



2021-2023 Board of Directors - Nominee Bios



Karen Pitcherello – Mears Transportation, Orlando, Florida

Karen began her career with Mears in June of 1988 and is currently the Director of Business Development for Mears Transportation Group and Mears Global Chauffeured Services. Ms. Pitcherello is responsible for developing and promoting international and domestic sales for the corporate and travel industry markets.

She is the Vice President of TWIGS (Travel Women International Golf Society) and has raised over \$800,000 for various charities over the last 29 years. As a past member of the Board of Trustees for the Student Youth Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Student Youth Travel Association, she is able to help provide students financial resources and programming through travel experiences that impact the lives of tomorrow's global citizens. Karen has served on the National Tour Association Board of Directors and chaired NTA's National convention in 2000.



Petra Hackworth – Travel Oregon, Portland, Oregon

Petra is the Vice President of Global Sales at Travel Oregon, the state's tourism agency and former Director of Global Sales and European Sales Manager. In her role as VP, she leads Travel Oregon's Global Sales efforts to share Oregon as a world-class destination by working closely with the Global Sales team and Oregon's tourism partners. She is passionate about boosting inbound tourism from international markets, which ultimately helps drive Oregon's economy. Born and raised on the Oregon Coast, Petra graduated from the University of Oregon and majored in Recreation and Tourism Management with a minor in German. After moving to Portland in 1997 she worked in corporate Sales Management at the Westin Hotel and Kimpton Hotels through 2003, and then as the Marketing Manager for Lufthansa German Airlines before taking a position at Travel Portland as the Sales & Marketing Manager.



Gloria Lan – Tour America, LLC – Los Angeles, California

Gloria is the founder & CEO of Tour America LLC. She started her travel industry career after college in early '80s. Born & raised in Hong Kong, then moved to Los Angeles with her husband in 1987. She was working for Jetour USA Inc. as Purchasing Manager & Sales Director (S.E. Asia) from 1987 till 1997. In 1997 she opened the first Tour America office in Los Angeles and later, added other regional offices in New York and Tokyo, with key multi-lingual staffs (Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino & Japanese). Her market segments are within Asia/Pacific and predominantly S.E. Asia and Japan; specializing in Leisure, M.I.C.E. & Student programs. She is very active in all her covered markets. And she travels tirelessly in engaging with her clients, partners and also participating in most major regional trade shows. For the last eight years, she has hosted Tour America's own road show & workshops in Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines & Malaysia.



Elliot Calloway – Bonotel Exclusive Travel – Las Vegas, Nevada

Mr. Calloway is the Senior Director Brand Partnerships at Bonotel Exclusive Travel. He joined the company in 2013. In the role of Director of Brand Partnerships, Elliot oversees the relationships with all brand partners, management companies, and 3rd parties.

Early in his Bonotel career Elliot was tasked with growing secondary and tertiary markets which included New Orleans, Nashville, Memphis, to name a few. Upon taking over these markets he forged relationships with suppliers and CVBs which helped grow Bonotel's footprint in these cities extensively. Additionally, during his career with Bonotel Exclusive Travel Elliot has managed markets that include Mexico, the Caribbean, Florida, and Seattle. Starting in 2020 he began overseeing the East Coast contracting which includes New York, Boston, Chicago, and more in addition to his role working with large brands and mid-sized brands.

Elliot received the "Rising Star" award from IITA at the 2020 Annual Summit.



Richard Groesz – American Ring Travel, Inc., Daytona Beach, Florida

I started my career at ATI in 1989 at a time when bookings were still coming over a telex machine and the FAX was just gaining popularity. My desktop computer was a new IBM with a green screen using DOS 2.0. Over the course of the nineties, I was promoted several times, sent to Honolulu for 2 years, then left ATI to setup Meeting Point NA in 1994. I spent that summer organizing travel to the main venue cities for the World Cup. A few years later, I returned to ATI as a Senior Product Manager.

In 1999, I was recruited by Best Western International Worldwide Sales. I handled airline crew, travel agents, tour operators and OTAs before anyone really knew how to categorize them. I met with the founders of what is now hotels.com and Expedia (Richard Barton). Costco had bought a small pacific travel agency, and formed their first travel division, and I setup a coop marketing agreement with them. Following the tragic events of 9/11, I left the industry to pursue my dream of becoming a Realtor for the next 13 years. I returned to the industry in 2016 with American Ring Travel. Here I've contracted for our FIT, Fly & Drives and most recently our bus tours. I am also the company's Sustainability Coordinator.



Oswaldo Freitas – Easy Time Travel LLC, Windemere, Florida

With more than 30 years in the industry, I have been working with the USA trade for the majority of this time. Started contracting hotels, transportation, attractions and other products for Soletur and Nascimento Turismo, both major Tour Operators in Latin America with headquarters in Brazil and then developing Latin America Market for JTB Americas. Since 2019, I opened my own company providing groups, leisure and MICE, and FIT products for clients speaking Portuguese, Spanish and English.