

IFEA HALL OF FAME NOMINATION

A. Individual Submitting Nominee

1. Name, Organization, Address, Phone, Fax, Email

Vern Biaett, PhD, CFEE --- Chair or Nominating Committee
Faculty Associate
Arizona State University – School of Community Resources & Development
11116 West Sunflower Place
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Additional Members of Nominating Committee

Abbie Fink, HMAPR
Ken Koziol, Entertainment Solutions
Tracy Guerra, Fiesta Bowl
Terry Ricketts, Arizona Public Service
Rick Ripley, KJZZ 91.5 / KBACH 89.5 Public Radio

Endorsed by over 100 festival & event professionals networking under the group name of AZ Festival People

2. If your nominee is selected, will you be willing to help ensure that they attend the luncheon?

Yes

3. If your nominee is selected, will you be willing to assist the IFEA and the inductee in gathering materials to prepare their induction video?

Yes

B. Nominee Information

Karen Churchard, CFEE
Assistant Deputy Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
1110 W. Washington St., Suite 155
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C. Nomination Questions

- Please answer each of the following questions citing specific examples. Points will be awarded for each question. Points awarded are listed below.
- Please provide up to a one page response (single sided) for each of the below questions, for a maximum total of 4 (four) pages

1. Explain how your nominee has made a difference to the festival and events industry.

Karen Churchard is the premier festival and event professional in Arizona as well as recognized nationally and internationally for her contributions. She has been the festival and event professional face of almost every mega event in Arizona for more than 30 years. To say she has made a difference in the festival and events industry would be an understatement ... the better way to say that Karen has been the difference.

In 1983 the Fiesta Bowl became the first major college football bowl game to acquire a title sponsor – Sunkist. As part of a small staff at that time Karen was instrumental in ensuring two important aspects of sponsorship fulfillment – hospitality and branding, setting standards of excellence that are still used today, not only by the Fiesta Bowl, but many other bowl games and major festivals. The Fiesta Bowl was the first to insist that the title sponsor name must be part of every media mention, to develop a tiered level of corporate sponsorship for bowl games, and served as the immediate forerunner and model for the first-ever corporate-sponsored Olympics in 1984. For more than 20 years Karen was a pioneering force, the difference maker, behind many creative innovations at the Fiesta Bowl that quickly were adopted as industry standards.

Karen has been even more of a difference maker. She was the first in Arizona to really push the concept that festivals and events can have a major economic impact on a community and that community events need to place a greater emphasis on tourism. She established basic operational methods for major parades. Under her direction the Fiesta Bowl grew from a football game to a collection of 60 events including the Tempe Block Party and Fiesta Bowl Parade, both among the nation's top 10 New Year's events. When the Super Bowl and other internationally recognized events have come to Arizona, Karen is always the lead person that makes sure all the local boosters and politicians look good at the end of the day. She also served locally and nationally on many special events including: Phoenix Suns Celebration Parade, Chair (1993); 200th Anniversary of George Washington's Inauguration and Presidential Bicentennial (1989, New York City); Welcome Home America Parade (1991, New York City); Arizona Welcome Home to the Troops Parade, Chair (1991); Arizona Tourism Advisory Council (2004-2008); Arizona Governor's Film & Television Commission (2005-2008); and Arizona Historical Advisory Commission (2008-Current).

Finally, Arizona just celebrated its Centennial. Karen was appointed by the then Governor Janet Napolitano to direct the commission, however, with a change in state leadership the legislature opted to not provide funding for the celebration. Under Karen's direction the commission raised over \$10 million that will be talked about for years and serve as a model for future state celebrations. Without Karen it is doubtful that Arizona would have had much of a celebration. Karen was the difference.

2. Submit a general overview of your nominee's career, including organizations they have worked for, positions held, titles, awards, etc.

Karen has worked in the festivals and events industry her entire professional career spanning 32 years. During this time, she has been not only passionate about her career but has also been instrumental in elevating the importance of the special events industry.

1981 – 2002: Fiesta Bowl - For 21 years, beginning as an intern in 1981 and culminating as Vice President in 2002, Karen planned, created, produced and managed sporting events, festivals and special events for the community-based Fiesta Bowl with budgets ranging from thousands to multi-million dollars. While at the Fiesta Bowl, Karen wrote persuasive presentations and proposals that supported the successful selection to host major national events – the Bowl Championship Series and host city for the 1993 U.S. Figure Skating Championships. Following the successful selections, Karen was the primary organizer and producer for these major events.

2002 - 2007: KC Productions, Arizona Tourism Alliance - Karen formed KC Productions LLC in 2002 with Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau, Elite Racing and the City of Glendale being her primary clients. Highlights include: coordinated, prepared and responded to the National Football League's request for proposal to host Super Bowl XLII (2008), which Arizona was awarded; assisted with the planning and production of the inaugural Rock 'n' Roll Marathon (January 2004) the largest first-time annual running event; consultant to Glendale's city manager and staff in preparing for hosting three major sporting events -Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, Bowl Championship Series National Championship and Super Bowl XLII. While continuing her LLC, Karen was hired as President and CEO of the Arizona Tourism Alliance (ATA) in 2004, a non-profit association advocating the importance of the tourism and travel industry. While at ATA, Karen created the annual Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner now in its ninth year and elevated the annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism in both attendance and sponsorship making each a profitable and important element for the non-profit organization.

2008 - Present: Arizona Centennial / Arizona Office of Tourism - Asked by then Governor Janet Napolitano, Karen became employed by the State of Arizona to establish the Arizona Centennial Commission serving as its Director and ultimately to plan and direct the state's 100th anniversary of Statehood. In addition, she formed the Arizona Centennial 2012 Foundation organizing a high concentration of Signature Projects, Signature Events and promotions that began in July 2011 through February 2012. With no state appropriations, Karen and the board raised \$10.5 million and secured a \$5 million federal grant. Highlights include Best Fest events in Prescott (the largest event ever held in the town) and Phoenix – attracting 75,000 and 150,000 respectively; refurbishing the capitol's dome, historical markers, and creation of Centennial Way from downtown Phoenix to the capitol; and the sanctioning of over 100 statewide Centennial events.

Awards & Honors – Some recent highlights ... Karen has been recognized as: Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award, NAU Alumni Association (2006); Visitor Industry Champion Award, Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitors Bureau (2008); APS AzTEC "Big Kahuna" Lifetime Dedication to the Profession Award, AZ Festival People (2012); Tribute to Leaders, Public Sector Award, YWCA Maricopa County (2013).

3. Describe the level of involvement your nominee has had with IFEA during their career.

Karen joined and became actively involved in IFEA in 1983, both planning and attending her first IFEA convention in Phoenix that year. From that point on, Karen served as a volunteer in many capacities for IFEA conventions and conferences including being a speaker and providing written articles on many different subject matters for IFEA. Karen was one of the first to achieve status as a Certified Festival Executive (later CFEE). She was also the driving force behind a second Phoenix IFEA convention in 1999.

A long-time member of the IFEA Presidents Council, Karen was elected to the IFEA board of directors in 1993 and served in several capacities including Chairman of the Board in 2000. Karen also served 8 years on the IFEA Foundation Board.

In 1992, Karen decided that Arizona needed to have an IFEA state chapter and went about making that happen and directed the formation of the Arizona Festivals and Events Association. There were several founding members of AFEA, but Karen is recognized as THE Founder. At its peak AFEA had about 120 members. Although AFEA disbanded when IFEA moved away from affiliated state chapters, the organization still exists today as the AZ Festival People and a high-level of networking continues, all because Karen was a difference maker.

4. What void would there be if he/she were not an event professional?

Karen is the ultimate event professional. She has been a huge difference maker to the industry and we can't even begin to describe the void that would exist if she had not dedicated her life's work to the field. One can only speculate – the Fiesta Bowl would be a second-tier bowl game, Arizona would have never hosted a Super Bowl, much less two with a third on the way, the Arizona Centennial would have been only political speeches, tourism in Arizona would still be about golf and sunshine and not events, and Arizona festival and event professionals would not be as connected.

Personally, we discovered IFEA because of Karen – we cannot imagine how things might have turned out for us if that had not happened 20 years ago. Her professionalism made a huge difference in our lives, as we are positive it has in hundreds of others. We conclude this nomination with the following short testimonials:

I cannot image a more deserving candidate for the IFEA Hall of Fame. I know firsthand how she has conceived, developed and executed major statewide events; only Karen had the vision, tenacity and wherewithal to create and produce a yearlong Centennial recognition with hundreds of events across the state. Without Karen, Arizona citizens and visitors would not have had the cultural, historic, entertaining, “bragging rights” and economic impact of the events she created and fortunately for all of us continues to create – passing on the joy and legacy for years to come.

Sherry Henry, Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

In my roles leading the Commission and Foundation boards, I have observed first-hand how Karen's even-keeled approach to dealing with people and problems as well as her keen fiscal eye and operational resourcefulness were significant assets to the Arizona Centennial effort. It is hard to imagine the Arizona Centennial Celebration being any more successful than the full year of excitement and entertainment that actually was. In every aspect, Karen Churchard was the driving force and the steady hand upon the tiller. In my clearly biased view, IFEA would be hard-pressed to find a more deserving recipient of this most prestigious honor

Win Holden, Publisher, Arizona Highways Magazine

My students and I have had the pleasure of having Karen as a guest presenter in Special Event Management classes at ASU every year for the past 22 years. Although Karen's topics have changed over the years, from sponsorship, to sport tourism, to Arizona's Centennial Celebration, to event tourism, Karen's extensive knowledge of the field she loves is incredible. Even more so is her humble nature. I vividly remember Karen telling me she didn't think students would be interested in listening to her talk for an hour...HA...each time she comes to class we go a solid two hours and students are captivated.

Dr. Wendy Hultsman, Arizona State University

Karen has that rare ability to bring people together. At the Fiesta Bowl, no one worked better with volunteers than her. At the Arizona Centennial she had to bring divergent political views together with volunteers and the business community to make it worth. What she pulled off there was extraordinary. Both the Fiesta Bowl and the Arizona Centennial would have been offered to the community at a lower level if it wasn't for Karen's ability to inspire and to consolidate.

Bruce Skinner, CFEE, IFEA Hall of Fame Inductee, Past IFEA CEO