

Sky Ranch Commemorates 50 Years

Sky Ranch Foundation Supporters and WAABI Chapter Leaders Gather in South Dakota for Historic Event

On June 6th, The Sky Ranch Foundation hosted supporters of Sky Ranch for Boys and WAABI members in Deadwood, SD, for the Sky Ranch Hall of Fame Dinner. This year's event was particularly special as beverage alcohol industry leaders came together to celebrate Sky Ranch for Boys' 50th Anniversary.

At the event, special pioneer recognition went to Nancy Brady, the president of Sky Ranch, in tribute to over 20 years of devoted service to the organization. In honor of its 50th year, for the first time another special pioneer award was given to Bill Walsh, who was an employee at Sky Ranch in its earliest years and now sits on its board. Beverage Media Group's William Slone was in attendance to present the Mentor of the Year Award to Barb Hubbard, who tirelessly works to find suitable mentors for each boy. In addition, Thomas C. Cole of RNDC was named wholesale tier honoree, and John Esposito, president & CEO of Bacardi USA, was named supplier tier honoree. Harry Wiles

of ABL was honored as a retailer, while Tobin Thomas of Beam Global and VP, WAABI was recognized for allied organizations.

Industry leaders including Charles Merinoff, CEO of The Charmer Sunbelt Group, Jim Bareuther, EVP at Brown-Forman and John McDonnell, COO of Patrón, were there along with regional notables such as Sydney Ross of General Wine & Spirits in Michigan, longtime Sky Ranch supporter Robert Lipman of Lipman Brothers in Nashville and Robert Swearingen, the president of the Tavern League of Wisconsin.

From June 5th–8th, The World Association of the Alcohol Beverage Industry held its annual Leadership Conference in Deadwood, and took part in the Sky Ranch 50th anniversary events as WAABI focuses its charitable efforts on Sky Ranch for Boys. This year 50 delegates attended from the eight chapters across the country. For many of them, the most rewarding part of the conference was the visit to Sky Ranch since many had never visited before, taking the opportunity to meet the boys,

their teachers and counselors and see what their hard work and fundraising efforts had wrought.

For the first time in WAABI Leadership Conference history, a sitting Congressman addressed the group. Kevin Brady (R-TX), who was in town to help honor his mother Nancy, president of Sky Ranch for Boys, sits on the Ways and Means Committee in the House and spoke to those present about the very relevant issue of taxation. Other noteworthy speakers included Craig Wolf, WSWA president, who discussed wholesalers' concerns today, reinforcing the pivotal role that the states play in regulating the alcohol beverage system. ■

1. WAABI leadership: George McCarthy, Stephanie Flannery, Tobin Thomas, Duncan Cameron, Ralph Aguera, Paul Houston, Peggy Donovan, Mike Donohoe, Tony Abbinante 2. William Slone, BMG and Suzanne Riga, Green's Beverages 3. Duncan Cameron and Robert "Bubba" Spranger, Tavern League of WI 4. John Esposito, Bacardi at the Sky Ranch Hall of Fame Dinner 5. George McCarthy, Corby Distilleries and Charles Merinoff, CSG 6. Jim Bareuther, Brown-Forman and David Jabour, ABL president 7. Tom Cole, RNDC; John & Cathy McDonnell, Patrón Spirits Company

