

venues^{NOW}

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

MEL RAINES SETS THE PACE

MIDYEAR CHARTS

SPRINT CENTER

MLS FINE FOOD

IAVM WINNERS

FRONT ROW

Opening Number

JULY AT VENUESNOW means Women of Influence, the awards program begun in 2007 to salute professional women for their contributions to the live event industry. As we introduce the honorees for 2019 (see Page 20), it gives us a chance to look back at the names (and numbers) that are part of this proud tradition.

Women of Influence honorees, including the six featured in this issue.

Editors' pick, Mel Raines in this year's class (see Page 38). Readers have long cast the votes for Women of Influence, but we decided we wanted to get in on the fun! We'll continue to do so in the coming years, so this number will be going up.

Smallest classes, from 2009 through 2013.

Largest class, in 2019.

Members of the first class in 2007: Donna Dowless, Robyn Williams, Carol Wallace, Kim Bedier and Barbara "Mother" Hubbard.

The only year that each honoree was associated with a particular venue: Carol Pollock (Hoyt Sherman Place, Des Moines, Iowa), Leslee Stewart (Paramount Theatre, Oakland, Calif.), Kerry Painter (Cox Business Center, Tulsa, Okla.) and Karen Totaro (Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, N.J.)

EMPLOYEES ONLY

WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

LOCKED & LOADED





When it came time
to remake the
Ryman, IEBA and even
downtown Nashville,
Pam Matthews was
more than ready

BY BRAD WEISSBERG

WHEN PAM MATTHEWS arrived at the Ryman Auditorium in 2000 to be its general manager, downtown Nashville was not a destination.

"There were no condos, few restaurants and no reason to come downtown," Matthews said. "Musicwise, there were five honky-tonks, and that was it. The amphitheater wasn't built yet, the (NFL's Tennessee) Titans weren't here yet. This place was dead."

After years of neglect and dormancy following the Grand Ole Opry's departure for its new home in 1974, the Ryman had undergone a renovation and reopened in 1994. Programming consisted of kitschy country-themed fare, like the Patsy Cline bio-musical.

Matthews was born a little more than 200 miles to the southwest in Memphis; her family can trace itself back to the 1700s. She's known the city of Nashville her whole life.

"Everybody loved the Ryman Auditorium when I was young. It was the mother church of country music and it used to be a place that brought people together, and I

wanted to re-create that community," she said. "I changed everything they were doing there. I started booking lots and lots of concerts. Good concerts."

One of Matthews' many talents is marketing, and she used those skills to let fans know that the Ryman was not only back in business but back in the business of being the premier destination for country music fans.

"We had to reeducate the people," she said. "We tackled it like we were opening a new building."

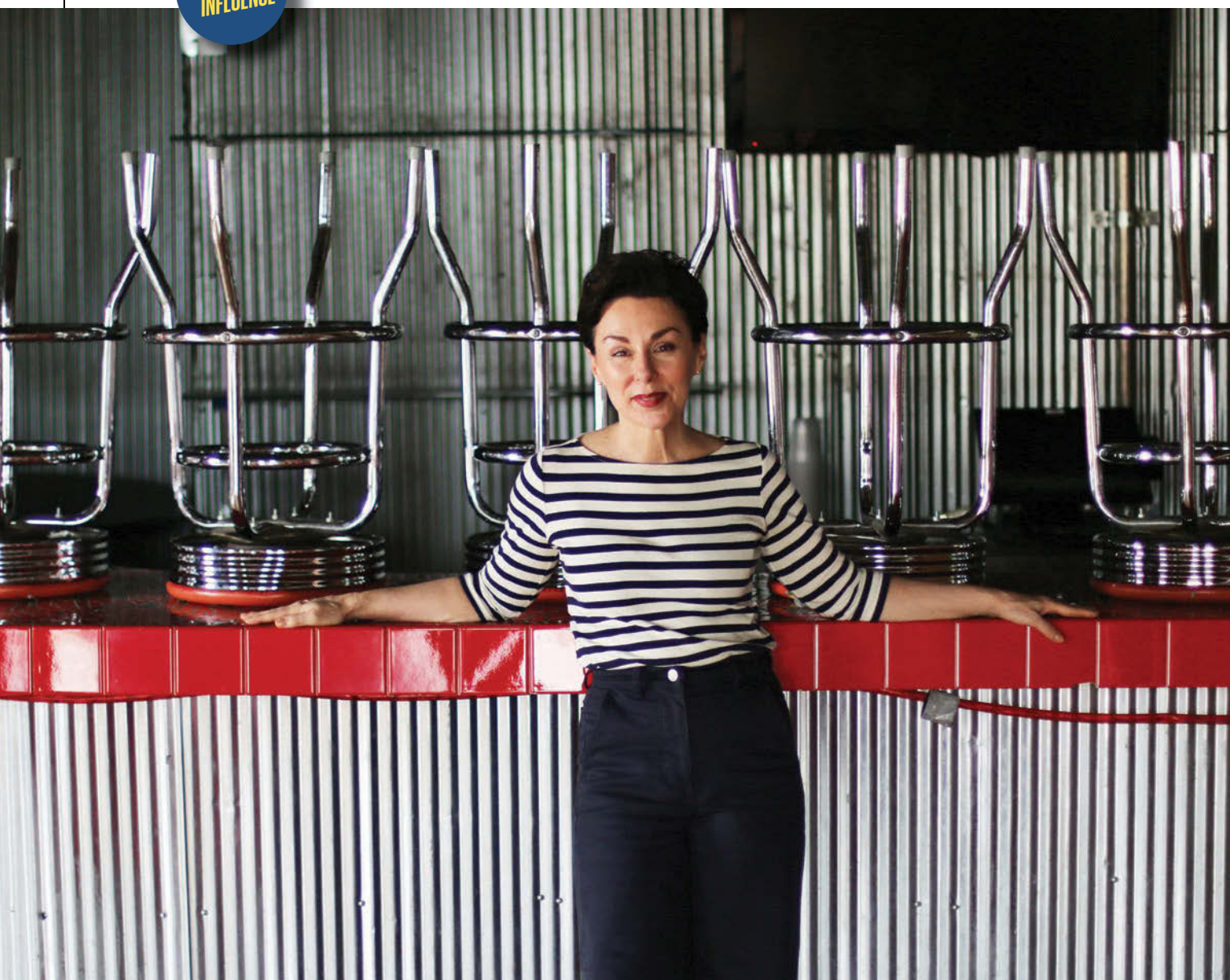
It worked. The stars played, the people came and the Ryman was once again at the forefront of the country music conversation.

Matthews gives longtime Nashville promoter Ali Harnell — now president and chief strategy officer for Live Nation and Women Nation, the initiative it launched last year to support female entrepreneurs and others in the live business — a lot of the credit for the Ryman resurrection, as well as for returning Nashville to its country music capital roots.

"Ali had just come back from maternity leave in January

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE



COURTESY IEBA



IEBA

International
Entertainment
Buyers
Association

We proudly congratulate
our Executive Director

— PAM —
MATTHEWS

Women of Influence
Honoree



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

2001 and she was ready to go," Matthews said of her longtime friend and colleague. "And she just blew it out of the water. She brought in one great show after the next. If anyone should get the credit for Nashville being the market it is, and the Ryman's resurgence, it's Ali."

It's a mutual appreciation society; Harnell, who was a Women of Influence honoree in 2016, said it's Matthews who deserves the praise.

"Pam had a great vision for the Ryman and Nashville, and she locked and loaded," Harnell said.

"Pam was so focused and gently aggressive about returning the Ryman to its glory, and she's the driving

force behind what the Ryman is today and the rebirth of Nashville. She cares from the bottom up and the top down. She gets every aspect of it. She gets the minutiae and the macro. She's a really smart woman with a scary IQ."

During her eight years managing the historic venue, the Ryman rose to prominence as one of the top-grossing theaters in the world. Now, almost 20 years later, Nashville is the midst of a renaissance. Its downtown is bustling. There are blocks and blocks of new clubs, there are great restaurants and activities, and none of that would have been possible without the Ryman roaring back to life.

Matthews got her start in the music business at 15. One of her best friends in high school was Jeff Dunn, whose father was renowned bass player Donald "Duck" Dunn, known for his work as a session musician with Memphis' Stax Records.

"My dad was in the grocery business and the Dunn family lived a very different life than we lived," Matthews said.

"When you walked into their house their entry hall was floor-to-ceiling gold and platinum records."

When the Duns went on the road, Matthews would sort their mail, make sure the pool was clean, and get messages from the answering machine. One day there was a call from Phil Collins thanking them for a wedding gift.

"Phil Collins did not call my house," Matthews said. "I wanted that life."

Dunn got her an interview with Bob Kelly of Mid-South Concerts, and Matthews started working as a runner. She continued with the company through most of her years as a student at Rhodes College in Memphis.

"These were the days of regional promoters and I would make copies of all the documents for settlement," Matthews said of her first real music industry skill.

That got her a job working for Kiss as a tour accounting assistant. Ozzy Osbourne hired her next. She returned to Nashville and started working for the team that started Starwood Amphitheater, the first promoter-owned venue in the country.

In 1988 she got a call from the Judds.

"The Judds did everything in-house," Matthews said. "They had their booking agency in-house, they promoted 85% of their own shows, they had their own merchandise company and they owned their own trucks and buses. They needed someone who could do marketing and settle

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

"Pam gets every aspect of it. She gets the minutiae and the macro. She's a really smart woman with a scary IQ." — ALI HARNELL

force behind what the Ryman is today and the rebirth of Nashville. She cares from the bottom up and the top down. She gets every aspect of it. She gets the minutiae and the macro. She's a really smart woman with a scary IQ.

"She's strategic and she executes and gets things done and she loves what she does."

Harnell most wanted to convey how much she appreciated the journey she and Matthews have been on since they met. "Pam is special, and unique, and we're all better in Nashville because of her," she said.

Matthews knew she had achieved her dream of bringing the Ryman back to distinction one night when she was standing in the balcony during a show.

"I was watching the fans and they were having such a good time and I thought, 'This show is making it better to be a Nashvillian than if it never happened. If the Ryman had never reopened and we didn't start bringing great mu-

COURTESY IEBA

shows, and I could do both.”

Matthews wound up working for the Judds for 12 years. She was part of their farewell tour when the mother-daughter duo ended the act in the early 1990s. She launched Wynonna Judd’s solo tour. She was part of the reunion tour in 1999. Matthews would eventually be vice president and treasurer of all three of the Judds’ corporations.

Matthews fondest memory of her time with the Judds is the first show of the reunion tour on New Year’s Eve in 1999 at Talking Stick Resort Arena in Phoenix.

“That was the year of the Y2K scare,” Matthews recalled. “Everybody on the planet was going to play everywhere, but they all fell off after the all the predictions that planes were going to fall out of the sky and all the power would go off. But we were fearless, and we promoted our own show, and we pulled it off, and sold it out.”

WME’s Greg Oswald remembered that night as being a standout as well; he was the Judds’ agent at the time.

“Pam had strategies in place in case anything went wrong,” Oswald said. “Pam had triple redundant backups in place to make sure there were no problems in case the power went off.”

“Pam’s a special person. She has a number of the qualities that give her the tools to be really good in a number of different facets of this industry,” he said. “She’s pragmatic and orderly, she’s oriented to detail, fiercely loyal to the artist or project she is working on, and creative in terms of going out of the box and will go with whatever the artist wants to do.

“She’s had three different jobs and she’s been great at every one of them. When Pam takes something on, she

takes it full-on.”

The last job Oswald refers to is her current job, CEO of music industry trade group the International Entertainment Buyers Association, which Matthews took over in 2013.

Under her leadership, the 49-year-old organization has tripled its membership and turned its annual conference once again into a must-attend for industry professionals.

“Not unlike the Ryman, IEBA is a beloved heritage brand that needed a little sprucing up,” she said. “We came in and we rocked and rolled it.”

Matthews made IEBA more inclusive, more diversified, and she made sure that things were appealing to a wider audience.

“We really concentrated on bringing venues into the organization,” she said. “When you are on tour you go to every venue in the world. We also wanted to bring in the younger generation, so we started a young professional steering committee for professionals under the age of 30. We get their perspective and groom them for leadership positions.”

IEBA also formed a 501(c)(3) charity that permanently endows scholarships, has a summer intern program, and has created scholarships for students. “We give away over \$60,000 every year,” Matthews said proudly.

Matthews has no clue what she’ll do if she ever leaves IEBA, but she’s pretty sure she’ll stay in Nashville forever.

“At every career move, I would not have predicted what would come next,” she said. “That’s the fun part of my career. I never calculated any move. I take the opportunity when it comes along and do it. I’m not driving. I’m just along for the ride.”

SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DISTINGUISHED RECIPIENTS OF THE 2019 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE AWARD.

“We know that plenty of long hours, late nights and urgent requests happen behind the scenes. We’re fortunate to have professionals who dedicate their careers to excellence in the sports, venues and events industry, setting the highest standards in the business.”



Cheryl Swanson, CVE

V.P. & General Manager
of the Columbia Metropolitan
Convention Center and recipient
of the 2014 Women of Influence Award

COLUMBIACONVENTIONCENTER.COM



A WOMEN OF INFLUENCE MAGICAL CAREER

PRESIDENT AND
CEO, INTIX

Maureen Andersen is known as an innovator, a mentor and a voice of reason in the ticketing industry

BY LISA WHITE

Before becoming CEO in 2016, Maureen Andersen was a 33-year INTIX member with 18 years on its board.



ONE OF THE moments that helped shape Maureen Andersen's career happened during her first trip to New York City, when she was 23, "naive, young and excited to be on the Great White Way."

At that time, the president and CEO of the International Ticketing Association was one year into a 23-year stint with the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, where she was director of ticketing services from 1982 to 2005.

"We tried to get tickets to 'Cats,' which was the biggest hit on Broadway at the time, but it was sold out," she said. "Then, with all the naiveté of the young, we went over to the Palace Theatre where 'La Cage aux Folles' had just started in previews."

After brazenly walking up to the ticket window and asking for two matinee tickets, the guy behind the window looked at Andersen, then up at his ticket rack before relaying the hefty price.

"I started writing traveler's checks and finally he told me to stop and handed me two tickets," Andersen said. "As the usher led us to our seats in the fifth row dead center on the

aisle, I was gobsmacked. Now I know that man in the window sold me two house releases."

The kid from the sticks was mesmerized, and the 1984 Tony Award winner for best musical remains one of Andersen's favorites.

"This taught me something I will never forget and that is part of my mantra at INTIX — the person in the ticket office window and all of us have great power to affect the lives of those we serve, the ticket buying public," Andersen said. "Seemingly small moments can create magic. Never had buying a ticket been as simple as when that nameless man behind bars made my dreams come true. This is now the message I carry for these professionals."

Making a difference has been a cornerstone to Andersen's career and has garnered her recognition as a 2019 Woman of Influence.

"This honor is meaningful and speaks to an industry that cultivates the success of the gender by having limited glass ceilings compared to other industries," Andersen said. "Being included with this group of women across so many industries, venues and types of venues

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

Simply the Best.

The INTIX Board and membership extend our heartfelt congratulations to INTIX President

Maureen Andersen

recipient of VenuesNow 2019
Women of Influence Award!

Maureen's passionate leadership is an inspiration to us all at INTIX. She is a power and light that leads not only women but everyone in the entertainment ticketing industry. This is a well-deserved award to someone who has made such an impact on us all and we are proud to celebrate her extraordinary influence and leadership

Join us for INTIX 2020 this January in New York City to congratulate and connect with Maureen as well as other influential industry professionals! Register now at www.intix.org





Maureen Andersen has been in entertainment ticketing in one incarnation or another for four decades.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

and parts of the industry is incredibly humbling, and I have such gratitude for it.”

Andersen has been in entertainment ticketing in one incarnation or another for her entire career, which spans almost four decades and has encompassed nonprofit, commercial arts, Broadway, regional ticketing, performing arts and colleges.

“I’ve been blessed with having jobs that allow me to sit in the chair,” she said.

Andersen’s experience includes ticket offices, call centers, season tickets, group sales, marketing, fundraising and management. Before joining INTIX in 2016, she worked for two ticketing software companies: six years as vice president of arts and entertainment at Toronto-based AudienceView and before that as senior business consultant at Paciolan from 2005 to 2009.

However, she got her feet wet in her current role when she served as INTIX’s interim president for a year in 2009.

“It was a wonderful interim job running INTIX as they looked for a CEO,” Andersen said.

When it was her turn at the helm, Andersen, a 33-year INTIX member with 18 years on its board, including three stints as chair, was an obvious choice.

“When I was being recruited for the INTIX president’s position, I decided that was my next logical step,” Andersen said.

In the job, she said, she no longer represents a given software company and her identity is no longer solely tied to her extensive performing arts ticketing experience.

“Taking this role, for me, was about realigning myself to be neutral and look at how I, with help from a whole lot of people, talk about an industry and elevate it,” Andersen said. “To me, this was a turning point and how all the parts of my career led

to this job. I had to rely completely on my experience, because there is no playbook on how to run this organization; I’m relying on my roots, so the transition is profound.”

What makes it even more challenging is the constant evolution of ticketing technology, which has changed so much and so rapidly that it requires constant learning and a very nimble approach.

Add to this Andersen’s day-to-day agenda, which has her securing speakers, sponsorships and reservation fees for INTIX 2020 while fielding member calls, among other responsibilities. She also helps elevate the association’s profile by consulting for other organizations on speakers and content for their conferences as well as serving as a speaker herself.

“INTIX is a not-for-profit, so I’m also wearing fundraising hats,” she said. “My days are interesting and varied and turn on a dime.”

Andersen credits Denver theater producer Bob Garner, who died at age 80 in 2012, as the one who gave her a crash course on negotiating.

“Bob taught me the value of your word and handshake, and how to stick to your guns, but know when to compromise and take a step back,” Andersen said. “The line in the sand is something you can step over.”

Consequently, Andersen empowers her staff members to learn the same way.

“This business is like a puzzle every day, with new and missing pieces and constant shifting and changing course,” she said. “The nuances of it being live makes it about living in the moment. When you’re a Type A personality, you like to control, fix and engineer everything, and that can be tough to do in this business.”

Andersen appreciates the many mentors that have been invaluable along the way, including Jane Kleinberger, co-founder of Paciolan; Jack Lucas, president of Spokane, Wash.-based WestCoast Entertainment — Broadway and

past president of TicketsWest; and Gary Lustig, owner of LusTicks Consulting in Medina, Ohio.

When Lucas began his career and joined INTIX in 1987, he said, Andersen took him under her wing.

"She introduced me to people and was always there as a resource," he said. "As my career and our relationships grew, Maureen has been not only a great mentor but a great friend."

Lucas added that, 30 years ago, ticketing professionals didn't have a seat at the table. But because of INTIX, technology and the sophistication needed to run ticketing organizations today, that is no longer the case.

"Maureen has helped develop that sense that we are ticketing professionals who have a certain skill set that others don't have," Lucas said. "She is an incredible individual and a strong leader."

Lustig, who has known Andersen for more than 30 years, said she quickly became one of his most trustworthy friends.

"I can think of no person more deserving of receiving the Woman of Influence honor," he said. "Maureen is a visionary pioneer who has actively worked to grow the influence and visibility of ticketing professionals in the entertainment industry, always placing the needs of others ahead of her own self-interest."

Linda Forlini, vice president of Ticket Philadelphia, has been Andersen's colleague for a number of years.

"Throughout that time, she has proven to be a sounding board for questions, problems or just professionally," Forlini said. "She is an innovator, creator, leader, mentor and friend. Maureen always has been a giver, a listener, a wonderful person, and I thank my luck stars that she is a

woman of influence in my life."

DeeDee Hill Naff, general manager at SmithsTix in Salt Lake City, has known Andersen for almost 20 years.

"She is one of those people that will help you when you call," she said. "We live in a tumultuous world, and she is always the voice of reason. I don't know anyone in this business that knows more or keeps up. She is truly is an

WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

"The person in the ticket office window and all of us have great power to affect the lives of those we serve."

— MAUREEN ANDERSEN

amazing leader and there for everybody."

Andersen noted that being successful in the ticketing industry means being willing to learn, ask a lot of questions and find many mentors, whether they're official or unofficial. "Imitate those you respect, talk to people you want to be like, do the work, take every job you can at an organization and don't be afraid to so," she advised. "Show business is nights, weekends and holidays as well as long hours. Those who embrace that will have a great life and career." ▮

CONGRATULATIONS MAUREEN ANDERSEN

WE ARE
YOUR
#1 FANS



Paciolan
LEARFIELD | IMG COLLEGE

2019 WOMEN OF INFLUENCE
AWARD WINNER

Messina Touring Group's **Kate McMahon** guides her company's inclusive, unstoppable team

BY ERIC RENNER BROWN

LEADER AND HERO

EXECUTIVE VICE
PRESIDENT,
MESSINA
TOURING GROUP



WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

KATE MCMAHON, EXECUTIVE vice president at Messina Touring Group, sometimes plays down her achievements. “I try not to travel too much anymore,” the industry lifer said. “I kind of see myself as the constant in the office, the person who is going to be here. There’s a little bit of HR, a little bit of approval of timesheets and expense reports and all that kind of boring stuff.”

But McMahon, who has helped lead Messina Touring Group since its inception in 2001, and has worked with founder Louis Messina since the mid-’90s, is as eminent a figure in the music biz as any, overseeing the marketing and promotion of major MTG clients — starting with country heavyweights such as George Strait and Kenny Chesney, and then widening to include pop powerhouses like Ed Sheeran and Taylor Swift — while elevating other women to traditionally male-dominated spaces.

“I am so happy to see how things have really changed for women, especially as promoters,” she said. “I kind of made a point to myself to hire more women, interview more women, make sure that we’ve got women in every position here. I’m really proud of that.”

McMahon got her first taste of the music biz working for Star Course, the student-run concert promotion and production organization at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as an undergraduate in the late ‘80s. A “super nerdy Midwest kid” who had grown up in Urbana, Ill., McMahon got involved with concerts after an injury after her sophomore year forced her to give up student athletics.

“I was looking around for something to do,” she recalled. “I had always loved going to concerts with my friends, because it was fun, and I just thought [Star Course] would be a fun thing I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2019 VENUESNOW 'WOMEN OF INFLUENCE' AWARD WINNER



KATE MCMAHON

**BIG TIME CONGRATS!
YOU INFLUENCE EVERYONE YOU TOUCH.
WE ARE ALL SO PROUD.**

Christopher Messina
Siva Schick
Karin Miller
Louis Messina
KEENA
Rachel Pavers
Rachael Krug
Laura Winter
Angela Johnson


Louis Messina
and your MTG family

Stacy Vee
Tori T.
Concetta Baker
Melissa McQueen
Lauren Ayoub
Brianna Kestel
Jenna Gombati
Katie Haggard
Jade Yee
Lauren Cairn
Halley

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

could try out for. I got on and then it was my whole life.”

McMahon booked acts such as the Smithereens at campus venues including Foellinger Auditorium. She also received some exposure to the industry’s glamorous side, although she now acknowledges she might’ve been caught up in the moment.

“The bands were still willing to hang out with us, so I remember we always had afterparties,” she said. “We really thought we were the coolest kids in the world. I’m sure that bands were like, ‘Oh my god, these kids are idiots.’”

McMahon parlayed her enthusiasm into a job at Jam Productions, the vaunted, Chicago-based independent promoter. But the job, a seemingly plum one for a young graduate with aspirations in the field, nearly soured McMahon on the business for good.

“It wasn’t a place that I fit in very well,” she said when summing up her tenure at the company from 1990 to 1995. A

told VenuesNow. “She never accepts ‘no’ for an answer. ... She’ll win you with a smile or hammer you down.”

As McMahon became an integral part of Messina’s team, she weathered his tumultuous late ‘90s alongside him, watching the promoter’s happiness plummet as Pace was bought by SFX, and then SFX by Clear Channel.

The turbulent period culminated with Messina’s decision to leave the company and launch Messina Touring Group. That was three weeks before McMahon was to be wed to fellow Pace employee Rome McMahon. She remembers Messina telling her, “You and your now-husband, let’s do our thing.” Messina added that they were the only two he took to his new company because “I believed in them and they believed in me.”

Working out of Messina’s house at first, the three Pace expats built a reputation quickly, kicking off their new enterprise by promoting Kenny Chesney’s first headline tour. “Kenny and I are only maybe six months apart in age, so there was a real click there immediately,” McMa-

hahon said. “I feel like we’ve grown up together on the road, too.” She points to her two decades of work with Chesney, now an unstoppable stadium force, as her proudest professional accomplishment.

“Kenny Chesney calls her direct,” Messina said. “Probably Kenny talks

Country superstar George Strait is part of Messina Touring Group’s large roster of A-list talent.

to her more than he talks to me, about ideas and creativity.”

Of course, McMahon has come a long way from her days throwing afterparties in college. “I think about those first (Chesney) shows and we would always have big afterparties, we were all young 30s,” she said. “Now I’m like, ‘Ew, do they have any coffee backstage? That would be awesome.’”

In a sense, that symbolizes why McMahon, now a seasoned vet, has turned her eye to the next generation. “All the young people in my office, she takes them under her wing,” Messina said.

McMahon still has a hand in major Messina clients, but she increasingly lets promising young talent lead the way. And, whether it’s Rachel Powers working Eric Church’s ambitious “Double Down” tour or Jaime Roberts orchestrating Shawn Mendes’ ascent to the stadium level, McMahon’s deputies are overwhelmingly women.

“One of the women in my office, Bridget Bauer, she has been on the road with George, with Eric Church, she’s in a position of basically our promoter rep,” McMahon said. “That’s an area where you typically don’t see a lot of women. You see women as production assistants or something like that, but she’s in charge and I love seeing that. Our executive committee is three women and two men, and our office is probably 65% women.”

McMahon’s “biggest value is leadership,” Messina said. “Her doing her job is a given, her being good and excelling at what she does is a given. But her being a leader—leaders and heroes are hard to find, and she is one of those people. She’s a leader and she is a hero to a lot of people, including myself.”

But it’s telling that, although McMahon has played a key role in making Messina Touring Group a leader in a changing industry, she still sees room for improvement.

“Hiring people that aren’t just like us brings a whole new mind-set to the table,” McMahon said when reflecting on MTG’s continued push for diversity. “We’re never too old to learn something new or look at something in a new way.”



previous generation’s gender disparities played a role. “When I was at Jam, there were no women booking,” McMahon elaborated. “There was only one woman in marketing, which was me. The only other women there were like party planners or receptionists ... There weren’t any women who had a seat at the table. That might’ve been a part of the reason I felt like I just didn’t fit there—I never found my groove.”

After leaving Jam, McMahon did some “half-assed jobs for friends” until Q Prime’s Tony DiCioccio tracked her down with a life-changing offer: Did McMahon want him to set up an interview with Louis Messina for a job at Pace Concerts?

“In my head I was like, ‘I’m going to go down to Texas and work for Louis Messina for like two years and I’m going to get really good and I’m going to come back to Chicago like a star,’” McMahon said. “That was, like, 26 years ago. Yeah, that part didn’t really happen, because I loved Louis and we totally clicked.”

As one of Messina’s chief collaborators, McMahon immediately began working with clients including George Strait—a relationship that became her “calling card” of sorts when seeking business with other artists in the country sphere.

“Kate’s just like me, she only knows winning,” Messina



COMMUNITY ASSET

GENERAL
MANAGER,
BON SECOURS
WELLNESS
ARENA

Beth Paul's efforts to connect with Greenville, S.C., have helped her arena thrive

BY NOELLE RILEY

GIVING BACK TO the community and creating a more inclusive environment for those with special needs are only a couple of Beth Paul's accomplishments as general manager of Bon Secours Wellness Arena for the past five years.

Initiatives such as those aren't just feel-good stories — they can also affect the bottom line. Paul helped double the operating profit of the Greenville, S.C., arena in

WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

2017 and continued growing it after that.

"The venue financially has improved tremendously. I would suggest that we've had a pretty solid plan in place for the last three years," said Paul, who graduated from Presbyterian College in Clinton, S.C., with a degree in accounting. "We've been really engaged in the community as more than

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



Beth Paul led Bon Secours Wellness Arena employees in a Habitat for Humanity build that began on the grounds of the arena.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

just a place to come enjoy live entertainment.”

Paul and her team started a campaign to extend their reach in the community. It’s called STAGE, or Serving Together: Arena’s Giving Experience. “Under this umbrella is where we thrive,” she said.

In its latest collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, Paul and employees at the arena spent a week in April building the frame of a house on the venue’s property before the frame was moved to its permanent location in Greenville County. It became a home for a single mom and her two children.

The venue’s food and beverage partner, Centerplate, also donates food monthly to Loaves & Fishes, a nonprofit that works to reduce hunger in Greenville County by taking surplus food from businesses and distributing it to families in need. Since July 2018, the arena and Centerplate have donated more than 5,200 pounds of prepared and nonperishable food to Loaves & Fishes. Loaves & Fishes rescues surplus prepared food after arena events and delivers it to its 94 partner agencies, including single meal providers, soup kitchens, nonprofit child care centers, shelters, group homes, low-income senior housing and community centers.

Additionally, the arena opened a sensory suite in March that has bean bags, calming sensory accessories and a de-escalation space for those who have sensory sensitivity issues or autism.

The arena created its sensory room from research and received help from area nonprofits that work with autistic individuals. Paul worked with the Project Hope Foundation to give her staff sensory training after a mother called saying her autistic child couldn't partici-

tangible difference in this community and merging these needs in live entertainment," Paul said.

Employees at the arena take pride in their efforts to give back, said Joe Dolan, the assistant general manager. "Those things are extremely rewarding," he said.

"She's extremely driven and very focused. Beth has a great ability to create a vision" and see what must be done to make it happen, Dolan said. "Almost everything we talked about three to five years ago is done. On a personal

level, she's tremendous to work with. She's great with our staff."

Paul also has showed her staff how to secure long-term revenue. Dolan has watched Paul find community partners and support through selling sponsorships to the arena's suites and other areas.

"We have a lot of local sponsorships. Our box office is sponsored by the airport," he said. Entegra Bank sponsors the arena's main entrance.

"Beth really went out and got the support of the community," Dolan said, highlighting that those efforts help the building's profitability. "When opportunities are presented, she is quick to grab those opportunities for the building. She doesn't just wait for things to come to us."

For instance, she was instrumental in bringing the

"Beth is quick to grab those opportunities for the building. She doesn't just wait for things to come to us." — JOE DOLAN

pate in a public ice skating session because all the people and noises proved overwhelming.

Paul and her staff created Skate, Roll and Stroll so families with disabled members could skate on the ice with wheelchairs or walkers. They also have a sled that pulls guests across the ice.

Before opening the sensory suite this year, the venue began offering Friendly Access Sensory Safety Kits in 2017 with sound-dampening headphones and fidget toys.

"We're really excited about being able to make a real

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



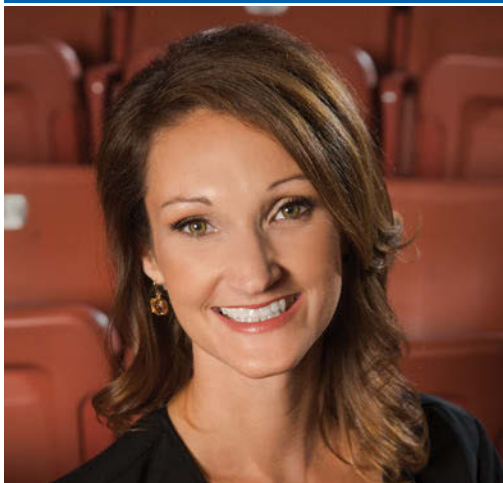
**BON SECOURS
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is proud to celebrate



JOE DOLAN

Assistant General Manager

*2019 VenuesNow
Generation Next Award*



BETH PAUL

General Manager

*VenuesNow 13th Annual Women
of Influence Class of 2019*



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament to the venue.

"She is always on the phone, talking to agents, talking to promoters. She really makes sure she's fighting for our building," Dolan said.

The 15,900-capacity venue is owned by the Greenville Arena District, which is operated by a board of directors nominated by the Greenville County Council.

"We are our own entity, we don't have a management company or anything like that. She's the one who has to

"A lot of us have worked at buildings that bring tremendous shows, but for us, we work with a tremendous sense of pride. It's important for us to treat our co-workers and our guests with respect and inclusion," Dolan said. "She's very encouraging. She hires people and lets them do their job."

When she's not at work, she's usually at one of her two kids' sporting events. She and her husband, Andy, have a daughter, Birdie, 11, and a son, Marshall, 10.

"They're my best ambassadors," Paul said. "One of the highlights of my career is hearing those two talk about

what mom does. Women can do anything they can set their mind to, and it's so important to have that relationship with my children."

Paul's children motivate her and root for her. Dolan admires her dual role as a mom and general manager of a large venue.

"There's a lot of times how you wonder if there's more

Paul and her staff created Skate, Roll and Stroll so families with disabled members could skate with wheelchairs or walkers.

go out and fight for us, puts us in the minds of promoters and agents," Dolan said. "All those things have resulted in our turnaround and allowed us the success we've had in the last three to five years, and this year being our best."

The camaraderie at the venue is unlike any other place that Dolan has worked, and he feels grateful to work in such a great environment.

than one of her," he said.

Paul has advice for others working toward a successful career in the venue business: "Be open-minded. You can't go into a job thinking this is my job description, and I'm going to stick with it. Sometimes you have to go out of your lane to help others. Don't hyper-focus so much on learning one skill, especially in this business." ▣



CENTERPLATE CONGRATULATES BETH PAUL

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and honor! Thank you for Making It
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Congratulations

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Maureen Andersen

President and CEO, International Ticketing Association

Pam Matthews

Executive Director, IEBA

Kate McMahon

Executive Vice President, Messina Touring Group

Beth Paul

General Manager, Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville Arena District

Michele "Mel" Raines

Senior Vice President of Arena Operations, Pacers Sports & Entertainment

Rena Wasserman

*Senior Vice President, Production & Operations, Business Development,
Nederlander Concerts*

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

STEADY
HAND
ON THE
WHEEL

EDITOR'S
CHOICE

From political conventions to Pacers Sports & Entertainment, **Mel Raines** is a pro's pro

BY NOELLE RILEY

MICHELE "MEL" RAINES knows how to go the extra mile, even when that means closing the road.

As the senior vice president of facilities operations for Pacers Sports & Entertainment, Raines was instrumental in the bid that her organization made in 2017 to bring the 2021 NBA All-Star Game to Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

"Instead of just FedExing it to New York City to the league office, (Pacers Sports & Entertainment Chief Operating Officer) Rick Fuson came up with the idea to get in an Indy car and drive it down Fifth Avenue and deliver it to Commissioner Adam Silver with Larry Bird (at the time the Pacers' president of basketball operations) driving it," she said. "I figured out how to close six blocks of Fifth Avenue."

She worked with the city's Police Department to close one lane of traffic. The Indy car arrived

wrapped in NBA 2021 All-Star decals, which Raines was able to pull off thanks to her network of friends and colleagues at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Winning the bid was one of Raines' biggest accomplishments since joining PS&E four years. Her next big on in on the horizon: a coming \$350 million renovation to Bankers Life Fieldhouse, home to the NBA's Indiana Pacers and the WNBA's Indiana Fever.

"She's done an incredible job in her role. I hope more cities are willing to hire women in these roles when they have opportunities," said Allison Melangton, senior vice president of events at Hulman

**SENIOR VICE
PRESIDENT
OF FACILITIES
OPERATIONS,
PACERS
SPORTS &
ENTERTAINMENT**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY PACERS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PACERS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT CONGRATULATES

MEL RAINES

**WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE
CLASS OF 2019**
**AN HONOR
WELL DESERVED!**





Raines with her senior team at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

Motorsports, owner of the speedway.

As president and CEO of the 2012 Super Bowl Host Committee in Indianapolis, Melangton said, "I had a couple of people call me and say you should look at this young woman." Raines was working in Washington D.C., doing political consulting at lobbying firm Navigators Global with Cheney's daughter Mary. She loved that Raines had worked on several political conventions, including logistics, operations, security, parking and venue management.

"The only larger event than the Super Bowl to run in the U.S. is a political convention," Melangton said.

"I'm able to sit in my chair now and understand people on the other side." — MEL RAINES

"She came in and knocked (the committee's) socks off," Melangton said. "It took 2 minutes and I said, 'That's the person we need to deliver a great Super Bowl.'"

They hired Raines immediately, and she and Melangton quickly became known as powerful women in the venue industry who not only get the job done but exceed expectations, Melangton said.

Before working on the venue side, Raines was a client. She has worked on six Republican National Conventions, organizing every aspect of how the conventions ran at any given venue. "I'm able to sit in my chair now and understand people on the other side," Raines said.

She started her position at the Pacers in 2015, and instead of using her vacation time in 2016 to travel or relax, she chose to go to Cleveland and work as a consultant on the 2016 Republican National Convention.

Those experiences gave her skills that others in the venue industry lack, Melangton said.

"The number of high-profile positions for women in sports the last 20 years has dramatically increased. I think that's a great statement for younger women to believe there can be careers in sports," Melangton said. "When I was the CEO of the 2012 Super Bowl Committee, I was only the second woman in 46 Super Bowls to hold that title. Since then, there have been three other women who have held that position."

Raines is only the third woman to hold a senior vice president title for an NBA arena. "Now we added a fourth and a fifth," Raines said.

Her career highlights also include being the assistant of political affairs for Vice President Dick Cheney from 2006 to '07. "It was one of the great honors of my life to work in the White House. You're in awe every day that you work there," she said.

After President Barack Obama won the presidency in 2008, she continued political consulting, but was eyeing positions in Indianapolis, hoping to go back to the state. She graduated from Indiana University with a degree in telecommunications.

"I knew that Indianapolis had won the Super Bowl bid. I applied online with 150 other people," Raines said. She opted not to call her connections in Indianapolis to recommend her for the job, wanting to see if her resume would shine on its own — and it did. That's when her friendship and professional relationship with Melangton began.

"I've also worked on six Super Bowls since we hosted it," Raines said.

When her current position opened up with the Pacers, Fuson, her boss, thought it was a no-brainer to hire her. "I think she's as good as there is. I've been with the Pacers for 35 years and ran the arena for over 30 years. When I decided I was going to look for someone to run the arena, she was on the top of the list," Fuson said. "She had the strong event background and strong management background. She's had a lovely career and has a personality that we knew would be a positive thing going for us in the future."

Fuson also recognizes the lack of women in leadership roles throughout the sports and arena business.

"There are not many women in our industry who run arenas like she does," he said. "I think it's important for women to know that there are still industries that need to be broken into and this is one of them."

In addition to hosting the 2021 NBA All-Star Game, Raines will lead Bankers Life Fieldhouse through a \$360 million renovation starting after the 2020 season.

The state will pay for roughly \$270 million of the renovations and Pacers Sports & Entertainment will fund \$65 million. The city will contribute \$25 million. The deal also ensures the Pacers will remain in Indianapolis for 25 years.

The renovations will be done in three phases, with projections that the final phase will be completed by October 2022. Upgrades include redoing the interior of the facility from Feb. 1 to Oct. 1, 2020, in phase one. The next phase includes expanding the pavilion into an outdoor plaza with an ice skating rink, along with more interior renovations starting Dec. 31 2021. The last phase will complete the expansion and give the entire arena an exterior face-lift.

Indoor renovations include upgrading all concessions, suites, seating and technology. The seven rows of balcony space will be knocked out and expanded into standing area for guests. They'll add new suites and renovate the old ones. "There's not much of the building that won't be touched," Raines said.

Raines works hard, but she also enjoys downtime with

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

"It took 2 minutes and I said, 'That's the person we need to deliver a great Super Bowl.'"

— ALLISON MELANGTON

family when she can. "I am not married, which makes it easy to move around as much as I have," she said, but her sister has five children between the ages of 5 and 15. "They come down to Indianapolis quite a bit to see things we host."

On a personal level, Raines is a great person to have as a friend, Melangton said.

"Mel is very witty and very funny. There is no one more fun to go have a beer with," she said.

She's also thoughtful of others and a compassionate person. "So she is just a really incredible person. She a great friend and a great role model for young women," Melangton said. ▽

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
VISIONARY PARTNER
MEL RAINES

Here's to influencing a bright future for Pacers Sports and Entertainment together for many more years!

Levy

BACKSTAGE POWERHOUSE

Rena Wasserman learned the game from Bill Graham, then put her stamp on venues like the Wiltern and the Greek

BY BRAD WEISSBERG



WOMEN OF
INFLUENCE

SENIOR VICE
PRESIDENT OF
PRODUCTION
AND
OPERATIONS,
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT,
NEDERLANDER
CONCERTS

RENA WASSERMAN IS old school and just as feisty as expected for someone who worked for the legendary Bill Graham, reopened and managed Los Angeles' famed Wiltern Theatre, ran L.A.'s iconic Greek Theatre for 10 years, and then went on to become Nederlander Concerts' senior vice president of production and operations and business development.

"I started making a living in the theater at 15 years old," Wasserman said. "In high school I loved the theater. Not acting, but anything backstage. Stage

managing, lighting and sound were my interests."

Wasserman's ticket to show business arrived when rock 'n' roll promoter Graham came to her Berkeley, Calif., high school looking for interns. The group became known as the Berkeley Kids, and with one exception they are all in the music industry today.

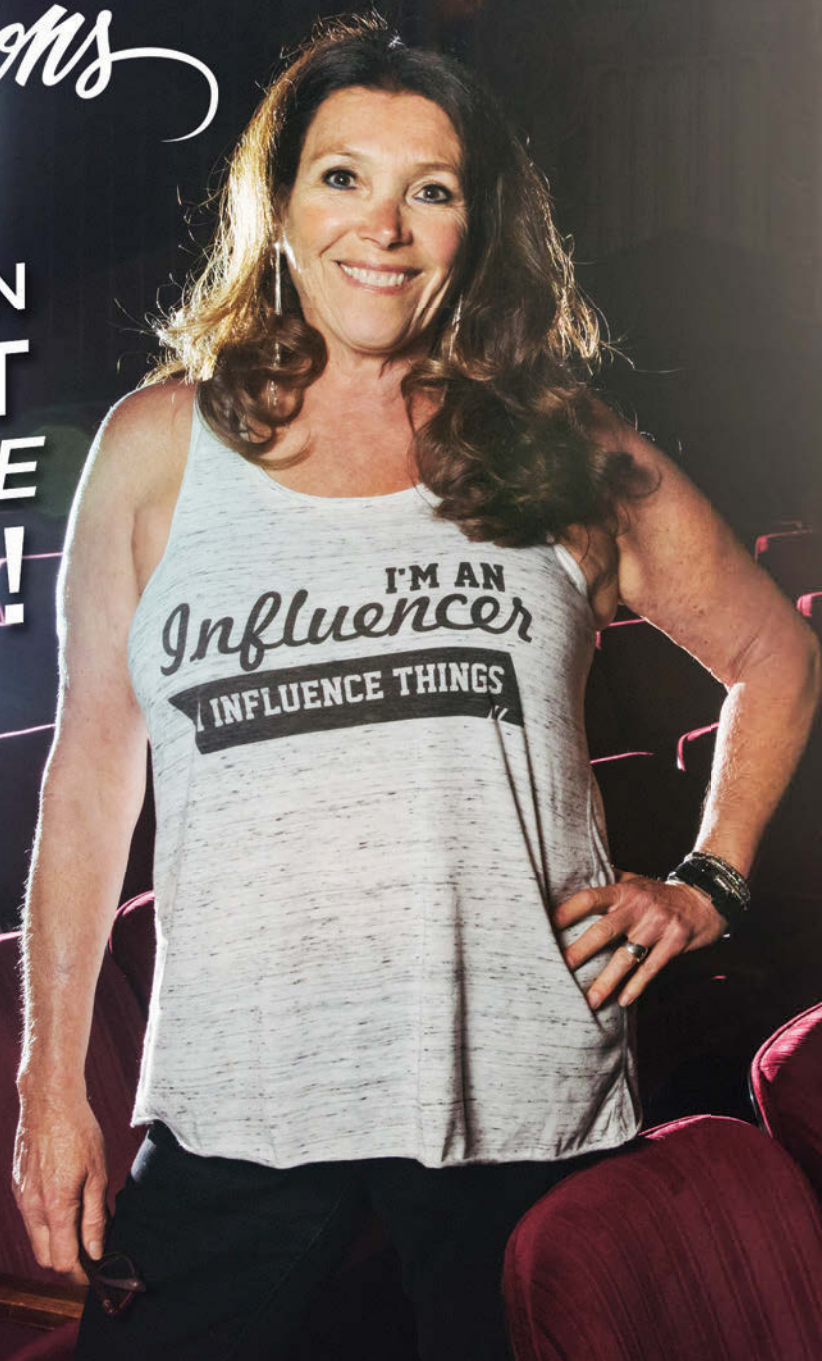
After high school, Wasserman went to UCLA and studied theater tech. "I did not need to go to college to get a degree to make a living in this industry,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

COURTESY NEDERLANDER CONCERTS

Congratulations

YOU'VE BEEN
A GREAT
INFLUENCE
ON US!



RENA WASSERMAN

WINNER OF VENUESNOW'S 2019
'WOMEN OF INFLUENCE'



N E D E R L A N D E R C O N C E R T S

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42

Wasserman said. “I went to college because my mother wanted me to go, because she was not able to go.”

Throughout college Wasserman was always working and getting paid to do theater jobs. One of those jobs,

Wasserman casually threw out, was when she opened

“I crawled in the rafters with rats crawling around me. I know every inch of that venue.”

— RENA WASSERMAN ON THE WILTERN RENOVATION

Sunset Boulevard’s infamous Roxy nightclub in 1973, running a follow spotlight on Neil Young, who played the first show there.

Wasserman left Los Angeles after college, moved across the country to New Hampshire and took a job as the technical coordinator for Dartmouth College’s Hopkins Center for the Performing Arts.

She stayed for seven years — and then Bill Graham came calling in 1985.

“Bill wanted me to come reopen the Wiltern in Los Angeles,” Wasserman said. “The venue was a gorgeous, old 2,300-seat art deco movie palace that had been closed for many years and was brought back to life.

“I crawled in the rafters with rats crawling around me. I know every inch of that venue. Opening it up and bringing it back to its splendor was really exciting.”

She wound up spending five years at the Wiltern as the production manager and the next 15 years as the general manager.

The refurbished Wiltern’s opening night, which featured the Alvin Ailey dance company, was a highlight for Wasserman. “I had a history with Alvin Ailey,” she said. “I have always loved to do dance presentations and you don’t get to do that often in a rock ‘n’ roll world.”

Tom Petty, The Rolling Stones, Van Morrison and David Bowie are just a few of the iconic acts Wassermann recalled as standouts.

One of her favorite memories from that time was the day she persuaded Bill Graham to replace her as production manager with her husband, Reid Bartlett. Graham agreed and Bartlett remains in that position at the Wiltern to this day. They’ve been married 32 years.

Wasserman credits Graham for teaching her just about everything she ever really needed to know about a career in the music industry.

“Everything I know, and the way I approach my work in the industry, came straight from what I witnessed and observed from being around Bill at a very young age. How he created ambiance in a dressing room. How he made the fans feel important and cared about how that fan felt from the moment they bought a ticket to how they felt at the end of a show. I think a lot of the things that were important to Bill are often overlooked by promoters and venue operators today. And I have never forgotten them. Both the fans and the artists were equally important to Bill.”

Wasserman is passionate about her work, evidenced by the fact that she is still burned up about the 2002 decision by SFX, the owners of the Wiltern at the time, to remove all the seating on the orchestra level to create a general admission standing room mosh pit.

“It was the worst day ever in my career when that actually came to fruition,” she said. “I made peace with it eventually.”

Candace Croteau, executive vice president of the Maui Arts and Cultural Center, has known Wasserman since 1986 when Croteau came to work at the Wiltern.

“We had an immediate connection,” Croteau said. “Rena is loyal and supportive. I’ve known her through all the highs and lows of life. When I had a family emergency, she dropped everything and got on a plane to be with me.

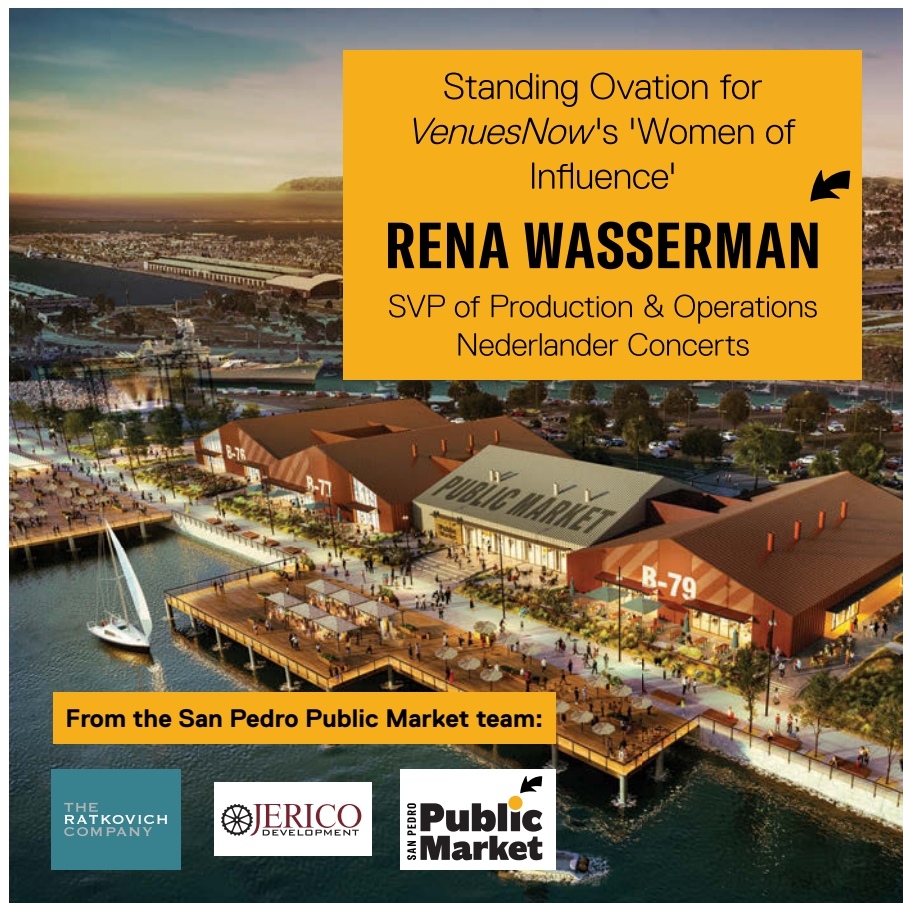
“When I moved to Maui, Rena threw a surprise party for me and even flew out my sister and her husband from New Jersey and invited everyone we cared about to come see me off.

“Rena is a complex human being. She’s always the biggest personality and magnet in the room wherever you are. She is fiercely, boldly herself without any fear of reprisal. That same open, quick intellect translates to every side of her personality.”

And while Croteau can easily reel off flattering superlatives about Wasserman’s kindness and generosity, she will also tell you that Wasserman is no pushover.

“Powerful union guys will not cross her,” Croteau said, laughing.

Croteau also pointed out that Wasserman



Standing Ovation for
VenuesNow's 'Women of
Influence'

RENA WASSERMAN
SVP of Production & Operations
Nederlander Concerts

From the San Pedro Public Market team:

THE RATKOVICH COMPANY
JERICO DEVELOPMENT
SAN PEDRO Public Market

was a pioneer in making inroads into the music business for women.

"Rena has been at the forefront of this business 30 years ahead of the game," Croteau said. "She made bringing your kids to work a thing, and that alone is enough of a legacy for Rena to be a major influencer."

Wasserman has four daughters: Casey, Robyn, Jenny and Cody.

"I brought them all to the Wiltern when they were kids," Wasserman said. "They were all brought up sitting on mixing boards."

In 2005, Wasserman left the Wiltern to become the general manager at the Greek Theatre for Nederlander Concerts.

The biggest difference between Wasserman's job at the Wiltern and her job at the Greek? "I didn't have to lock the door at the end of the night," she said. "The size of the staffing was so different. The Greek is a 6,000-seat venue. It's outdoors. I never had to deal with the volume of the sound in the neighborhood before or the traffic to get in and out of the venue."

Those issues, traffic and noise, became her biggest challenges. "My No. 1 job was keeping the neighborhood happy, which I feel I did, based on the massive support Nederlander received when we lost the Greek Theatre contract in 2015."

Wasserman moved her office to The Pantages Theatre. "It's a great office, but I overlook a busy street and not green mountains," she said wryly of her Hollywood Boulevard office.

Wasserman now oversees operations for the 300-

plus events Nederlander Concerts promotes each year. She looks for new opportunities to book Nederlander shows, places to develop new venues, and opportunities where the company can form partnerships. Nederlander Concerts programs and promotes shows in more than 45 venues.

"This company is one of the best independent compa-



"She made bringing your kids to work a thing, and that alone is enough of a legacy."

— CANDACE CROTEAU

nies around," she said. "It's not corporate. It doesn't report to Wall Street. It has an owner you can talk to and disagree with. The work environment is happy. We have an amazing team. Working with (Nederlander CEO) Alex Hodges is fun."

And while Wasserman said she enjoys the broad aspects of her job, she's a venue gal at heart and definitely misses not having a venue to call her own.

"I miss managing and giving a personality to a facility," Wasserman said. "Going to all the buildings is great, but at the end of the day I will likely be happiest in a venue to call home." ▀

Congratulations
RENA WASSERMAN

YOU ARE A TRUE WOMAN OF INFLUENCE.
WE LOVE YOU.

Jackson Browne,
Buddha & Cree Miller, Dennis Scrimo
and all of us at
TRIPLE O PRODUCTIONS