



A HOTELIER SERVING A HIGHER PURPOSE

Hyatt Regency New Orleans General Manager Winner of Philanthropic Award: The Times-Picayune Loving Cup

Photos of Michael O. Smith: [Download](#)

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New Orleans, LA Imagine this: A hotel General Manager and staff donating upwards of \$1.6 M of in-kind donations yearly, and volunteering more than 1,000 hours to the community. That is exactly what Hyatt Regency New Orleans (HRNO) General Manager Michael Smith has done. And now, he is the proud winner of this years The Times-Picayune Loving Cup.

The Loving Cup, which is given to celebrate activity in the preceding year, has been awarded since 1901 to men and women who have worked unselfishly for the community without expectation of public recognition or material reward. Dating back more than 120 years this once in a life time honor includes former recipients such as, the late Leah Chase, Roger Ogden of the Ogden Museum, Bill Goldring and many more.

“To get this kind of recognition, knowing that The Times-Picayune has been giving out this award for nearly 120 years, is a gigantic honor,” Smith said.

Smith, the Hyatt’s general manager since 2004, has used the hotel as a venue for the myriad causes and organizations he supports. But he does more than merely provide the venue. He helps organize the event, and he engages well-heeled friends, including corporate leaders, to kick in.

“I’m not the guy who writes the check; I’m the guy who does the work,” says Smith.

Michael has utilized his platform to excel toward his life’s mission as a philanthropist. As an active civic citizen within the city, he takes pride in supporting programs and organizations of diversity and inclusion, LGBTQ, arts & culture, education, religion and community. Deemed a true advocate and ally, Smith seeks the opportunity to serve a higher purpose—not only as a true testament to himself, but the city of New Orleans.

Smith enjoys exercising daily with a favorite pastime of mountainous nature walks. Deemed a wine connoisseur, Smith has collected more than 1,000 bottles of the finest wine over the years. He enjoys traveling the world learning about the different cultures, cuisine, and traditions. When home, he loves to cook the many of the dishes experienced while traveling, adding his special twist, then sharing with friends and family.

Through his leadership, vision and passion, Smith's efforts have not only perpetuated economic development, but achieved long lasting and sustainable results. His desire for the betterment of the community has boasted him as a necessary attribute to any city—and especially, this great city.

About Hyatt Regency New Orleans + MOS Philanthropy

Hyatt Regency New Orleans chooses philanthropic efforts based on a foundation of educational, human and civil rights. Hotel executives and associates are encouraged to lead and participate in all charity events that happen on property and throughout New Orleans and are encouraged to identify worthy causes. General Manager Michael Smith has a passion within education. Michael believes that a college education is a direct investment into our future. It helps to establish fulfilling careers and creates involved citizens within the community. HRNO has helped to raise more than \$10 Million for UNCF to ensure uninterrupted education. Michael also encourages his team to support the local community and national charitable foundations such as the Human Rights Campaign, Emeril's Carnival du Vin, Sisters of the Holy Family and more.

Through research, HRNO discovered the importance of ensuring human rights within the LGBTQ community and the awareness needed to prevent hate crimes within the community. The hotel works with various LGBTQ programs including underwriting the Human Rights Campaign Louisiana Gala for the past three years, the creation of Pride Prom Nola for LGBT Teens, sponsorship of an event for the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, The Lazarus Ball, sensitivity training for associates, gender-neutral restrooms for groups and Galas, and establishing a HyPride chapter for associates.

When Hyatt Regency thrives, the city of New Orleans thrives. As a proud supporter of each partner organization, HRNO is able to build relationships with leaders and organizations with an underlying impact of economic development. These companies, organizations and individuals recognize Hyatt Regency— not only as a business who caters to their needs, but a brand and hotel that cares about the building and sustainment of the community. Businesses do business with people who have a higher purpose. Our property is able to bring in additional programs and events from an array of community businesses and leaders alike. With the support of a great corporate team, generous hotel owners and business leaders, Hyatt Regency New Orleans will continue to fight for a cause. The return on investment for the time, hours and effort spent on each project is priceless and immeasurable.