



— VIRGINIA SOCIETY of —
ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

YOUR

association

PRESS

January/February 2024



VSAE Executive Director Terry Monroe, CAE and VSAE President Shannon McCabe, CAE with CEO Award Recipient, Stewart Hinckley; Career Service Award Recipient, Jack Berry; and Emma Mumaw, who accepted the Associate Member Award for Ann Hayes in her absence.

On Friday, December 6, over 175 members and guests of the VSAE community came together in-person to enjoy the holiday season at the **2024 Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction** held at the **Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa Short Pump**.

After an outstanding surf and turf lunch, the highly distinguished VSAE Awards of Excellence were presented to three special and deserving individuals who reflect the best

in the association industry. Congratulations to the following recipients:

Stewart Hinckley, President and CEO, Ruggles Service Corporation, recipient of the **CEO Award of Excellence**, given to an outstanding association professional in recognition of their leadership and achievement, not just to their own association or VSAE, but to the entire association industry.

continued on page 5 >

Leadership That Inspires Belonging



Join us for the March Seminar and Luncheon on Thursday, March 6 at the **Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center** where Anne Collier, MPP, JD, CEO of Arudia and a professional certified coach, will present, "Leadership That Inspires Belonging."

In this session you will learn an emotional intelligence-based framework for leading with aplomb and creating a culture in which all feel welcome, safe, and are doing their best work and are thriving. Learn how your actions – regardless of whether you are a leader – affect culture and thus whether you are successful in creating true Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB).

Earn 1.5 CAE credits at this in-person only seminar. Register at vsae.org/calendar.

DON'T MISS IT!

MARCH SEMINAR & LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, MARCH 6
Virginia Crossings Hotel

SCHEDULE

9:00 AM

REGISTRATION OPENS

9:30 AM

SEMINAR:
LEADERSHIP THAT INSPIRES
BELONGING

11:00-11:45 AM

NETWORKING RECEPTION

11:45 AM

LUNCHEON AND PRESENTATION

REGISTER AT
[VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR](https://vsae.org/calendar)

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEBINAR

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4
AI, Your New Best Friend
in the Office

ASSOCIATE MEMBER SIG
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20
Virtual

SEMINAR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20
Bridging the Gap: Building
Meaningful Connections for
Career Growth
Virtual

MEETING PLANNER SUMMIT
FEBRUARY 27-28
Caesars Virginia

VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS AT
[VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR](https://vsae.org/calendar)

President's Club



Justin Beale
Cavalier Resort



Brittany Rice
Colonial Williamsburg Hotels



Doug Barger
Hilton Norfolk The Main



Matt Polansky
The Hotel Roanoke and
Conference Center



Randy Cummins
James River
Audio Visual Services



Lilly Mitchell
Kalahari Resorts



Sally Noona, CMP
Virginia Beach Convention
& Visitors Bureau



Lisa Meriwether
Visit SoSi

Thank You, 2025 Partners!

VSAE Partners are Associate members actively engaged and financially committed to supporting VSAE and all its programs and services. These Partners have committed to a level of support for 2025 through their advertising, sponsorship, and scholarship.

The 2025 Partners are committed to helping VSAE realize its strategic goals of strengthening our association community and delivering value to members. When looking for industry services for your association, VSAE encourages you to reach out to these Partners first to see how they can deliver value to your association and its members.

If you are interested in becoming a Partner, there are still advertising and sponsorship opportunities available to make your mark on the society for Virginia's association professionals. Visit vsae.org/partner-program for more information.

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Omni Richmond Hotel
Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel
Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
The Virginian Hotel
VisitNorfolk



Terry Monroe, MBA, CAE
VSAE Executive Director

The Positive Impact of Associations: A Story Worth Championing

January's arrival ushers in familiar routines: colder temperatures, playoff football, and the commencement of new sessions in both the Virginia General Assembly and the US Congress. These seasonal markers offer a comforting sense of normalcy, yet the current political landscape is far from static or normal. Significant changes have swept across Washington D.C., with a new administration and unified government under one party. In Virginia, the fall's statewide elections are expected to cast a long shadow over the General Assembly's actions. Both in Richmond and Washington, the deeply polarized political climate presents a complex and challenging environment for effective advocacy.

The recent Virginia and National Political Outlook luncheon underscored the charged political atmosphere at the state and federal levels. It also emphasized the critical importance of proactive engagement by associations and their members. During the luncheon, renowned Virginia political analyst Dr. Bob Holsworth and ASAE's Chief Public Policy and Governance Officer, Mary Kate Cunningham, provided valuable insights into the anticipated key policy battles of the coming year. Beyond specific policy predictions, a crucial takeaway from their remarks was that the evolving political landscape has fundamentally transformed the playing field for associations. The days of relying on established relationships with legislators and staff, and well-worn policy precedents seem over.

The Power of Storytelling

Today's political environment necessitates a more dynamic and proactive approach. Mary Kate Cunningham emphasized the critical need to ensure that our voices are heard loud and clear by those in power. "We must ensure we have a seat at the table, to ensure we're not on the menu at the table." A powerful tool for achieving this is through

storytelling. And what compelling stories associations have to tell!

From healthcare, financial services, transportation, education, energy, environmental protection, and so much more, associations play a vital role in every facet of our daily lives and the overall health of our state and national economies. VSAE member associations are engines of economic development, creating jobs throughout Virginia and contributing significantly to vibrant and sustainable communities. These contributions were rightfully acknowledged by the Governor and the General Assembly last year in honoring VSAE on its 75th anniversary.

Take Action

So, how can you get involved? **ASAE's Legislative Fly-In, scheduled for March 25-26 in Washington D.C.**, presents a unique opportunity for associations to directly engage with legislators and their staff. This event allows associations to highlight the positive contributions their organizations and members make to our state and national economies, as well as their commitment to policies that support a strong and inclusive workforce. It also provides valuable training in association advocacy and equips participants with the necessary tools to build successful policy programs.

"We must ensure we have a seat at the table, to ensure we're not on the menu at the table."

With federal tax reform on the agenda in 2025, including proposals to tax the revenue of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) organizations at the 21% corporate tax rate, it is more critical than ever for associations to be at the table and advocate for their interests. Consider joining with other VSAE members as part of the Virginia delegation, meeting with congressional offices to ensure the voices of Virginia's associations are heard on Capitol Hill. Even if you can't attend the Fly-In, ASAE will continue to provide opportunities to share your stories and help make a difference.

Associations have a long and distinguished history of advocating for their members and the issues they care about. By proactively engaging with policymakers and sharing our stories, we can ensure that our voices are heard and that the positive impact of associations continues to be recognized. I encourage you to get involved and help shape a positive future for our associations and the critical missions we serve.

ASAE's Legislative Fly-In

March 25-26

Washington, DC

Register at

asaecenter.org/meetings/

114114-2025-asaec-legislative-fly-in

Contact Terry Monroe (terry@vsaec.org) if you plan to attend.

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Jack Berry, Richmond Region Tourism (retired), recipient of the **Career Service Award of Excellence**, which recognizes an individual outside of the field of association management who has provided exceptional service to the association community over the years.

Ann Hayes, CTA, CGMP, Director of Sales, Visit Loudoun, recipient of the **Associate Member Award of Excellence**, presented to VSAE member suppliers or vendors who have distinguished themselves through their leadership, professionalism, and customer service.

SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS

Members had the opportunity to bid on three different auctions: online silent auction, in-person silent auction, and a live auction.

The online silent auction featured 69 items, including getaways at top destinations across Virginia and the Southeast, wine and beer packages, specialty goodie baskets, golf outings, outdoor adventures, professional services, books, tools, and much more.

The in-person silent auction featured 20 baskets containing wine, food items, hotel stays, gift cards, and more.

Three items were auctioned live at the luncheon by a lively and entertaining auctioneer, Ernie Rogers of Blacktie Benefit Auctions. Congratulations to **Mike O'Connor**, who won the Carnival 6-Day Cruise; **Trenton Clark**, who won a package from **Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau**; and **Rich Keurajian**, who won a two-night stay at **Wintergeen Resort**.

The Community Service Committee selected Richmond Animal League (RAL) as this year's charity. Larry Eason, Executive Director shared the history of and the many beneficial services provided by RAL.

continued on page 7 >

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IS FOR
LOVERS**

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We appreciate all of those who donated 155 pounds of canned and packaged goods that were collected during the event. The food will go to Feed More and will be prepared and distributed to 125 neighbors in need.

Thanks to everyone who made this year's Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction such a great success, including the Silent Auction Task Force, the Community Services Committee, the Awards Committee,

Eisenman & Associates staff, the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump, and of course, our sponsors, donors and bidders!



We asked the three Awards of Excellence recipients what advice they would give to someone new to the association industry. Here are their responses:

Stewart Hinkley

I'm coming up on my 33rd anniversary in association management and that's after 10 years in the hotel industry. If you're new to the business and have concerns about whether you've made the right decision, let me try to give you some words of encouragement (and advice).

Our AMC just celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, so we must be doing something right. As I look back at both my career and our company's success, I ask myself what I did well (best practices) and what I would like to do over. Fortunately, the latter isn't a very long list and is mostly attributed to things out of my control.

The bottom line is that I think my success in the association management business is attributed to learning, learning, and learning. There are many ways to learn and I'm talking about beyond your comfort zone. Of course, there is VSAE, which is rich with content and contacts. There is the CAE program. You have tons of online courses and webinars available through ASAE and others. Take some risks and explore.

Get your feet wet with membership, exhibits, meeting planning, graphic design, digital marketing, social media, technology and finances to name a few. Having come from the hotel business, I was strong in meeting planning and exhibits. However, I was weak in membership, graphic design, technology, and finances (social media and digital marketing did not exist). The key for me was surrounding myself with the people who were good at delivering these services. I just had to be willing to learn from them.

Since our AMC has 20 employees who provide these services, all I had to do was walk down the hall and inquire. For example, I had a hard time understanding certain line items on the balance sheet such as "Deferred Dues". How do deferred dues impact the current and next fiscal years' income statements? Fortunately, we have two CPAs on staff who could always answer my questions. I soon gained enough confidence to answer just about any related question in an association board meeting.

If you work for a stand-alone association with just a few staff and you outsource some of the work, you can still learn from these vendors. For example, ask the outsourced graphic designer why it costs more to prepare files for both digital and print media when it's the same newsletter. If your association still has a printed newsletter in addition to a digital, what are the options for blending these efficiently? How much can your association save by eliminating the printed version including graphic design, printing, postage and mail-house handling? If you are asked these questions in your association's board meeting, you might not be able to give the exact answer but just knowing that there would be cost savings in a number of areas would make you look reasonably smart until you could provide the exact figures.

In conclusion, the old saying "you will get out of it what you put into it" is true for association management, so keep learning! You'll know you're there when you are confident and comfortable answering questions in your association's board meeting.

Jack Berry

Although my advice sounds redundant, I'd recommend to any member of VSAE to volunteer and get involved.

I have been associated with VSAE for over 40 years going back to my days at Norfolk SCOPE. In the 1980s who would have thought that Rick Eisenman, who was at the Sheraton Oceanfront, and I would both move to Richmond and be so involved with VSAE (of course Rick's involvement is in a different stratosphere than mine), but we have remained close after all of these years.

I am grateful to VSAE for all of the wonderful opportunities it has provided me throughout my career.

Ann Hayes

I have enjoyed being an Associate Member of VSAE. The organization is welcoming and approachable. My advice to a new associate professional member is to learn as much as you can about associations. What I found most useful were the monthly seminars and luncheons hosted by VSAE. These seminars are educational, and the networking afterward is extremely beneficial. Whether you are working with other associates or association professionals, take the time to build those relationships. Getting involved and participating in the Fall Expo and the annual meeting helps you meet other associates who share your questions and can offer advice on how best to work with association executives. The world of associations can change rapidly. Stay on top of trends, best practices, and new technologies by participating in professional development opportunities. Attend events, pursue certifications, and seek mentorship from more experienced professionals.

LET'S RECAP

January Seminar: 2025 Virginia and National Politics

At the January luncheon, Mary Kate Cunningham, Chief Public Policy and Governance Officer at ASAE, discussed ASAE's upcoming March "Fly-In" Congressional lobbying event. ASAE will again advocate for plans to be used toward non-collegiate career training, including apprenticeship and certification programs. ASAE hopes to get this legislation passed in the next tax bill before Congress. She also addressed proposals to tax the non-profit sector, which is currently federal income tax exempt for mission-based endeavors. She urged association leaders to share with legislators the services they will have to stop providing if their organizations are taxed at the 21% corporate rate.

Dr. Bob Holsworth offered his annual assessment of the upcoming General Assembly session and November's gubernatorial elections. He anticipates data centers and their related energy use issues will be emerging topics in the Virginia legislature. Holsworth related how national politics can impact state offices and elections. Virginia may be facing contentious deportation and transgender issues the state really hasn't had to address previously. Looking to the November elections, Abigail Spanberger is the slight favorite to win over Republican Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears for governor. Rumors are floating that Congressman Bobby Scott might consider running for governor as well. He noted that both parties will have to reckon with who shows up to vote and who doesn't, and how to energize voters to get them to the polls in November.



Association Leadership Virginia

Thank you to the Virginia Society of CPAs for hosting January's Association Leadership Virginia program and to Beth Bickford, Townley Goldsmith-Ray, Kelsey Thayer, and Jennifer Stern for sharing their expertise and experience on association finance and HR. ALV cohort 4, you're half-way to graduation!

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DOING YOUR DILIGENCE: MAKING YOUR EVENT A SURE BET

Join fellow association and not-for-profit meeting planners February 27-28 at the brand-new Caesar's Virginia for the 2025 Meeting Planner Summit. Get ready for a fun, collaborative learning experience designed by meeting planners for meeting planners. From crafting resilient crisis management plans to learning practical applications of AI for your next meeting, you'll leave with actionable tips to elevate your events.

Earn 6.25 CEU/CAE credits while you learn from each other, outside industry experts, and representatives from hotels and CVBs.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, February 26

5:30–7:30 pm SoSi DMO Hosted Activities

Thursday, February 27

9:00–9:15 am Welcome and Introductions
 9:15–10:15 am Framing the Future: Strategic Crisis Planning for Your Organization's Success (1.00 CEU)
 10:45–11:45 am Framing the Future: A Hands-On Workshop for Crafting Your Crisis Management Plan (1.00 CEU)
 12:00–1:00 pm Networking Lunch
 1:00–1:45 pm Property Tour
 2:00–2:45 pm Comprehending Contracts – Understanding Terminology and Creating Revenue (0.75 CEU)
 3:15–4:15 pm Gentle Networking: How to Draw Out the Introverts and Wall Flowers (1.00 CEU)
 5:30–6:30 pm Reception
 6:30–8:30 pm Dinner
 8:30–9:30 pm After-dinner Event

Friday, February 28

7:30–8:30 am Breakfast
 8:30–9:45 am Shaping Your Event's Destiny: How to Work with DMOs/CVBs (1.25 CEU)
 10:00–11:15 am Practical AI Applications for Meeting Planners (1.25 CEU)
 11:15–11:30 am Closing Remarks
 11:30 am Pick Up Boxed Lunches to Go

THIS RETREAT IS LIMITED TO ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONALS, MEETING PLANNERS, AND SPONSORS. ONLINE REGISTRATION CLOSSES FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 AT NOON.

REGISTER AT [VSAE.ORG/2025-MEETING-PLANNER-SUMMIT](https://vsaе.org/2025-meeting-planner-summit)



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- Omni Charlottesville
- Whiteford

Save the Date!

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AT THE BEAUTIFUL
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Sunday, May 4

Schedule subject to change.

12:00–4:00 pm	Pre-conference Activities
5:00–6:00 pm	New Member and First-Time Attendee Mixer (invitation only)
6:00–7:30 pm	Opening Reception
7:30 pm	Dine on Your Own

Monday, May 5

7:00–8:15 am	Breakfast
8:15–8:30 am	Opening Remarks
8:30–9:30 am	OPENING KEYNOTE: THE BUCKET LIST LIFE
9:45–11:00 am	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizing Membership Engagement through Strategic Marketing and Communications • The Value of Conducting an Association Competitive Analysis • Workforce Challenges Through a Dual Lens
11:15 am–12:45 pm	Luncheon, 2024–2026 Board Installation and CAE Recognitions
1:00–2:15 pm	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for Successful Career Management • Building Stronger Together: Strategic Alliances for Association Success • Tech Stack Essentials for Small Staff Associations
2:30–3:30 pm	Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-Impact Meetings Without Breaking the Bank • Legal Considerations for an Association's Code of Ethics
3:30–4:30 pm	Shared Interest Group (SIG) Meetings
5:30–6:15 pm	President's Reception (invitation only)
6:30–7:30 pm	Pre-Dinner Reception
7:30–9:00 pm	Dinner & Dessert
9:00 pm	After Dinner Entertainment

Tuesday, May 6

8:00–9:00 am	Breakfast at Your Leisure
9:00–10:15 am	CLOSING KEYNOTE: UNSTOPPABLE COURAGE—SHATTERING LIMITATIONS AND DARING TO THRIVE
10:30–11:30 am	General Session Inspiring Bold Leadership & Creating Engaged Employees
11:30–11:45 am	Closing Remarks and 2026 Annual Conference Host and Venue Announcement

REGISTRATION OPENS IN FEBRUARY!

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Step into History: Reimagine Meetings at Colonial Williamsburg Resorts

With America preparing to celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2026, there's no better time for the Virginia Society of Executive Associates to plan an unforgettable gathering at Colonial Williamsburg Resorts. Recently named the "Best Historic Resort in America" by Historic Hotels of America, our property offers a dynamic blend of modern amenities, elegant accommodations, and an extraordinary connection to our nation's past—all designed to inspire, engage, and delight your attendees.

A Storied Setting with Versatile Meeting Spaces

Nestled in the heart of the world's largest living history museum, Colonial Williamsburg Resorts boasts more than 55,000 square feet of flexible event space, accommodating groups from 18 to 1,300 attendees. Whether you envision an intimate board meeting, a mid-sized conference, or a grand reception, each venue can be tailored to your specific needs. Our legendary facilities, paired with cutting-edge technology, will help you deliver a memorable and impactful experience.

Accommodations That Elevate Every Stay

Your guests will find a range of lodging options, each infused with Southern charm and modern comforts. The Williamsburg Lodge, part of Marriott's Autograph Collection, provides a warm and inviting atmosphere, while the Forbes Travel Guide Four-Star Williamsburg Inn offers timeless luxury. The family-friendly Williamsburg Woodlands Hotel & Suites includes an enhanced continental breakfast and is ideally located near the Historic Area. For those seeking a more intimate vibe, the Historic Lodging - Colonial Houses and Griffin Hotel each add a unique, boutique-style ambiance with easy access to natural beauty and peaceful surroundings.

Amenities to Engage and Entertain

Between meetings, attendees can tee off at our award-winning Golden Horseshoe Golf Club, home to two championship courses, plus a new nine-hole par-three course opening in summer 2025. Stay active at our 30,000-square-foot Forbes four-star spa and fitness center, complete with four pools (one indoor), eight



tennis courts, and four pickleball courts. Our culinary offerings range from historic taverns and fine dining, bakery cafés to refined, chef-driven dining experiences. You'll also find 40 boutique shops and restaurants in Merchant's Square, all within walking distance or easily accessible by Williamsburg shuttle.

Immersive Activities and New Enhancements

Because Colonial Williamsburg is a living history museum, your group can explore 18th-century trades, meet Nation Builders who bring the past to life, or enjoy a spirited

ghost tour. These interactive experiences make team-building both educational and entertaining. We continually invest in fresh renovations and upgraded technologies to ensure your guests benefit from the highest level of comfort, service, and convenience.

Secure your spot now and make your next meeting an event for the ages. **Contact our dedicated sales team at Sales@cwf.org or call 1-800-822-9127 to begin planning.** Step into America's story at Colonial Williamsburg Resorts—and let your event become part of living history.



Elevate your meeting, *escape the ordinary.*

Discover a meeting destination like no other at Colonial Williamsburg Resorts. Whether you're organizing a board meeting or a large-scale conference, our exceptional venues, modern amenities, and unforgettable experiences blend history with comfort. Picture team-building on championship golf courses, networking in historic taverns, and unwinding with signature spa treatments—all in the heart of America's original capital.

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Newport News Tourism
Newport News

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Jennifer Parham

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Kiersten Wall

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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

Yuri Ouellette is now the Associate Director of Sales with **Kimpton The Forum Hotel** in Charlottesville.

Wendy Evalle is now the Senior Sales Manager with **The Founders Inn and Spa, Tapestry Collection by Hilton** in Virginia Beach.



2024-2025 OFFICERS

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