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April 9, 2007

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire will honor Michael Leven, founder and former chairman of Atlanta-based US Franchise Systems, Inc. (USFS), for his outstanding achievements in and contributions to the hospitality management industry by awarding him the university's Hotelier of the Year Award Saturday, April 21, 2007.

The UNH Hotelier of the Year Award recognizes outstanding contributions of a leader in the hospitality management industry. It also is the highlight of the Gourmet Dinner, a seven-course meal organized by students at the nation's second-oldest hospitality management program at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics. The evening, which will feature cuisine from Northern Italy, begins at 6 p.m. with a cocktail hour, and dinner starting at 7 p.m. in the Great Room of Huddleston Hall. The dinner also will be served Friday, April 20.

Leven, 69, has taught hospitality courses at UNH and recently retired after spending his entire 45-year career in the hotel industry.

"A role model in the hospitality industry, Mike Leven is one of the most innovative leaders in franchising. His contributions to the hotel industry are surpassed only by his commitment to helping those who are less fortunate," said J. Bonnie Newman, interim president of UNH.

In June 2006, Leven became vice chairman of the Atlanta-based Marcus Foundation, where he has been a trustee since 2001. The Marcus Foundation is chaired by Bernie Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot and one of America's most generous philanthropists. Leven is also on the board of the Marcus Institute and the recently opened Georgia Aquarium. He continued to serve as chairman of USFS through December 2006.

Prior to forming USFS in 1995, which franchises the Microtel Inns & Suites and Hawthorn Suites hotel brands, Leven was president and chief operating officer of Holiday Inn Worldwide. From 1985 to 1990, he was president of Days Inn of America, where he not only spearheaded the growth of the brand, but also led initiatives to hire older workers, people with disabilities, and the homeless. He also served as President of Americana Hotels, and co-founded the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) with 12 members in 1989.

Under Leven's tenure, USFS gained national recognition as a fair franchisor, both customer and franchisee-oriented. The company was named best practice champion for its franchise agreement by the American Hotel Foundation and was the first hotel company to receive the Fair Franchising Seal from the American Association of Franchisees and Dealers.

Leven has served numerous industry organizations throughout his career. He is former international president of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) and a member of HSMIAI's Hall of Fame. He chaired the Millennium Occupancy & Revenue Effort (MORE) task force of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), and the AH&LA Government Affairs Committee. He has been on the board of Starwood Hotels, and is

currently on the boards of the Las Vegas Sands Corp. (The Venetian) and Hersha Hospitality Trust.

In addition to the Marcus Foundation, Leven is active in many civic organizations. He was a member of the National Board of Governors of the American Red Cross, its Executive Committee, and Chairman of its Biomedical Services Board.

Leven's most recent hospitality industry recognitions include: American Association of Franchisees and Dealers, Total Quality Franchising Lifetime Achievement Award (2005); Hospitality Industry Hall of Honor, University of Houston C.N. Hilton Hotel & College (2004); First occupant, William R. Tiefel Distinguished Speakers Chair for the Hospitality College at Johnson & Wales University (2004), and HSMAI Hot List of 25 Most Extraordinary Sales & Marketing Minds in Hospitality & Travel (2004).

Tickets for the Gourmet Dinner are \$50 a person and 10-seat sponsor tables are \$5,000. Tickets are on sale now and may be ordered at the UNH Memorial Union Building Ticket Office ticket office Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 603-862-2290. To purchase a sponsor table, contact Donna Stickney at 603-862-3303 or Donna.Stickney@unh.edu.