

# Smart meetings

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VISIONARIES

100

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE US



TRAIL-  
BLAZERS

INDUSTRY  
LEADERS



INNOVATORS

RISING  
STARS



ENTREPRENEURS



# Jay Burress



If you don't have some failures, you are not pushing the envelope enough. Celebrate victories and successes, but always push yourself to be better.

College years can be used to explore, until finding your pathway to the "real world." Long before becoming president and CEO of Visit Anaheim, a youthful Jay Burress backpacked through Europe for 2 1/2 months, becoming a student of the globe and learning about diverse cultures—collecting 14 passport stamps along the way.

"I kept a journal during this trip and documented how I wanted to work in an industry that allowed me to travel and see different ways of life and expose people to my hometown," he says. "That trip changed my life."

It wasn't until planning and fundraising for IPW in 2000 that Burress realized he wanted to run a tourism bureau. When he sets a goal, he commits to accomplishing it. This gusto enables him to achieve great things. *Orange County Business Journal* (OCBJ) selected him as the 2018 business Person of the Year in hospitality. He serves on the boards of CalTravel, Visit California, Destination International and Anaheim Transportation Network, and is chairman of Orange County Visitor Association. Last year, he was OCBJ's Hospitality Person to Watch.

## Fly on the Wall

Burress encourages those following in his wake to find what they're passionate about, always be challenged and soak up knowledge from the creme de la creme. "Early on in my career, I was let in on where some industry leaders went to just get away," he says. "I started to go to that same place, to be around some of the smartest minds out there. I would just sit and listen..."

## Winning Spirit

Anaheim is a big sports town with two pro teams, MLB's Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and NHL's Anaheim Ducks. Burress remains a Texas boy at heart, admitting he roots for the Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers. He attended Baylor University in Waco and worked for Experience Arlington and VisitDallas.

"Sports has been a part of my whole life and has had a huge impact on my career," he says. "I'm a big believer in event-driven tourism, as well as participation-driven tourism through the growing amateur sports market."

Burress' vision is to inspire and delight the imagination of every visitor. "We are consistently working on our destination development efforts to build a better tomorrow for not only our visitors, but our residents, as well," he says.

To stay at the forefront of the meetings industry, the Anaheim Convention Center debuted the ACC North expansion in September, making it the largest center on the West Coast. He is also excited that the upcoming The Westin Anaheim Resort and local brewery scene is elevating Anaheim on planners' radars.

## Burress' Leadership Philosophy

1. Be authentic, visionary and passionate.
2. Surround yourself with smart and talented people.
3. Never stifle imagination and innovation.
4. Allow for discovery.
5. Make mistakes.

## Smart Moves



### Jill Harlow

Jill Harlow brings more than 25 years of marketing, public relations and communications experience to her new role as director of brand and marketing for Miraval Group. She'll develop the brand's identity, and oversee marketing for all of Miraval's resorts and spas. She worked in marketing for Miraval Arizona, RED Development, LLC and General Growth Properties.



### Blair McSheffrey

Sonesta International Hotels Corporation has named Blair McSheffrey vice president of global and hotel sales. He'll be based out of the company's Boston office. McSheffrey spent more than 14 years in various positions at InterContinental Hotels Group, most recently as vice president of hotel commercial performance. He's also worked for Davidson Hotel Group.



### Raj Radke

Northwood Hospitality welcomes Raj Radke as general manager of The Ballantyne in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was most recently interim general manager and hotel manager at The St. Regis Deer Valley in Park City, Utah. He previously oversaw food and beverage at The St. Regis Aspen Resort in Colorado, Thunder Valley Casino Resort in California and Four Seasons Hotel Washington, D.C., after starting his career in his native India.



### Jean Spaulding

Benchmark appointed Jean Spaulding director of sales and marketing of Villas of Grand Cypress in Orlando. She's fresh off her stint as director of sales and marketing at Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate. Her resume includes Starwood Hotels, Westin Hotels and Resorts, and Four Seasons Hotels, plus destination marketing for the Los Angeles and Seattle CVBs.



### Jacqueline Volkart

The St. Regis San Francisco named Jacqueline "Jackie" Volkart general manager. She has held managerial roles at The Ritz-Carlton properties in Puerto Rico, Florida and New York City. Volkart has also worked in food, beverage and catering at Marriott's Casa Magna Resort in Puerto Vallarta and The Ritz-Carlton in Cancun, both in Mexico. She's also a CMP.