nomination process for which any hospitality service provider in the region is eligible - regardless of whether their organization is a GSCVB member. Three respected industry leaders selected from outside Western Mass judged the finalists, and selected the winners in each category. The judges for this year's event included Michael Quinlan of Commonwealth Marketing Office, Cindy Brown of Boston Duck Tours and Steve Mills of Constellation Brands.

Each Howdy award winner received a decorative glass Hospitality Excellence Award, a framed certificate of achievement and a custom gift bag filled with gift certificates and other items from the region's top tourism establishments.

Sponsors for the 2019 Howdy Awards for Hospitality Excellence include MGM Springfield, Yankee Candle Company, Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, WWLP TV-22, Aladco Linen Co, Baystate Health, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority, Freedom Credit Union, Masslive.com, Performance Foodservice, Williams Distributing, IHeart Media, Eastern States Exposition and *The Republican*.

The GSCVB, an affiliate of the Economic Development Council of Western MA, is a private non-profit destination marketing organization dedicated to promoting Western Mass for meetings and conventions, group tours, sports and leisure travel. For more information on the GSCVB, visit www.ExploreWesternMass.com or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ExploreWesternMass and follow us on twitter using handle @XploreWesternMA. Engage with us using #westernmass.

GREATER SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU
2019 HOWDY AWARD WINNERS FOR HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE

In the category of **Accommodations:**

Robin Brown, Director of Sales
Inn on Boltwood, Amherst

In the category of **Attractions:**

George Church, Guide
Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge

In the category of **Banquet & Meetings:**

Colin Shevlin, Lead Server
The Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting House, Holyoke

In the category of **Beverage:**

Cindy Liverpool – Bartender
The Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting House, Holyoke

In the category of **Food - Casual:**

Louanne Lortie, Owner
Lou's Bagel Nook, Hampden

In the category of **Food - Tableside**

Brianna Robles, Server
Red Robin, Holyoke

In the category of **Public Service:**

Lea Rivkin, Patient Advocate
Baystate Health System – Springfield

In the category of **Retail:**

Tammy Campbell, Retail Associate
Kringle Candle Company, Bernardston

In the category of **Transportation**

Michael Cruise, Director of Customer Care
Peter Pan Bus Lines – Springfield

Spotlight Winner:

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Springfield

2019 People's Choice Winner:

January Russell, Horace Mann Insurance, Agawam
& Patrick Bienvenue, The Student Prince, Springfield

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