



Dunfey Brothers Honored With 2008 UNH Hoteliers Of The Year Award

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DURHAM, N.H. -The Dunfey Brothers, who went from operating a clam stand at Hampton Beach to building a hotel empire that included Omni Hotels, the Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans and the Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Rhode Island, will be honored by the University of New Hampshire with the 2008 Hoteliers of the Year Award.

Brothers John Dunfey , Robert Dunfey and Gerald Dunfey , will be presented with the award Saturday, April 19, 2008, at the annual spring Gourmet Dinner sponsored by the Department of Hospitality Management at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics.

In addition, alumna Lynne Dougherty, senior vice president at Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, will be honored with the Alumni Achievement Award. Dougherty oversees franchise operations for Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, including day-to-day operations for more than 229 franchised Starwood properties including Westin, Sheraton, Four Points by Sheraton and Luxury Collection Hotels in North America.

Designed to promote a more sustainable community, the spring 2008 Gourmet Dinner "Green Cuisine" will feature locally grown and harvested food from across New England. The seven-course dinner will be served Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19 at the UNH New England Center. The full menu, tickets and more information about the Gourmet Dinner is available at www.unhgourmetdinners.com.

"The Dunfey brothers are leaders in the transformation of the hotel industry. Early on, the family adopted a Yankee sense of hospitality that became the signature for their inns and hotels. That sense of customer service and care now permeates the hotel industry, and we are pleased to honor these true pioneers in the hotel industry," said Dan Innis, dean of the Whittemore School.

In 1945, the five Dunfey brothers started a clam stand at Hampton Beach. Within a few years John, Gerald, Walter, Robert and William Dunfey had been involved in restaurants, real estate and a bank before taking over the Lamie Tavern and embarking on a hotel-keeping career.

During the next five decades, the brothers built a hotel empire that included Omni Hotels, the Parker House in Boston, Berkshire Place Hotel in New York, the Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans and the Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Rhode Island.

Innovative services instituted by the Dunfeys still can be seen in today's hotel industry. For instance, in 1968 they started a "Wayfarers Club" that gave perks such as free travel insurance, coffee, and newspapers to their most frequent patrons. That successful program became a model for the frequent traveler programs that became commonplace by the 1980s.

The Dunfeys also initiated the "Colleen Club," or secretaries club, which provided benefits to both the traveler and the person that made the reservations.

The surviving brothers now operate the Dunfeys Brothers Capital Group, a venture capital company oriented toward socially responsible companies. Brothers Walter Dunfeys, '55, and William Dunfeys, '50, passed away in 1989 and 1991 respectively.

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