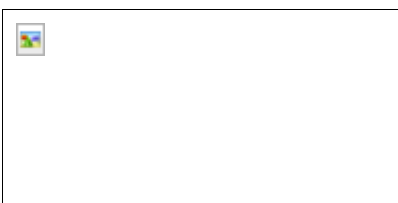




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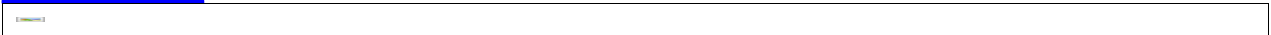
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IMEX Academy Awards and JMIC Unity Award

IMEX celebrates some of the industry's finest at its annual Awards ceremony
Monday, May 31, 2010

REPORT - IMEX - FRANKFURT: **IMEX** played host to the international meetings industry's most admired professionals from all over the world last night at its annual Gala Dinner at Frankfurt's Alte Oper. The evening culminated in a long night of dancing and celebration for more than 650 guests but not before IMEX Directors, Chairman Ray Bloom and Managing Director, Paul Flackett, had paid tribute to several individuals whose contributions to the meetings industry have ensured its continued growth and success.

Four Academy Award heroes

A series of IMEX Academy Awards was also presented to individuals from four global regions. Each award celebrated and acknowledged an 'unsung hero' working in the meetings, incentive travel or events sector.

This year's Asia-Pacific Academy Award was presented to **Suprabha Moleeratanond**, Director Conventions, **Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau** (TCEB) in recognition of her leading its international marketing team and representing the Bureau on many related industry associations. Using her previous experience of working for Thai Airways International, **Paul Flackett** explained how Suprabha helped to engineer the inception of the Convention Plus programme at Star Alliance together with Lufthansa and SAS Scandinavian Airlines System.

The 2010 IMEX Academy Award for The Americas was presented to Greg Ortale. Quoting from a glowing reference received from his wife of 42 years, Mitzi, Paul described Greg's long and successful career in the conventions industry that began in 1972 at the Des Moines Convention Bureau in Iowa, USA. Here, Paul noted, Greg worked on the Beer Can Collectors of America and the National Carousel Roundtable. What followed was a varied and successful career punctuated throughout by Greg's second passion (the first being his wife and family) – golf.

As winner of the Academy Award for Europe, **Nic Racic** was recognised for his pivotal role in developing the tourism industry of Croatia. Choosing not to pursue a professional tennis career (having won the title of junior champion of Yugoslavia), Nic began working in the industry as an advisor to the Tourism Association in Zagreb in 1978, later becoming General Secretary of the Yugoslavian Congress Office and then Advisor to the Ministry of Tourism in the first government

of the Republic of Croatia. In 2001, Nic was appointed as Director of the Croatian Congress and Incentive Office.

The final Academy Award - for Africa and The Middle East - was made to **Yousef Husseiny**. As a talented young artist Yousef was tutored by renowned Jordanian artists Mohanna al-Dorra, Rafik Laham and Azeez Amoura. Yousef joined the Royal Jordanian's design department and was responsible for creating its posters, brochures and stands before he eventually took to organising its exhibitions, both regionally and globally. This part of his career lasted for 23 years, but for the last 11 years Yousef has been responsible for designing Jordan's stands at international exhibitions and fairs, which Paul highlighted, are always extremely well received.

JMIC Unity Award

One of the night's first awards – the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) Unity Award - was presented to **Christian Mutschlechner**, Director of the **Vienna Convention Bureau**. Christian's outstanding work in the meetings industry includes leading from the top for over 20 years as Director of the Vienna Convention Bureau, one of the five departments of the Vienna Tourist Office. Christian is a well-known figure in the industry having served as ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) President for 4 years and his award was loudly applauded by Gala Dinner guests.

Site Master Motivator

New this year, the Site Master Motivator Award was presented to **Laurie Sprouse**, CITE, CMP, DMCP, President of Ultimate Ventures, a DMC Network Company, by the CEO of Site, Brenda Anderson. This new award has been introduced to recognise a member of the industry who has shown the highest standard of excellence in creating or executing motivational events.

Brenda Anderson told Gala Dinner guests: *"For the past 17 years Laurie has owned and operated a destination management company employing 14 people. A few years ago that very business was threatened by pending tax legislation that would have put their company, and many others out of business. So what did they do? With absolutely no experience in working with the government or lobbying, Laurie rallied and led the effort to defeat not one...but two tax bills. Thanks to her hard work, now in the state of Texas, destination management companies are able to deduct the cost of service from their tax base."*

MPI Foundation Youth Award

As part of IMEX's ongoing commitment to nurturing some of the brightest up and coming talent in the industry, the MPI Foundation Youth Award is given to the winner of the international IMEX-MPI University Challenge programme. Students are judged on presentations given at Forums around the world, with the final held during the show at IMEX and the overall winner being announced at the Gala Dinner.

This year, **Renea Anderson** was the deserved winner and picked up her award from **Bruce MacMillan**, CEO and President, MPI.

Renea Anderson is an event management student and also President for the UCF Chapter of MPI. On receiving the award she commented: *"The University Challenge offered such a unique opportunity for me to voice the innovative ideas I have on the future of this industry. I am humbled that MPI would ask for the vision of students such as myself, providing us with a platform to share our ideas. The Future Leaders Forum Programme has meant more to me and my career than I can ever articulate. It was the beginning of new connections, new opportunities and an education beyond the classroom. The leadership training compelled me on a personal mission to set myself apart, to strive for excellence and to make the most out of every opportunity. To win this award really is the icing on the cake!"*

[Panos Fotiadis](#) - Monday, May 31, 2010