



International Festivals & Events Association

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) and Zambelli Fireworks, Announce Alex Freeman from the Kentucky Derby Festival as the 2011 Volunteer of the Year

Boise, Idaho – The International Festivals & Events Association and Zambelli Fireworks are pleased to announce Alex Freeman from the Kentucky Derby Festival in Louisville, KY, as the recipient of the 2011 IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks Volunteer of the Year Award. As this year's winner, Alex will be the guest of the IFEA and Zambelli Fireworks at the IFEA's 56th Annual Convention & Expo, October 3-5, 2011 in Fort Worth, TX, where she will be recognized and presented with her award during the IFEA Hall of Fame Awards Luncheon on Monday, October 3rd, 2011.



Alex Freeman stood out among the other outstanding volunteer nominations for her enthusiasm and dedication as a volunteer for the Kentucky Derby Festival. The length and depth of Alex Freeman's involvement with the Kentucky Derby Festival can best be described in three words: forty one years. As a member of its board of directors for 18 years and as a "civilian" volunteer serving on event committees and helping with event production; Alex Freeman is and has been, a dedicated and dependable volunteer and she shows no signs of slowing down!

Alex first became involved with the Derby Festival when The Derby Festival's Great Balloon Race was first held; the same year Alex and her husband John started their balloon company, Air 'n' Mania. Together they have participated in the Balloon race a number of times and even won the event in 1980! Working on the inaugural Great Balloon Race was Alex's first foray as a Derby Festival volunteer and she hasn't looked back since.

It's hard to know where to start when it comes to describing the difference that Alex Freeman has had on the growth and success of the Kentucky Derby Festival over the past 41 years. Her impact and influence cannot be limited to a single event, or even a series of events. One would be hard pressed to imagine what the Festival would be like without her leadership – both as a volunteer and a board member. The Derby Festival is an infinitely better and stronger organization with the involvement of Alex Freeman and all the volunteers she has helped to recruit. Forty-one years is a mighty long run for any endeavor, but it's particularly remarkable that Alex remains as enthusiastic and supportive as ever.

To quote a current Derby Festival staff member: *"You can see Alex's love for this organization in everything she does. She is truly an ambassador for the Kentucky Derby Festival, always referencing the Festival within the community with pride. Most of all, I love that she always does it with a smile."*

For a more in depth look at Alex Freeman, [Click Here.](#)

Steve Rosenauer, Executive Director of the St. Mary's University Alumni Association/Fiesta Oyster Bake in San Antonio, TX and Chair of the 2011 Volunteer of the Year Committee for IFEA, said *"It is volunteers that most often determine an event's success. Festivals and events rely heavily on the dedication of volunteers. Without their spirit of involvement and commitment to their communities it would be difficult to pull off any event, large or small."* Rosenauer added that *"While ultimately only one person is selected for this high honor, hundreds of volunteers are recognized by IFEA's member organizations and affiliated associations. All of us in this industry recognize that volunteers are the backbone of our business."*

The late George Zambelli, Sr. of Zambelli Fireworks and sponsor of the award since its inception in 2001, summed it up well when he said *"imagine a world without the great blessing of volunteers; it would be a far different place. God bless them all."*

Headquartered in Boise, Idaho, the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) is *The Premiere Association Supporting and Enabling Festival & Event Professionals Worldwide*. In partnership with global affiliates under the umbrellas of IFEA Africa, IFEA Asia, IFEA Australia, IFEA Europe, IFEA Latin America, IFEA Middle East, and IFEA North America the organization's common vision is for *"A Globally United Industry that Touches Lives in a Positive Way through Celebration,"* The Association offers the most complete source of ideas, resources, information, education and networking for festival and event professionals worldwide. Visit the IFEA website at www.ifea.com for additional details.

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