



International Festivals & Events Association

2016 IFEA Hall of Fame William B. Flinn Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association Pasadena, CA

Born in Pennsylvania to Salvation Army officer ministers, it was instilled in Bill Flinn from an early age that the focus on family, faith, community and commitment to others would be the building blocks of personal success. Bill has embraced these tenets with his long career in the festival and special events industry.

Musically trained from a young age, Bill has played, conducted and toured with various bands and vocal ensembles throughout the world. This lifelong commitment to music, in some ways, was a precursor of things to come.

In the late 1970's, Bill ventured to Los Angeles to begin a career in public relations and he also worked with the film and television industry. His drive to support music and volunteerism led him to Pasadena where he directed The Salvation Army Band in the Rose Parade. Bill had become a participant in the very Rose Parade he had watched as a young boy on television on the East Coast.



His community volunteer spirit led him to become a white-suited Tournament of Roses member in 1980. He would man his barricade position in the evening and march in the Parade in the morning. As fate would have it, Bill was offered the position as the public relations director for the Tournament of Roses in 1981 and the rest, as they say, is history.

Bill embarked on a career that for almost 36 years has been dedicated to the festivals and special events industry by not only helping the Tournament of Roses volunteers and staff produce the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game but to the sharing of his knowledge, mentorship and friendship to the entire industry and by his service as a leader with local, national and international organizations.

Bill quickly advanced through the ranks of the Tournament of Roses staff and became its first Chief Operating Officer in 1996. He served in that role for 15 years, helping to manage the operations of the now 128th Rose Parade and the 103rd Rose Bowl Game.

His professional career, by any measure, including his tenure with the Tournament of Roses has been a resounding success. From his early days as a public relations director under longtime administrator and IFEA Hall of Fame member Jack French, Bill has spearheaded and assisted with the efforts to launch a successful marketing and sponsorship program, the expansion of the parade's domestic and international

broadcasts, modernization of the Tournament's infrastructure, the development of an enhanced community relations program and the development of staff team members that assist the Association's nearly 1,000 volunteers with America's New Year Celebration.

Bill's efforts for the Association have been wide reaching. To enhance the Parade and Game even more, Bill reached out to military friends and arranged for the B2 stealth bomber flyover, a tradition which has continued to this day.

When Bill became aware that the rose was to be designated the official flower of the United States, he reached out to the White House to gently remind them of how much the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game had done for the flower's fame. His proactive approach led to a White House invitation on the occasion of President Reagan signing the official proclamation making the Rose - America's official flower.

Recognizing the need for consistent branding, both for recognition and for potential revenue growth, Bill worked for the creation and implementation of the single rose design to be used as the Tournament's logo. The rose logo now is the unique symbol of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses and recognized around the world.

In recognition of his years of dedicated service, Bill was chosen by the Association's leadership to become the Executive Director in 2011. His elevation caps a career spanning more than three decades but his work will continue through his retirement on April 30, 2017 and beyond.

As Executive Director, Bill has continued to build upon the Association's history and tradition while, at the same time, embracing the future with the continued enhancement of participant and television broadcaster relationships and the expansion of new media with digital and social platforms to increase the brand's recognition in emerging markets and audiences.

Bill believes that giving back in service is a critical part and vital in any community. Bill has served on many event and festival organization boards and is currently on the World Board of Directors of the IFEA, the Football Bowl Association and other local and national boards. During this time, he has faithfully maintained his volunteer commitment as a music director at his Salvation Army church.

He is a regular speaker on non-profit and special event management and is generous with his time in sharing with all who are interested in special events, community service and volunteerism. Bill has spoken at conferences around the world and is the first to speak up on all the special events and festival industry has to offer to enhance community spirit and economics.

Bill's success comes with the support of his family. He and his wife Catherine, a Registered Nurse at Pasadena's Huntington Hospital, have two children. Daughter Meredith and son Derek have both been instilled with the same inspiration for service. Derek actively serves as an infantry and intelligence officer in the United States Army. Meredith continues Bill's long history of public relations as the Director of External Relations for Pasadena's Rose Bowl Stadium. Meredith and her husband Shaun, a Pasadena high school teacher, added a daughter, Madelyn Rose, to their family this past summer.

Bill has been recognized for his professional and community contributions on many fronts. Most recently, at the O2 Arena in London, England, The Salvation Army's highest honor for exceptional service, the Order of the Founder, was bestowed upon him.

The festival and events industry has been incredibly fortunate to have Bill Flinn's leadership, vision and commitment in "Bringing People Together" for these many years.

Please help us congratulate our 2016 IFEA Hall of Fame inductee, William B. Flinn.