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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

ILLINOIS HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION CELEBRATED INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES AT  
30<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP & STATE STARS OF THE INDUSTRY HOLIDAY LUNCHEON  
*State-Wide Employees Honored on December 14, 2018*

CHICAGO, IL—The **Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association** (IHLA) celebrated the outstanding accomplishments, service and leadership of IHLA member hotel employees in the hospitality and lodging industry at its **30<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership & State Stars of the Industry Holiday Luncheon** on December 14, 2018. Awards were presented in 11 different categories to individuals from across the state in a celebratory luncheon filled with fabulous food, music and memorable moments throughout the entire afternoon.

“After an exceptionally transitional year for IHLA, it is so humbling and rewarding for us all to come together and celebrate the individuals who make us want to go to work every day,” said IHLA President and CEO **Michael Jacobson**. “It is truly an honor and joy to witness the support and admiration that each nominee is shown by their colleagues throughout the entire event. This is an opportunity for those behind the scenes to get the appreciation and attention they deserve, and we are so thrilled to celebrate them each and every year, especially during the holiday season where a bit of cheer always goes a long way.”

The inspiring afternoon took place at the Swissotel Chicago and welcomed both the city and state’s industry employees, many of whom who were nominated for a star. The event was hosted by Emmy award-winning writers, journalists and TV personalities **Marianne Murciano** and **Bob Sirott** who presented each award to the deserving recipients. A special “Year in Review” video was presented, showcasing the incredible events and opportunities that IHLA provides year-round.

In celebration of the season, and in conjunction with the Chicago Police Department Community Relations Division and Domestic Violence Programs, IHLA collected gently used and new winter coats, scarves, socks, hats and mittens during the luncheon for those in need as part of their annual *Cold Hands, Warm Hearts* donation program.



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## STATE STARS OF THE INDUSTRY:

- Hotelier of the Year: **Lisa Timbo** | JW Marriott Chicago
- Department-Division Head Employee of the Year: **Ashley Hoppe** | The Hyatt Lodge at McDonald's Campus
- Manager of the Year: **Ashley Walter** | DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington
- Administrative Employee of the Year: **Corey Taylor** | Four Seasons Hotel Chicago
- Bell Staff Employee of the Year: **Chris Lindo** | The Drake, a Hilton Hotel
- First-Level Supervisor Employee of the Year: **Alexis Chapman** | Eastland Suites Hotel & Conference Center Bloomington
- Food & Beverage Employee of the Year - Front of House: **Dominique Chandler** | Hotel EMC2, Autograph Collection
- Food & Beverage Employee of the Year - Heart of House: **Emmanuel Williams** | Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile
- Guest Services Employee of the Year: **Cecilia Jordan** | Hampton Inn Peoria-East At The River Boat Crossing
- Housekeeping Employee of the Year: **Maria Nataly Cenicerros** | Residence Inn by Marriott Bloomington
- Maintenance Employee of the Year: **Daniel Rodriguez** | Eastland Suites Hotel & Conference Center - Bloomington
- Allied Member of the Year: **Robert Bernstein** | Laner Muchin, Ltd.
- Community Service Award: **Hotel EMC2, Autograph Collection**
- Good EarthKeeping Award: **Holiday Inn Chicago-Mart Plaza River North**

*\*For a full list of winners, please visit [illinoishotels.org/stars](http://illinoishotels.org/stars).*

### About Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association

The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association (IHLA) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) trade association that represents the lodging industry in Illinois. IHLA members consist of over 500 hotels and their employees throughout the state as well as related industry partners and suppliers. IHLA provides significant benefits to its members by advocating the industry's position on political issues, educating through quality, relevant seminars and webinars, providing promotional exposure and access to current industry news, resources, and contacts through IHLA's website, marketing initiatives, member programs, and networking events, and recognizing hotel employees for their outstanding accomplishments, service, and leadership in the Illinois hospitality and lodging industry. For more information, visit [www.illinoishotels.org](http://www.illinoishotels.org) and follow the latest news on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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