

## **2023-2024 IAVM SLATE OF OFFICERS**



**Chairman of the Board: Adam Cook, CVE**

**Adam Cook, CVE** serves as the Director of Tacoma Venues & Events (TVE) where he is responsible for leading the operations and management of the City's public assembly facilities. TVE manages renowned venues, including the Tacoma Dome (5,000-23,000 capacity); the Greater Tacoma Convention Center (119,000 sq ft); Cheney Stadium, home of the Tacoma Rainiers; and the historic Pantages and Rialto Theaters, and Theatre on the Square.

Cook has led sports and entertainment venues across North America for more than 20 years. His experience includes serving as Deputy Director for TVE, Vice President of Business Operations for Seafair (Seattle, WA), Vice President and General Manager at the Rose Quarter (Portland, OR), Venue Director and General Manager at Edmonton Expo Centre and Rexall Place (Edmonton, AB, Canada), and Acting General Manager for Global Spectrum at Comcast Arena (Everett, WA).

Cook served on the Venue Management School (VMS) Board of Regents and has served on IAVM's Audit, Governance, Arenas, and Membership committees, as a member of its Board of Directors, and as a part of Region 4's leadership. He was named a recipient of the Venues Today Generation Next Award in 2014 and has engaged in speaking opportunities and published articles throughout the industry.



**First Vice Chair: Anne Wheat, CVE**

**Anne Wheat, CVE** has been the Event Operations General Manager at Pier 57 with Google since August 2021. This marquee venue features over 130,000 sq ft of broadcast-quality event space floating on the Hudson River in a historically preserved building that is longer than the Empire State Building is tall.

Before this position, Wheat served as the Vice President, Guest Services and Special Projects for MetLife Stadium, home of the New York Giants and New York Jets. In addition to hundreds of MetLife Stadium events, she has also worked as an NFL consultant for nine Super Bowls and as the Venue Director for the three NYNJ games of the 2016 COPA America Centenario tournament.

Prior to her time at the Stadium, Wheat worked for the Chicago White Sox for nearly 10 seasons which included working over 800 baseball games, the 2003 MLB All Star Events, and 3 post-season runs including the 2005 World Series Championship.

Beyond her experience in sporting venues, Wheat developed her guest service and leadership skills in various other organizations, including professional theater and retail stores. Key elements of her expertise come in the form of guest experience, staff training and development, communication, and organizational design. She is also proud to have been a master trainer with the T.E.A.M. Coalition since May of 2005.

Wheat currently holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Chicago, a Master of Arts in Arts Management from Columbia College and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with concentrations in General and Analytic Management, Operations and Organizational Behavior.



### **Second Vice Chair: Stacey Church, CVE**

**Stacey Church, CVE** currently serves as the General Manager at Dallas Fair Park in Dallas, TX. Covering 277-acres just east of downtown Dallas, Fair Park's cultural, historical, and entertainment venues play host to visitors from around the world every day of the year.

Church began her venue management career as Director of Finance in South Bend, IN at the Century Center and then in Springfield, MA at the MassMutual Center in both Assistant General Manager and General Manager capacities. She has also held leadership roles at the Fort Worth Convention Center and Will Rogers Memorial Center in Fort Worth, TX; and the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville, KY where she reopened the newly renovated convention center. Prior to her current role, Church served as the Assistant General Manager at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas.

Church, a graduate of the University of Kentucky (GO CATS!), earned her Certified Venue Executive (CVE) designation in 2022. While she currently serves as the Region 6 Assistant Director, Church has a passion for giving back through volunteerism and has served on multiple IAVM committees. She currently lives with her family in East Dallas.



**Past Chair: Kerry Painter, CVE, CMP, CEM**

**Kerry Painter, CVE, CEM, CMP** is the General Manager/Director of the Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Complex which encompasses the Raleigh Convention Center, Duke Energy Performing Arts Center, Red Hat Amphitheater and Walnut Creek Amphitheater. Previously, Painter was the AGM in Tulsa Oklahoma where the convention center won the Venue Excellence award in 2017. Earlier to that, Painter was the President/GM in Niagara Falls Canada and has assisted in constructing/opening five venues in total throughout her lengthy career.

Painter is a member of IAVM, IAEE and PCMA, and has served on several boards/committees both within the industry and in her communities. She currently serves on the IAVM Foundation Board of Trustees, and the Board of Regents. Painter created the 100+ Women campaign now launched into its sixth year. She was awarded Venues Today Woman of Influence in 2015, and Woman of Distinction in 2017.

Painter teaches at the Venue Management School yearly and was the Exchange Instructor in 2013 for the Venue Management school in Australia. As well, she teaches both domestic and internationally for CEM classes through IAEE (Korea, Saudi and Bangkok), and advises for Meredith woman's college in Raleigh. Painter is a graduate of University of Michigan majoring in Business, Economics and Communications.



**Director – Region 1: Phil Costa, CVP**

**Philip Costa, CVP** was recently promoted to the role of Deputy Director at the Baltimore Convention Center (BCC) where he reports directly to the Executive Director. He manages all Departmental Directors for all operations within the organization and oversees the contract and relationship management of all Service Partners at the BCC. In this role, he also assists with organizational projects related to culture, sustainability, art, technology, and DEI.

In addition to Region 1 involvement, Costa is the chair of IAVM's Young Professional Committee and Sustainability Committee. His first involvement with IAVM (then, IAAM) was in college, where he was an intern at VenueConnect. Costa earned his Certified Venue Professional (CVP) designation in 2018.

Previously, Costa was the Director of Operations at the BCC where he managed a staff of over 60 employees and led many sustainability projects. Prior to Baltimore, Costa worked at the Augusta Entertainment Complex in Augusta, GA as the Event Manager where he oversaw operations for events. At the Stephen C. O'Connell Center in Gainesville, FL Costa worked as a Senior Event Coordinator.

Costa holds dual Bachelor's Degrees from the University of Florida and both a Masters of Business Administration and a Masters of Sports Business Management from the University of Central Florida.



### **Director – Region 2: Maria Tofalo, CVP**

**Maria Tofalo, CVP** is the Director of Event Development for Haslam Sports Group, focused on booking major and secondary events at Cleveland Browns Stadium in Cleveland, OH, and Lower.com Field and Historic Crew Stadium in Columbus, OH. She has 10 years of experience in venue management, concert and festival promotion, and event booking.

Tofalo has served IAVM's Region 2 as an officer since 2022 and has been a Young Professional member of IAVM since 2020. She also serves on the board of Women in Sports & Events (WISE) – Cleveland Chapter and serves on the Associate Board for the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission. She is humbled by the opportunity to continue to serve Region 2 as the Director and the Association.



### **Director – Region 3: Tiffany Vickaryous-Hubbard**

**Tiffany Vickaryous-Hubbard** is the Assistant GM/Booking manager for SCHEELS arena in Fargo, ND and has been an influential part of the venue management industry starting out in Food and Beverage and worked her way to the building management side.

Vickaryous-Hubbard has worked in convention centers to racetracks and supported events around the US and Canada.

Vickaryous-Hubbard joined IAVM in 2016 and has been active with the Mentoring Committee as well as Region 3 leadership. She lives in Bemidji, MN where she enjoys her family, the lake life and fostering puppies!



**Director – Region 4: Cody Lund**

**Cody Lund** serves as the Executive Director of Boise Centre, an award-winning convention facility located in beautiful downtown Boise, Idaho. With over 18 years of experience at Boise Centre, Lund has held various roles, including overseeing the successful expansion of Boise Centre East in 2016 and assisting in the creation and development of Boise Centre’s signature culture program, Wowgistics.

Lund is a proud and active member of Capital City Kiwanis, where he was named Kiwanian of the Year in 2022. In the same year, he was also recognized as Manager of the Year at Boise’s ROSE Awards. Lund is a member of several industry-related associations, such as SKAL, NIGP, IPPA, and IAVM, where he will assume the role of Director of Region 4 this year.

In his spare time, Lund enjoys playing golf and visiting local establishments for lunch, dinner, or to catch a game or concert, as he is a big fan of sports and live music.



**Director – Region 5: Timothy Hemphill, CVP**

**Timothy R. Hemphill, CVP** is the Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Events for the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. In this capacity, Hemphill is charged with strategic planning and oversight of the event services, sales, marketing and communications initiatives for the Center. He has served over 30 years in the meeting, convention and travel industry that included the involvement with various types of destinations and the design and management of several public meeting facilities. He oversaw one of the largest CVB budgets in the country and received numerous awards for excellence in sales, marketing and public relations.

During his fifteen-year tenure at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Hemphill has been responsible for several unique initiatives including the acquisition of a UPS Store franchise, and launching a department to produce trade shows and conferences. Under his oversight ResCon, a

global summit on resilience, was launched and most recently formed a partnership with the National Governors Association to co-produce the event. ResCon and the other owned shows are intended to fill need months and generate a new source of revenue.

Hemphill's career in the industry also includes service with CVBs in Fort Worth and Beaumont, Texas; Bakersfield, California; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana and was selected as a delegate to the White House Conference of Tourism. Hemphill holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University. He is or has been an active member of Professional Convention Management Association, International Association of Exhibitions and Events, Meeting Professionals International, Travel Industry Association of America and the American Society of Association Executives. He is a member of and is an officer for Region 5 of the International Association of Venue Managers. Hemphill is a past two-time President of the Board of Directors for the Skala International Club of New Orleans. In 2022, he was named to the CityBusiness "Power 20" list.



### **Director – Region 6: Nick Zazal, CVP**

**Nick Zazal, CVP** is General Manager of the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion (AMP) in Northwest Arkansas. Previously he has served as Director of Events and Patron Services for the Walton Arts Center (Fayetteville, AR) and Events Director for the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (Champaign-Urbana, IL) along with several freelance positions with The Christie Clinic Illinois Marathon, International Festival of Arts and Ideas (New Haven), Colorado Shakespeare Festival (Boulder) and Wildwood Park for the Performing Arts (Little Rock).

Zazal has served on several IAVM Committees including Membership (Chair 2015-2017), Performing Arts, Amphitheaters & Fairgrounds, Industry Affairs and the Region Guidelines Task Force. He has been an officer in Region 6 since 2017.

Zazal holds a BFA in Stage Management (2004) and an MS in Recreation, Sports and Tourism (2010) both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A VMS graduate in 2013, he earned his CVP in 2017.

Zazal lives in Fayetteville, AR with his wife, Sallie, and two kids, Anya and Jack.



### **Director – Region 7: Danny Wheeler, CVE**

**Danny Wheeler, CVE** works for OVG360 and serves as the General Manager of the Utah Valley Convention Center, located in Provo, Utah. He has worked in various venues over the past 20 years including LaVell Edwards Stadium and the Marriott Center on the campus of Brigham Young University, the Overland Park Convention Center, the Iowa Events Center and the St. Charles Convention Center, prior to opening the Utah Valley Convention Center. Wheeler currently serves on numerous boards including Past Chair of the IAVM's Utah Chapter, Chair of the Utah County Tourism Tax Advisory Board, Board Member and Sales Committee Chair for Explore Utah Valley, and Advisory Board Member for Utah Valley University's Event Management program.

Wheeler teaches the Event and Venue Management class at Utah's largest university, Utah Valley University, as part of the Hospitality and Event Management majors. He achieved IAVM's highest level of certification when he was awarded his Certified Venue Executive (CVE) in 2017. Wheeler has also previously served on IAVM's Finance and Convention Center committees. He and his wife Laura live in Lehi, Utah and are the parents of four children.



### **Director - IAVM/VMA Asia Pacific: Phil King, AVM**

**Phil King, AVM** is the Managing Director for Ticketek Australia.

His previous roles were Chief Commercial Officer at the South Australian Cricket Association and General Manager of the Adelaide Entertainment Centre and Coopers Stadium, which encompassed the overall managerial responsibility for the operational and commercial aspects of both venues.

Prior to moving to Adelaide, King was the Director of Live Entertainment at the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICCS) from 2016 to 2018 and was part of the pre-opening team. From 2011 to 2015 King was the Commercial Manager at Qudos Bank Arena (QBA), Australia's largest indoor arena. Prior to working at QBA, he was the Commercial Manager at Suncorp Stadium, widely regarded as the best rectangular venue in Australia, working there from 2004 to 2011.

King commenced in the venue management industry at Marvel Stadium in 2001 (formerly Colonial Stadium). He is well recognized as a Senior Venue Management Professional with more than 18 years' experience across Stadia and Arenas. King is an Accredited Venue Manager (AVM), and an alumnus of

the inaugural Venue Management School's Graduate Institute Program, a current instructor at the Venue Management School and a VMA Board Member from 2017.



**Director - Allied: Kayln Denniston, CVP**

**Kayln Denniston** is a distinguished live events industry professional with nearly a decade of experience in scoping, strategizing, and implementing enterprise-level venue management software for diverse venues worldwide. Based in Knoxville, TN, she currently serves as the Lead Solutions Engineer at Momentus Technologies. In this role, she excels in driving customer success through a blend of technical expertise and business value consultation during the pre-sales process. Her extensive career at Momentus includes roles in account management, consulting and onboarding, and front-line customer support, allowing her to engage with every point of the customer experience.

Denniston is a graduate of the prestigious Venue Management School and holds several leadership positions in industry committees. She has served as Chair of the Allied Committee and has been a member of the CEO Succession Committee, the Foundation Task Force, and the Young Professionals Committee. Additionally, she holds a Board position as a Young Professional representative with the International Entertainment Buyer's Association (IEBA).

Denniston is passionate about being a voice for Allied membership, striving to shift the perception of Allied members from a transactional, vendor relationship to positioning them as industry thought leaders and valuable resources. Her contributions to IAVM have been recognized with several accolades, including the Chair Citation in 2023, the 30|Under|30 award in 2020, and being elected by her peers as Class Representative for VMS in 2018.

Believing that the relationships forged within IAVM have been fundamental to her career growth and advancement, Denniston looks forward to making continued progress as the Allied Sector Director.



**Director - Arenas: Michael Gatto**



As the Chief Venue Officer of Columbus Arena Sports & Entertainment (CASE), **Michael Gatto** oversees the operations of Nationwide Arena, home of the NHL's Columbus Blue Jackets, and the Jerome Schottenstein Center, which hosts Ohio State Buckeye Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, and Men's Ice Hockey teams. Additionally, Gatto manages the booking and execution of all entertainment events at the iconic Ohio Stadium.

With a tenure spanning 26 years in Columbus, Gatto has played a pivotal role in establishing the city as the premier sports and entertainment hub of the Midwest. His achievements include the opening of the Schottenstein Center in 1998, the centralization of booking, marketing, ticketing, and finance departments under CASE Management, the development of Buckeye Country Superfest (a two-day country music festival at Ohio Stadium), the oversight of the \$32M renovation of the Schottenstein Center, and the leadership of the CASE team in producing and executing major sporting and entertainment events across the arenas and the Stadium. Under Gatto's guidance, CASE recently expanded its portfolio by adding Mershon Auditorium, a 2,600-seat theater located on The Ohio State University campus, to its family of venues.

With over 30 years of experience in venue management, Gatto is an active member of the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM). He has previously served as Chair of the IAVM Arenas Committee and currently holds a position on the IAVM Board as the Arenas Sector Director.

Gatto earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Widener University and a Master of Education degree in Sports Administration from Temple University.



**Director – Convention Centers: Naz Sabripour, CVP, CEM**

**Naz Sabripour, CVP, CEM** brings over 20 years of experience in the meeting and events facility industry as the Executive Director of the Pasadena Convention Center. She is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the event management, guest services, engineering, event operations, public safety, and parking departments for the convention center.

Sabripour joined the organization in 2007 as the Senior Event Manager and was promoted to Director of Convention Services and Director of Events & Operations before assuming her current role.

Sabripour came to Pasadena after five years as a sales and events manager at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Houston, followed by a graduate degree from the University of Denver. Most recently, she was awarded the Smart Meetings Smart Women Industry Leader Award in 2023. Sabripour earned both Certified Venue Professional (CVP) designation and Certified in Exhibition Management (CEM) designation in 2016.

Sabripour is an active member of the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) and currently serves on the Convention Center Committee. She is also a member of International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE).



## **Director - Performing Arts: Cindy Vargo, AFMEA**

**Cindy Vargo** is the VP of Sales at the Fabulous Fox Theatre – St. Louis MO. “The bar is set at FABULOUS!”

Vargo has over 25 years of combined experience in leading teams to exceed guest and member expectations through intentional guest service. Before joining the Fabulous Fox Theatre 19 years ago, she was Director of Membership Services for The Missouri Athletic Club. During her tenure, the MAC held Platinum status for City Clubs of America.

In her current role, Vargo oversees the sales and service initiatives that support the 32,000+ Season Ticket Holders, Group Sales, the two premium seat programs; Fabulous Fox Broadway Club and Corporate Suites, and champions the Guest Experience. She serves on the Executive Leadership Team. While at the Fabulous Fox Theatre, Vargo has been an integral part of defining the Fabulous Fox culture and creating the guest service and core value training “IT’S SHOWTIME”.

Vargo has served on the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) Performing Arts Committee and currently serves on the Strategic Leadership and Resources Committee. She has completed both Venue Management School (VMS) and the Graduate Institute (GI) and two of the three years of the Senior Executive Symposium.

Outside of work, Vargo serves on the Vision Committee for African Vision of Hope; a Non-Profit organization bringing sustainable help to the orphans and vulnerable of Zambia. On weekends, you will find her on the main stage at FBMaryville community church hosting and welcoming thousands in person and watching online.



## **Director - Stadiums: Brian Wright, CVP**

First joining IAVM as a student in college, **Brian Wright, CVP** has been an active member for over ten years. A graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Wright worked as Venue Manager at Finley Stadium & First Horizon Pavilion from 2014-2016. He moved to

Atlanta in November 2016, as one of the first hires on the Stadium Operations team for Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Over nearly six years in Atlanta, Wright served numerous roles, including Assistant Facility Manager and Project Manager as well as on the steering committees for the Green Team and Atlanta Falcons Youth Foundation.

Wright relocated back to Chattanooga in 2022, to become Executive Director at Finley Stadium and First Horizon Pavilion, tasked with overseeing a strategic capital plan to rejuvenate the 25-year-old facility.

Wright is a Venue Management School graduate, Certified Venue Professional, 30-Under-30 recipient in 2019, Mentor Connector Program participant, and has served on the Young Professionals, Stadiums, and Mentoring Committees. He is also active with other organizations, including the Green Sports Alliance and Habitat for Humanity of Greater Chattanooga.



### **Director – Universities: Michael Junod, CVE**

**Michael Junod, CVE** serves as the Director of the University Center at Mercer University. He earned the designation of a Certified Venue Executive (CVE) by the International Association of Venue Mangers (IAVM) in 2019. He also serves Mercer University as the Chair of the Board of Appeals, a Title IX Investigator and Adjunct Professor in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Junod previously worked at the Stephen C. O’Connell Center and the Macon Centerplex.

Junod has over 30 years as a Citizen- Soldier, retiring from the United States Army Reserves in 2017 at the rank of Colonel. He held command positions from Platoon Leader to Battalion Commander – deploying four times in support of our nation’s conflicts in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Junod is married to the former Leigh Ann Green of Alabama and has two daughters: Sara Grace (24) and Amelia Leigh (23) and an English Bulldog named Tubbs. The Junod family currently resides in Macon, Georgia.