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**Extraordinary Hospitality and Tourism Professionals Honored by Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association**

**Richmond, Va. – October 26, 2016** – Hospitality and tourism professionals from across the Commonwealth of Virginia were honored during the inaugural Ordinary Awards Dinner Monday, October 24 in Richmond by the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA).

During the evening, 15 individuals and organizations were honored with an Ordinary Award for their outstanding work in the hospitality field and within their communities. The awards are named after Chinn's Ordinary, which is considered "the oldest original inn in America" (*Baltimore Sun*, August 1996). Dating to 1728 in what is now Middleburg, Chinn's Ordinary, operating today as the Red Fox Inn, chiefly catered to travelers between Alexandria and Winchester, Virginia.

The awards program and dinner would not have been possible without generous contributions from our sponsors Kings Dominion, Virginia Beach CVB, Visit Fairfax, Virginia Business, and the Williamsburg Area Chamber and Tourism Alliance.

"We are proud to honor these exemplary individuals and companies with the first 'Ordinary Awards,'" said Eric Terry, president of VRLTA. "While the name of the program may exude simplicity, its ties to the early Ordinaries of Virginia is truly unique and is a perfect antithesis to the extraordinary, exceptional individuals in our industry."

The awards were presented by several important members of Virginia's hospitality industry including Debbie Donehey (owner, Griffin Tavern; VRLTA chair), Barry Biggar (president, Visit Fairfax; VRLTA board member), Paula Squires (managing editor, Virginia Business), and Kelli Lemon (Mama J's).

The inaugural Ordinary Awards Winners are:

- Karen Blaylock (Kings Dominion) – **Charlie Buser Award**, Travel Attraction Employee of the Year
- Sara Saavedra (Abingdon CVB) – **Jim Ricketts Award**, DMO/CVB Employee of the Year
- Kristin Winderweedle (The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner) – Hotel Employee of the Year
- Emil Corvera (Ford's Fish Shack) – Restaurant Employee of the Year
- Travis Milton (Shovel and Pick; Appalachian Food Summit) – Chef of the Year
- Jenna Wines (Virginia Tech) – **Rising Pineapple Award**, Hospitality & Tourism Student of the Year
- Old Ox Brewery – Beverage Producer of the Year
- Sysco Virginia & Sysco Hampton Roads – Hospitality Supplier of the Year
- Virginia Creeper Trail (Abingdon, VA) – Travel Attraction of the Year
- The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner – Hotel of the Year
- L'Auberge Chez Francois (Great Falls, VA) – Restaurant of the Year

- Hal Craddock (Craddock Terry Hotel) – Hotelier of the Year
- Hu Odom (BOTH, Inc; Golden Corral) – **Jim Wordsworth Award**, Restaurateur of the Year

Rita McClenny (president, Virginia Tourism Corporation) was also on hand to honor the late Jim Ricketts with the **Golden Pineapple Lifetime Achievement Award** for his dedication to not only Virginia Beach tourism but to Virginia tourism as a whole.

Additionally, Senator Thomas K. Norment, Jr. was honored with an Ordinary Award for **Virginia Legislator of the Year** for his commitment to Virginia tourism and the hospitality industry.

For more information about the Ordinary Awards, visit [VRLTA.org](http://VRLTA.org) or [OrdinaryAwards.com](http://OrdinaryAwards.com).

***About Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA)***

*The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the only unified voice for the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. Inquiries about membership and VRLTA services should be directed to VRLTA at (804) 288-3065 or [VRLTA.org](http://VRLTA.org).*

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