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## **Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association Announces Industry Champions**

*To be honored at the 2019 Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner on May 22<sup>nd</sup>*

**PHOENIX, AZ** (May 8, 2019) – Today the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association (AzLTA) announced that several exemplary industry champions will be recognized at the 2019 Arizona Tourism Unity Dinner to be held at the JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each honoree has demonstrated extraordinary efforts to enhance the Arizona business climate and promote our great state on national and international levels.

AzLTA hosts the annual awards dinner to recognize the best-of-the-best of our vast industry including statewide hotels and resorts, tourism attractions, destination marketing organizations, sports teams, the arts, airlines, airports and related business partners. We are thrilled to honor those who have made remarkable contributions at the 2019 Unity Dinner.

- Honoree of the Year – Michael Bidwill, Arizona Cardinals
- Lifetime Achievement - Don Brandt, Arizona Public Service (APS)
- Global Partner of the Year – Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC)
- Hotelier of the Year – Westroc Hospitality
- Tourism Leader of the Year – Visit Tucson
- Tourism Advocate(s) – To Be Announced

"We are incredibly grateful for the leadership, dedication and support each honoree has demonstrated in advancing this \$23 billion economic engine for the State of Arizona," said Kim Sabow, President and CEO of AzLTA. "Each of these leaders has been a staunch advocate for this vital Arizona industry which has a positive economic impact in all 15 counties throughout our great state."

Michael Bidwill, President and CEO of the Arizona Cardinals, will be recognized as this year's honoree. Michael has spearheaded extraordinary efforts to unify our industry by convening industry leadership throughout the state to advance economic development and increase visitation. His efforts have produced unprecedented wins, including most recently Arizona being selected as the host for Super Bowl in 2023 and the Final Four in 2024.

Don Brandt, Chairman of the Board and CEO for Pinnacle West Capital Corporation and of Arizona Public Service will be celebrated with our Lifetime Achievement award for his years of stewardship that has powered Arizona's success. A recognized industry leader, Brandt affects positive change through his work with institutions including the McCain Institute, the Phoenix Art Museum, and Greater Phoenix Leadership.

"Every year the Unity Dinner shines a light on people and organizations who make real and lasting contributions to the success of tourism in Arizona. This year's honorees fit the bill in every way. Each of them, in their own way, have proven willing to pursue big ideas, take big risks and follow through on big commitments to make Arizona a better place to visit and to live." said Debbie Johnson, Director, Arizona Office of Tourism.

Westroc Hospitality will be recognized for their vision, development and management of multiple signature Arizona resorts including: Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa, Mountain Shadows, Hotel Valley Ho, and the newest gem in the Westroc collection, Castle Hot Springs, an iconic and historic Arizona treasure in the Bradshaw Mountains. These unique properties help keep Arizona top-of-mind as a world-class travel destination and will be honored as Arizona's Hotelier of the Year.

Visit Tucson elevated the region globally when it secured UNESCO's designation as the only City of Gastronomy in North America. That notoriety accelerated with its selection to be the host site for 2019's Délice Network Gathering of culinary leaders. Not only does Visit Tucson successfully sell and market Tucson and Southern Arizona as a destination, they also lead and support many key initiatives including an effort to create a 10-year tourism masterplan for the region. With the strong leadership of Brent DeRaad, President and CEO, Visit Tucson has earned the Tourism Leadership Award for their on-going efforts.

This year, the Arizona-Mexico Commission celebrates six decades of elevating borderless economic prosperity that is achieved across the greater Arizona-Sonoran region. Strong synergies impacting bi-national trade, tourism and commerce result from the important work and public/private collaborations of the AMC. They will be honored as Global Partner of the Year for their accomplishments. Our most sincere compliments to Governor Ducey for his steadfast commitment to strengthening a vibrant relationship between Arizona and Mexico.

The 2019 Unity Dinner will be held May 22, 2019, at the JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa beginning with a reception and silent auction at 5:00 p.m. followed by the dinner and program at 6:00 p.m.

Join us to celebrate these extraordinary industry champions, elected officials and lodging and tourism business leaders across Arizona by registering at [www.AZLTA.com](http://www.AZLTA.com).

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About AzLTA:

The Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association (AzLTA) is the leading public policy advocate for Arizona's Lodging and Tourism Industry. Representing statewide hotels and resorts, tourism attractions, destination marketing organizations, sports teams, the arts, airlines, airports and related business partners, the AzLTA is focused on advocacy, collaboration and education in support of strengthening the industry in Arizona. For additional information, please contact the Arizona Lodging and Tourism Association at 602-604-0729 or visit [www.azlta.com](http://www.azlta.com).