



NEWS RELEASE

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**Long-time Comic-Con Executive Director Fae Desmond to
receive Inaugural Carol Wallace Women in Hospitality
and Tourism Lifetime Achievement Award**

Luncheon will honor six female leaders in San Diego's
regional hospitality and tourism sector

(San Diego, CA): Honoring six regional female leaders in hospitality and tourism who have led the way for other women, the 3rd annual Women in Hospitality and Tourism (WITH) Luncheon sponsored by the Multi-Cultural Convention Services Network (MCCSN) will occur on Thursday, March 22, 2018, with registration beginning at 11 a.m. The event, held at the Four-Points by Sheraton located at 8110 Aero Drive, will include a panel discussion among the honorees who will share their lessons learned on their path to success.

This year MCCSN will inaugurate its highest honor with ***Carol Wallace Lifetime Achievement WITH Award***. The award, presented annually, recognizes an individual whose vision, innovation and leadership have made a significant impact on the growth of San Diego's tourism and hospitality industry and San Diego's economy. Wallace, who has been a leader in the convention and meeting industry for 35 years, most recently as the president and CEO of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation for 25 years, will present the award.

MCCSN is pleased to announce the inaugural recipient is Fae Desmond, Executive Director of Comic-Con International: San Diego. Under Fae's leadership Comic-Con has become the definitive organization dedicated to creating awareness of, and appreciation for, comics and related popular artforms, primarily through conventions and events that celebrate the contribution of comics to art and culture. Fae rarely gives interviews, so this opportunity to meet and talk with her is exciting and a highlight of the lunch. Like all WITH honorees, through volunteer work, community service or business accomplishments, Fae has made invaluable contributions to San Diego's reputation as one of the best places to visit in the USA.

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In addition to Fae, five other leaders in San Diego's tourism and hospitality sector are being honored at the WITH luncheon:

- **Randa J. Coniglio**, President/CEO Port of San Diego. As CEO of the Port of San Diego, Randa leads a workforce of more than 500 talented and committed public servants overseeing land along San Diego's waterfront, home to numerous visitor attractions including the San Diego Convention Center, Seaport Village, and Embarcadero.
- **Marilyn Hannes**, Park President SeaWorld & Aquatica, San Diego SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. Marilyn was appointed Park President for SeaWorld and Aquatica in April 2016. As SeaWorld's first woman Park President, she is responsible for more than 4,600 ambassadors and 12,000 animals.
- **Deborah Scott**, Executive Chef & Partner of Cohn Restaurant Group Coasterra, Indigo Grill, C Level / Island Prime, & Vintana. As one of San Diego's most renowned celebrity chefs, Deborah is known for her diverse tastes and ability to create innovative dishes with an emphasis on presentation.
- **Dania Duke**, General Manager Hilton San Diego Gaslamp. Dania's career spans over 28 years including General Manager of the world's top hotel brands. Dania is praised as "caring" by employees, "results-oriented" by employers and "welcoming and memorable" by guests of the Hyatt and Hilton hotels, and "innovative" by industry professionals.
- **Barbara Moreno**, Executive Director of Communications San Diego Convention Center Corporation. Barbara is the chief storyteller for the convention center, producing award-winning content for an award-winning venue. The San Diego Convention Center's blog was named PR News' best Non-Profit blog in the nation, and Barbara was named one of PR News Top Women in PR in 2017. Under her direction, the Corporation's Communications Team has won more than two dozen awards in four years.

"Through hard work, persistence, and dedication these women are leading the way for a new generation of female leaders in San Diego's third largest industry, tourism and hospitality," said Clara Carter, President, and Founder of MCCSN. "During March, officially Women's History Month, we take the time to acknowledge and applaud these strong leaders."

"San Diego is a premier tourist destination because of incredible leaders who dedicate themselves to making San Diego's cultural experience worthy of its international recognition," said San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer. "Congratulations to Fae Desmond and all of the female honorees whose leadership and vision are strengthening our tourism industry each and every day."

Guests will enjoy a delicious lunch, live entertainment, and silent auction with destination gifts. Proceeds from the W.I.T.H. silent auction will benefit Mt. Miguel High School Matador Business Academy and are tax deductible. The Academy's mission is to develop compassionate, collaborative, college, and career ready students in the underserved communities of Spring Valley and Lemon Grove.

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