

# 2019 IFEA AWARDS LUNCHEON



September 25, 2019



C F E E

CERTIFIED FESTIVAL AND EVENT EXECUTIVE

Luncheon Sponsored By

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# 2019 IFEA AWARDS LUNCHEON



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**Karen Churchard, CFEE**

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International Festivals & Events Association  
**IFE A World**

**2019 IFEA**

# **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**



## **LuAnn Chapman Gatts**

**Nominated by the  
Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Grapevine, TX, USA**

All of us in the festivals and events industry recognize the irreplaceable value provided by countless community volunteers around the world. Through the IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award we recognize and pay tribute to all of those outstanding individuals whose unselfish and dedicated service allows our industry to continue bonding our communities together and touching the world.

The International Festivals & Events Association is pleased to announce LuAnn Chapman Gatts from the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau as the recipient of the 2019 IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award.

As this year's winner, LuAnn will be the guest of the IFEA at the IFEA's 64th Annual Convention, Expo & Retreat, presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, September 25-27, 2019 in Colonial Williamsburg, VA, USA. She will be recognized and presented with her award during the IFEA Awards Luncheon sponsored by Eventeny, on Wednesday, September 25, 2019.

LuAnn Chapman Gatts has been an outstanding volunteer for both of Grapevine's annual festivals for many years. Her expertise, relationship with vendors, and willingness to give countless hours every year make her a vital part of the success of both Main Street Fest and GrapeFest.

LuAnn oversees load-in of vendors at both festivals; manages the food vendors; is co-supervisor for admission gates; and part of the leadership team of People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic. She does all of this with enthusiasm, positive attitude and energy. She gives 14+ hours every day of the festival and countless hours before and after to ensure the success of the festival.

LuAnn's involvement began in 2001 at Main Street Days where she volunteered for the Heritage Ambucs, a local service group, as a gate attendant. During load-out, she was able to help get vendors off the street efficiently and kept the normal chaos under control. She was awarded the Joey Kramer Volunteer award and invited to be on the steering committee for 2001 GrapeFest.

After becoming the Food Vendor chair in 2002, LuAnn realized that vendor check-out needed to be overhauled. She invited the vendors to bring left over food to share to give the time waiting at check out more of a party feeling. She is able to ensure that the vendor not only receives their pay-out but leaves satisfied and ready to sign-up for the next festival all while making the time go much quicker.

In the early days of Grapevine's festivals, the emergency management team consisted of the Director of Festivals and Events, the Fire Marshall, and a police lieutenant. LuAnn quickly became part of this team. She could diffuse many problems with a smile, a joke or her famous tag line "Hey, I'm just a volunteer".

When LuAnn learned that Gayle Hall, Grapevine's Director of Festivals and Events, needed help from someone with computer skills, they would work together

on many of the operational and logistical festival requirements, including developing the festival plan of work and inputting all needs/requirements into Excel so that the set-up team could do a more efficient job during the load-in process.

As Vendor chair, LuAnn noticed that there was no information on where artisans were located. She put together a directory of vendors both by location and category. She also designed the pocket size volunteer handbook that is still updated each festival.

In 2007, LuAnn became part of the GrapeFest People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic leadership team. Her initial job was to move from hand vote counting to scanned electronic ballots. This helped on the integrity side as well as time involved. She helped produce the wine reference guide, participates in the wine ordering and developed the signage for the wineries. She "recruited" her two high school aged sons to assist with the heavy lifting in between sessions. After they graduated, she worked with local schools to fill this assignment. With the rest of the People's Choice leadership, LuAnn has helped grow the event to 11 sessions and over 7,500 attendees.

LuAnn is the go-to person for new events. She chaired the Professionals Only Wine Tasting when the CVB was working to add more Texas wines in Dallas/Fort Worth area restaurants. Her enthusiasm and willingness to do whatever is necessary was also evident when the new Culinary area was added at GrapeFest in 2004. Though she is notorious for not cooking, she can be quite the foodie, so she was willing to chair this event and develop it as a new venue.

LuAnn has participated in festival exchanges with the National Cherry Festival and Heritage Harbor Days. When other festivals visit Grapevine, she helps with tours of the festival. She serves on the Vendor Selection Committee for both festivals and is part of the team that collects tickets at the end of each evening. LuAnn

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# PAST IFEA VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

**2001**

**John Johnson**

Nominated by SunFest  
Palm Beach County, Florida

**2002**

**John Altadonna**

Nominated by the Autumn Leaf Festival  
Clarion, Pennsylvania

**2003**

**Tad Fraizer**

Nominated by Updowntowners  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**2004**

**Ray Griffin**

Nominated by Cityfolk  
Dayton, Ohio

**2005**

**Lisa Collins**

Nominated by the  
Memphis in May International Festival  
Memphis, Tennessee

**2006**

**Doreen Ravenscroft**

Nominated by Waco Cultural Arts Fest  
Waco, Texas

**2007**

**Dave Carter**

Nominated by Wichita Festivals, Inc.  
Wichita, Kansas

**2008**

**Randy Hawthorne**

Nominated by Updowntowners, Inc.  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**2009**

**Gayl Doster**

Nominated by Music for All  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**2010**

**Mary Jo Sartain**

Nominated by Tulsa International Mayfest  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

**2011**

**Alex Freeman**

Nominated by the Kentucky Derby Festival,  
Louisville, Kentucky

**2012**

**Charlie Clint**

Nominated by the Portland Rose Festival,  
Portland, Oregon

**2013**

**Christopher Protho, M.Ed.**

Nominated by Music for All  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**2014**

**Mary Bernaski**

Nominated by  
BorderFest Association and Festival of Lights  
Hidalgo, Texas

**2015**

**Marinus Rouw**

Nominated by the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival  
Mount Vernon, Washington

**2016**

**Barbara Ehrlich**

Nominated by the  
National Cherry Blossom Festival  
Washington, D.C.

**2017**

**Becky Browder**

Nominated by  
Riverbend Festival  
Chattanooga, TN

**2018**

**Jean A. Lawler**

Nominated by  
North Carolina Azalea Festival  
Wilmington, NC



2019  
IFEA WORLD  
FESTIVAL & EVENT CITY<sup>®</sup>  
AWARD PROGRAM

# AWARD RECIPIENTS

The *IFEA World Festival & Event City Award*, was designed and created as a way for the global festivals and events industry to openly encourage, support and recognize positive local environments for festivals and events worldwide. Festivals and events create tremendous community and economic capital in the markets that they serve, but the partnership with and support from the local community, at all levels, is critical to the success and sustainability of existing festivals and events, as well as the ability to attract and encourage new events. The IFEA is pleased to recognize and fly the flag of those cities and markets who have worked, through concerted efforts, to provide an environment conducive to successful festivals and events.

Celebrating 10 years of recognizing the best in City - Event partnerships worldwide.

For more information on the  
2019 IFEA WORLD FESTIVAL & EVENT CITY WINNERS,  
go to [www.ifea.com](http://www.ifea.com)



International Festivals & Events Association  
**IFEFA World**

# 2019 IFEA HALL OF FAME



The International Festivals & Events Association is pleased to announce the induction of one of the festivals and events industry's finest professionals into its prestigious IFEA Hall of Fame – Chuck O'Connor, CFEE, Principal Consultant, Event Marketing Group, LLC, Traverse City, MI, USA

Known as the association's most prestigious honor, the IFEA Hall of Fame recognizes those outstanding individuals who, through their exceptional work and achievements, have made a significant contribution to the Festivals and Events Industry and a profound difference in the communities they serve. Induction into the Hall of Fame is considered the highest of industry honors. Selected by a global committee of his industry-peers, Chuck joins the prestigious ranks of 56 others inducted into the hall over the past 28 years.



**Chuck O'Connor, CFEE**  
**Principal Consultant**  
**Event Marketing Group, LLC**  
**Traverse City, MI, USA**

In his advice book, 'Don't Sweat the Small Stuff', author Richard Carlson says 'Don't struggle against the natural flow of experience'. That bit of instruction could be the storyboard for Chuck O'Connor's early work life.

Born in southern Michigan, the eldest of eleven children, Chuck's early 'flow of work experience' found him in various unrelated professions, from managing a production line at an aluminum anodizing plant, to running the front desk of a Holiday Inn, to selling specialty coatings for Allied Chemical Corporation. Finally, he became a partner and sales manager for a tennis court & running track surface



coatings company in the Detroit area throughout the late '70's.

But that all changed when he married his wife, Gail, in 1980 and made the BOLD CHOICE to sell his share of the business back to his partners, and pick up, re-locate, and start all over in beautiful northern Michigan.

Key takeaway: "Learning what you DON'T want to do for a living is as important as finding your true calling!" For Chuck... it was marketing, negotiations and SALES!

Enter – the crazy world of MEDIA! Hired by a local radio station in 1981, Chuck hit the streets as a radio rep, selling 30-second spots to retail customers in Traverse City, Michigan. After three years of learning the ropes, he was offered a sales position at the local NBC television station. That led to a promotion to General Sales Manager, followed by a better offer from a bigger CBS station, where he managed sales and also directed their affiliate national spot sales effort. Times were good!

Meanwhile, Chuck and Gail had started their family, and Chuck's job-related travel lost its appeal. In 1993 - with two young sons - Chuck took another chance and joined the National Cherry Festival as its Marketing Director, charged with developing a sustainable corporate sponsorship platform. At the Cherry Festival, negotiating partnerships to the mutual benefit of the Festival and its sponsors, played right into his wheelhouse. But he would need to learn the business.... His early career path resembled anything BUT the Festivals & Events industry.

Chuck credits much of his education and success in the sponsorship business to the excellent networking opportunities through IFEA and IEG conferences. He also honed his presenting skills through Dale Carnegie training courses. He was an early CFEE program graduate, and as he became more proficient, he gave back by conducting sponsorship and onsite marketing presentations and we-

binars for IFEA, IEG, MFEA, Chambers of Commerce, and numerous festivals and events across the country. In 2008, Chuck taught the sponsorship section of the then newly-developed CFEE Fast-Track program to a group of festival representatives in Honolulu, which the Hawaii Tourism Authority had assembled to help re-invent and grow their businesses.

Over the last 25 years Chuck tried to maintain continuity as the Cherry Festival grew and evolved under 5 different executive directors, each with unique visions for the organization. He grew sponsorship investment to over one-million dollars annually, helping to ensure that the traditions of the nearly 100-year-old festival, driving tourism and commerce, would endure.

At the same time, he acted as a key liaison to the cherry industry - something that he was proud to do, especially because he and his family lived in the heart of Leelanau County's cherry-growing region. Both of his sons worked for nearly eight summers for a local cherry farmer, learning a farmer's excellent work ethic and contributing to the cost of their college educations. And while Gail never worked in the industry, she sure enjoyed introducing family and visitors to the area by taking them hand-picking cherries every summer! To their parents' delight, their two sons, now in their early thirties, were both blessed with daughters last year!

In 2001, Chuck founded EMG – Event Marketing Group, and began consulting and representing a number of other established and start-up special events, leveraging his network of contacts to mutual benefit. Among them: the Iceman Cometh Mountain Bike Challenge; the Great Lakes Equestrian Festival; the M-22 Challenge Triathlon; National Writers Series; Traverse City Film Festival; the Great Lakes Winter Trails Council; and the North American VASA cross-country ski race series.

But, as satisfying as the 'art of the deal' was, it was something else that became

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International Festivals & Events Association  
**IFEFA World**

# 2019 IFEA HALL OF FAME



The International Festivals & Events Association is pleased to announce the induction of one of the festivals and events industry's finest professionals into its prestigious IFEA Hall of Fame – Tom Bisignano, CFEE, Freelance Producer, Orlando, Florida, United States.

Known as the association's most prestigious honor, the IFEA Hall of Fame recognizes those outstanding individuals who, through their exceptional work and achievements, have made a significant contribution to the Festivals and Events Industry and a profound difference in the communities they serve. Induction into the Hall of Fame is considered the highest of industry honors. Selected by a global committee of his industry-peers, Tom joins the prestigious ranks of 56 others inducted into the hall over the past 28 years.



**Tom Bisignano, CFEE**  
**Freelance Producer**  
**Orlando, Florida, United States**

From a very young age Tom knew he wanted to be part of the celebration, no matter what it was. Growing up in a large Italian family there was always a gathering on the calendar - weddings, baptisms, graduations, and holidays were always celebrated with great fanfare. This early initiation into the world of celebrations would lay the foundation for a nearly 40-year career in the events industry.

Today, Tom is an Executive Producer of live shows, spectaculars and special events. He has a diverse blend of talents with an extensive background in the ideation, creation and delivery of large-scale events and entertainment productions.

Tom believes festivals and events are unique art forms that should educate as well as surprise and delight guests. "They ought to make you think, laugh, dance, cheer and sometimes weep". He considers himself a bit of an alchemist, connecting different experiences and always searching to see what he can bring together for the next event. His goal is to wow the guests with something new and unexpected each and every time. He embraces the quote from Walt Disney, "If you can dream it, you can do it!"

Having worked in both the theme-park world as well as large scale special events, Tom has a unique background. He spent the early years of his career at Walt Disney World Creative Entertainment. It was there that he managed and produced countless special events for Disney. Some of the highlights include the 75-city tour promoting the Disney MGM Studios, two Superbowl Half Time Shows, the opening ceremony of the Pan American Games, The LiMOUSEine Tour, The EarForce One Tour, Disney parade units in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the Chicago Magnificent Mile Holiday Parade.

Tom moved from Disney's Creative Entertainment to the Marketing Division for Walt Disney Parks & Resorts where he was Director of Special Events for fourteen years. In this role he was responsible for organizing thousands of special events and festivals for Disney. Tom and his team oversaw a portfolio of 11 annual attendance and revenue generating signature events at Disney Theme Parks; like the award-winning EPCOT International Food & Wine Festival, the EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival, the ever-popular Mickey's Not so Scary Halloween Party and Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party. In addition, Tom was responsible for producing the activities surrounding Disney's media and PR events. Highlights include the grand opening of Disney's Animal Kingdom, The 100 Years of Magic Year-long celebration, the christening of the Disney Magic and Disney Wonder

Cruise Ships, Disney's Dreamers Academy and Disney's Kids Day Celebration.

After 25 years at Disney, Tom decided to venture out on his own and become a Freelance Producer. Tom has developed, produced and delivered ceremonies and special events with a myriad of companies around the world. Working with FiveCurrents, a firm that specializes in creating live content, Tom produced the Emmy-nominated opening ceremony of The Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, the 1st ever European Games opening and closing ceremonies in Baku, Azerbaijan and The National Day Celebration for Sheikha Maryam bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

In 2011, on behalf of the IFEA, Tom was asked by the Saudi Commission on Antiquities and Tourism to deliver an event assessment for one of the oldest events in the world, Souq Okaz. Under the direction of HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman Al Saud, Tom laid the foundation to expand Souq Okaz into a destination driving festival to encourage travel and tourism to Saudi Arabia.

Closer to home, Tom worked with Sea World Parks to develop the programs surrounding their 50th anniversary, the "Sea of Surprises Celebration". The assignment included integrating all the divisions of the three Sea World parks to drive awareness and attendance during the 15 month-long Special Event.

Rounding out his theme park experience in Orlando, Tom spent a year at Universal Studios as the Senior Director of Entertainment Events. During his tenure at Universal he was the executive in charge for the grand opening of Universal's newest theme park, Volcano Bay, and produced the opening festivities for the attraction "Race through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon".

Recently Tom produced the opening and closing ceremonies for the Department of Defense Warrior Games. The games showcase the incredible potential of

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# HALL OF FAME



International Festivals & Events Association  
**IFE A World**

## 1992

### **Martin Hanson**

National Nederlands Wintercircus

### **Ned Harden**

Circleville, Ohio Pumpkin Show

### **Josephine Hauck, CFEE (d)**

Indianapolis 500 Festival

### **Dan Mangeot, CFEE (d)**

Kentucky Derby Festival

## 1993

### **Janice Meyer, CFEE**

Pro Football Hall of Fame Festival

### **Don Whitely, CFEE (d)**

Argonne Parades, Inc.

### **George Zambelli (d)**

Zambelli Fireworks Internationale

## 1994

### **Max Colwell (d)**

Pasadena Tournament of Roses

### **Col. Iain Ferguson, O.B.E.**

The Royal Tournament

### **John Geisler (d)**

St. Paul Winter Carnival

### **Marlene Pedroza, CFEE**

Fiesta San Antonio Commission

## 1995

### **Hans Horsting**

Communis Opinio, formerly Rotterdam C.C.

### **Ken Walstad (d)**

Minneapolis Aquatennial

## 1996

### **Carolyn Crayton, CFEE**

Macon Georgia's International Cherry Blossom Festival

### **John H.B. "Jack" French**

Pasadena Tournament of Roses

### **Jack Guthrie**

Guthrie/Mayes Public Relations

### **Richard Nicholls, CFEE (d)**

Gilroy Garlic Festival

## 1997

### **Clayton W. Hannon**

Portland Rose Festival

### **John G. Stewart, CFEE (d)**

La fete Columbienne des Enfants

### **JoAnn Ward**

Fond du Lac Convention & Visitors Bureau

## 1998

### **JoAnn Andera, CFEE**

Texas Folklife Festival

### **William Lofthouse (d)**

Phoenix Decorating Company

### **Annie Sidro, Ph.D.**

Carnival Sans Frontieres

## 1999

### **Dennis Boese, CFEE**

Miller Brewing Company

### **Norm Langill**

One Reel/Bumbershoot

### **Jean McFaddin (d)**

Macy's Parade and Events

## 2000

### **Blaine Kern**

Kern Studios, Inc.

### **Eric L. Martin, Esq., CFEE**

Bands of America, Inc.

## 2000

**Lesla Ukman**

IEG, Inc.

**Barry Wilkins, OAM**

District Council of Mount Baker, Australia

## 2001

**Bruce Skinner, CFEE**

Bruce Skinner & Associates

## 2002

**Pat Corda, CFEE (d)**

Gator Bowl Association

**Zeren Earls**

First Night International

## 2003

**Colm Croffy**

Association of Irish Festivals & Events

**Robert (Bob) Jackson (d)**

Creative Consultant

**Sue Twyford, CFEE (d)**

SunFest

## 2004

**"K" Alferio, CFEE**

CITYCELEBRATIONS

**Bridget Sherrill, CFEE**

Kentucky Derby Festival

**Jim Thomson (d)**

Dynamic Displays

## 2005

**Sylvia Allen, CFEE**

Allen Consulting

**Ira Rosen, CFEE**

Entertainment On Location

**Joe Vera, III, CFEE**

Borderfest

## 2006

**Thérèse St-Onge, CFEE**

The National Capital Commission

## 2007

**Ron Simpson, CFEE**

RCS Productions

**Herb Melleney, CFEE**

the St. Petersburg Festival of States

**Kay Wolf, CFEE**

Dixie Flag

## 2008

**Muriel A. Anderson**

Hawai'i Tourism Authority

**Dr. Joe Goldblatt, CSEP**

Queen Margaret University

**Mike Berry, CFEE**

The Kentucky Derby Festival

## 2009

**Charlotte DeWitt, CFEE**

International Events, Ltd.

## 2010

**Kirk Hendrix**

Indy 500 Festival

## 2011

**Pete Van de Putte, CFEE**

*difest*<sup>®</sup>/Dixie Flag Event Services Team

## 2012

**Johan Moerman**

Rotterdam Festivals

## 2013

**Karen Churchard, CFEE**

Arizona Office of Tourism

## 2014

**Karen Scherberger, CFEE**

Norfolk Festevents, Ltd.

## 2015

**Nick Dodds**

Festivals & Events International

London, England

**Bruce Erley, CFEE**

Creative Strategies Group

## 2016

**William B. Flinn**

Pasadena Tournament of

Roses Association

## 2017

**Becky Genoways, CFEE**

Genoways Event Management

Rockford, IL

## 2018

**Bill O'Toole, CFEE**

Event Project Management System, Pty., Ltd.

Bondi Beach, NSW, Australia

\*(d) = deceased

**Continued from Page 5, 2019 IFEA Volunteer of the Year LuAnn Chapman Gatts**

also assists the Marketing team to provide information on wines and wineries for the People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic, despite having all the operational needs of the event happening simultaneously.

Festival Set-up has been streamlined by her addition of booth location signs in the window of the vendor vehicle. Her helping train vendors on the most effective ways to tear-down at the end of the festival has made the process more efficient.

In addition to her other festival responsibilities, she was made the Admission Gates co-chair in 2013. The gates are staffed by local school and civic groups and her team does all the training to these groups. LuAnn also recruits hard working volunteers into management roles for future festivals.

To LuAnn, it is much more than just being onsite open to close for the festivals. She also volunteers for other city-sponsored events in Grapevine. She has taught knitting at Nash Farm; works set-up and wrangles the judges for Butterfly Flutter-by; helps set-up on the Blessing of the Vines and has worked operations on the Grapevine Wine Trail.

LuAnn prepared the winning application for Grapevine when we won the IFEA World Festival and Event City award and has helped with many Pinnacle award entries.

As Chairperson of the 2010 GrapeFest, her motto was to have fun while you do great work. Her top 10 lists kept meetings moving and she was great at mixing volunteering and leadership.

In 2017, LuAnn was diagnosed with

breast cancer just before Main Street Fest. Fortunate not to have chemo or radiation, she delayed reconstruction surgery to allow for her to work her usual 14-hour days at GrapeFest.

As a leader, LuAnn trusts her volunteers to accomplish their tasks while she problem solves any unusual situation. Customer service is her credo, and she can always be found with her two-way radio on, taking off to help another volunteer or staff member with any number of interesting tasks, many of which are unrelated to her actual assignment.

Her involvement does not end with festivals and events in Grapevine. She is very active in other areas throughout the community. LuAnn has been on the Grapevine Heritage Foundation and PTA Board of Directors, is on the board of FOGSAC and Heritage AMBUCS, a current member of the Heritage Foundation, Grapevine Historical Society and is a charter member helping to form the Craft Brew Guild of Grapevine. This year she chaired the silent auction for the GCISD Education Foundation and operations for the AMBUC's charity bike ride.

Her enthusiasm, willingness to do whatever is necessary, love of her community, energy, positive attitude, vision, leadership and initiative are all reasons while LuAnn Chapman Gatts is IFEA's Volunteer of the Year.

Please help us congratulate our 2019 IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award Winner, LuAnn Chapman Gatts.

Please help us congratulate our 2018 IFEA Volunteer of the Year Award Winner, Jean A Lawler.

**Continued from Page 9, 2019 IFEA Hall of Fame Chuck O'Connor, CFEE**

more meaningful and gratifying over the years: Building lifelong friendships with the Cherry Festival's staff and volunteers. During the annual eight-day event Chuck came to be known for his signature 'safari hat', as he rode his bicycle throughout the property's venues and parade routes, with a smile and a wave for anyone who noticed.

Through his 35 years in media & special events, Chuck has accumulated a wealth of knowledge in his specialty, which he continues to share. He has personally mentored hundreds of people from the attendees at IFEA and IEG conferences, to past and current National Cherry Festival employees, and to other festivals and sponsorship professionals, teaching them how he became successful, and where he had made mistakes.

Now retired from active duty at the Cherry Festival, Chuck remains connected as a senior consultant. In his spare time, he enjoys sailing, backcountry skiing, hiking, cycling, playing guitar, and of course spending time with his wife and new granddaughters!

"Personally, I have known Chuck for 28 wonderful years. He has held many roles in my life: mentor, friend, confidant, role model, boss and employee. That said, the most important role he plays is that of a family member. Chuck is the biggest cheerleader in our National Cherry Festival "family". His personal demeanor and contagious enthusiasm for work and life makes all of us strive to be better people. Because of knowing Chuck O'Connor, we are better." (Kat Paye ~ Cherry Festival Executive Director)

Please help us congratulate our 2019 IFEA Hall of Fame inductee, Chuck OConnor, CFEE.

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**Continued from Page 11, 2019 IFEA Hall of Fame Tom Bisignano, CFEE**

wounded warriors through competitive sports. Tom believes "our industry really shines when we help others shine. No other event truly touches the heart like the Warrior Games. These brave men and women are true heroes". The patriotic ceremony was hosted by Jon Stewart and featured performances by Kelly Clarkson and Weezer.

Tom is humbled and honored for being chosen for induction into the IFEA Hall Of Fame. "What a privilege it is to be recognized by your peers, who are some of the best in the business". Thanks to his work with IFEA and the invaluable connections made through the organization, Tom has made lifelong friends with fellow colleagues in the event industry. "The IFEA has been instrumental in Festival and Event improvements and innovations. They have helped shape better event leaders who in turn have managed better event staffs which ultimately leads to a better guest experience for all at festivals and events."

He loves to ignite the creative flame when it comes to events. Tom has given count-

less speeches to event professionals and lectures to students around the world on lessons learned in his career. He truly enjoys attending events as much as producing them and has been fortunate enough to have been to some of the best in the world. "One of the bonuses of working in the event industry is benchmarking what our peers have created...it's not only enlightening, it's a ton of fun!"

Tom is a graduate of Fairfield University and attended The Crummer leadership program at Rollins College. He is a Certified Festival and Event Executive (CFEE) and has received The President's Volunteer Service Award from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. He has served as the Chairman of the World Board for the International Festival and Events Association and serves on the Board of Advisors to Pictureworks. He resides in Orlando, Florida with his wife Terri, daughter Kelsey and son Justin.

Please help us congratulate our 2019 IFEA Hall of Fame inductee, Tom Bisignano, CFEE.



# IFEA / HAAS & WILKERSON INSURANCE PINNACLE AWARDS

Today 5:15 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.  
In the Colony Ballroom

Join us as we put a memorable cap on the first day of the convention with the most anticipated event of the year. The IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Insurance Pinnacle Awards pay tribute to both creativity and excellence in multiple categories, from marketing to merchandise; operations to sponsorship; all leading up to the presentation of the coveted Grand Pinnacle Awards. This is the Academy Awards Ceremony for the festivals and events industry. The IFEA / Haas & Wilkerson Insurance Pinnacle Awards, recognizing festival and event excellence for 25 years, are proudly sponsored by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance. Don't miss this unopposed special event as we all wait to hear... "And the Pinnacle Award goes to..."

