

BoardRoom magazine Recognizes 23 Private Club Presidents of the Year

By Dave White, Editor, BoardRoom magazine

BoardRoom magazine annually recognizes the world's top private club presidents, captains and chairs as **Private Club Presidents of the Year**, for their outstanding work, their understanding of the industry, and role and responsibilities of the club's board of directors. In this continuing series, BoardRoom introduces four of the top 23 presidents for 2013.

Private club board presidents play a huge role in professional operations of their clubs as a volunteer working diligently with their board of directors and general managers, striving for well informed, but not emotional decisions.

This recognition by **BoardRoom magazine** has attracted board president nominations from clubs and other nominators around the world.

These outstanding presidents exemplify the focus on the leadership responsibilities, the accountability and the management of the board providing a healthy respect for the club's macro management. They are cognizant of the importance of working, effectively and efficiently, with their volunteer boards and the dedication required from everyone with whom they work.

Key elements of a "good" board include commitment, competence, diversity, collective decision making, openness, transparency, effective communication with the management and the membership, fiscal responsibility, development and establishment of the clubs' mission, vision and policy direction, especially through establishment of a strategic plan.

A successful board president draws upon the expertise of other board members, the club's institutional memory and stewardship of the club's resources. As well the board president provides new board members and future board presidents with information they need to perform effectively as board members.

Congratulations to these outstanding private club board presidents.

Four club president profiles on page 58 & 59

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Club presidents or club general managers accepting on behalf of the club presidents at the 2013 Top Private Club Presidents reception at the CMAA World Conference and Expo in Orlando, FL this past February. PHOTOS BY BRUCE MATHEWS

Top 23 Private Club Presidents

BoardRoom magazine, for the sixth year, is recognizing 23 club presidents and chairs as Private Club Presidents of the Year – 2013 for practicing what they preach – leadership for the betterment of their clubs.

Ms. Cynthia White (Distinguished of the Year)	Bonita Bay Club	Bonita Springs, FL
Mr. Richard Bennett	River Bend Golf and Country Club	Great Falls, VA
Mr. William H. Coquillette	The Union Club of Cleveland	Cleveland OH
Dr. Ken Chu	Mission Hills China	Shenzhen, CHINA
Mr. Carl F. Dill, Jr.	The Club at Mediterra	Naples, FL
Mr. Bob Dutlinger	Atlanta Athletic Club	Johns Creek, GA
Mr. William Durkin III	Greenwich Country Club	Greenwich, CT
Mr. Pat Flynn	Sand Point Country Club	Seattle, WA
Mr. Jacob R. Goldenberg	Oak Ridge Country Club	Hopkins, MN
Mr. Michael Goldman	St. Andrews Country Club	Boca Raton, FL
Ms. Dianne Jett	Las Vegas Country Club	Las Vegas, NV
Mr. Larry Kleinberg	Frenchman's Creek Beach & Country Club	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Mr. E. Paul Legault	Le Club Laval-Sur-le-Lac	Laval, QC CANADA
Rear Admiral Thomas J. Lynch	Union Club of Philadelphia	Philadelphia, PA
Mr. Kevin Mackey	Upper Montclair Country Club	Clifton, NJ
Mr. Rob Norton	Colleton River Plantation Club	Bluffton, SC
Mr. Rick Powell	Hillcrest Country Club	Los Angeles, CA
Mr. Charles W. Schellhorn	The Kansas City Country Club	Mission Hills, KS
Mr. Fred Schulte	BallenIsles Country Club	Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Mr. Jeff Springer	Sanctuary Golf Club	Sanibel Island, FL
Mr. Al Thorell	Philadelphia Cricket Club	Philadelphia, PA
Mr. Jeffrey M. Weber	Lakewood Country Club	Rockville, MD
Mr. Paul Wutz	Desert Mountain Club	Scottsdale, AZ

RICK BENNETT, PRESIDENT | RIVER BEND GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB | GREAT FALLS, VA



RICK BENNETT, PRESIDENT



HUSAM ATARI, GM/COO

When Rick Bennett joined the board in 2006, River Bend was drifting along...a club in a state of flux seeking an identity. And it was a club needing a rebuild of its golf course.

During his terms as a board member and committee chair, Bennett surfaced as the voice of reason and vision as numerous projects were proposed and implemented including the golf course, clubhouse renovations, the addition of a fitness facility and golf course maintenance facilities.

So when the club searched for a president after completing of these projects a couple of years ago, Rick Bennett was a clear choice.

His presidency began with the need to complete one last ongoing project, expansion of the indoor tennis facility, a project that required another membership vote to approve additional funding because of the scope and planning issues that had doubled the anticipated costs. It passed with a majority vote.

River Bend has had a need to focus on River Bend as a club and the member experience provided both on and off the golf course. President Bennett had shared that vision while ensuring there is the correct balance of services while reminding the board of those costs to the members.

He brings a focus to the financial future by ensuring the operating and capital budgeting processes are robust and scenario driven so the club can adjust to changing business conditions in a timely manner. He also had ensured that decisions are made with an eye to the future.

President Bennett has brought additional focus and structure to the club's board and committees, instituted an annual board retreat and has established goals for each committee.

The club's long range vision is now in the hands of a long range planning committee tasked with looking at the club's overall strategic visions.

Bennett has also championed several bylaw revisions to ensure the board has the authority to do the 'right thing' for the club's membership, including a senior dining category revision. This allows members, but who no longer use most of the facilities, but who dine and play cards, can remain River Bend membership family.

"He provides focus and direction without micromanaging," explains general manager Husam Atari. "He encourages and inspires management, members, committees and the board to embrace River Bend as their club."

A senior partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers, President Bennett lives in Great Falls, VA and is the father of two children, Carter and Caroline. **BR**

KEN CHU, CHAIRMAN AND CEO | MISSION HILLS GROUP | CHINA



DR. KEN CHU, CHAIRMAN/CEO

Acknowledged as a pioneer and leader of China's burgeoning tourism sector, Ken Chu leads Mission Hills Group in developing and operating championship golf courses, world-class family resorts and spas, high-end and exquisitely-designed residential developments in Southern China.

His commitment in promoting the game of golf had earned him the top 10 position at 2013 US Golf Inc.'s ranking of the most powerful people in the world and the first position for its inaugural list in Asia.

Over the past 20 years, the Mission Hills Group has built 24 top-rated golf courses and established China as a popular golfing destination.

Transforming barren land on the outskirts of Shenzhen and Dongguan and volcanic desert on tropical Hainan Island, it has generated positive economic, cultural and environmental effects for the local communities.



WILLIAM H. COQUILLETTE, PRESIDENT



CLAUDIO CAVIGLIA, GM

A vision and untiring efforts have marked William Coquillette's very successful term as president of the Union Club of Cleveland. And it has all resulted in a club with a freshened image that's a magnet for new members.

President Coquillette first charge focused on the purchased and transformation of an adjacent property. He rallied the membership and within three weeks had raised the \$1.4 million necessary for the purchase. He then appointed and chaired a special development committee that not only created a new streetscape but it also provided the club with much needed parking spaces for members.

For the first time in the club's history, the club's members have an outdoor venue and a signature "Summer in the City" event attracted 250 members and guests.

During his tenure President Coquillette restructured the club's board meetings, designating time for in-depth discussions about the club's goals and strategic plan; and refined the committee process so that board meeting time could be used more effectively.

He established a compensation committee working directly with general manager Claudio Caviglia, which successfully uses private club benchmarking and ensure that the club remains competitive in the job market by retaining quality staff at all levels. Key management is provided continued education and another manager has now entered the CMAA's Business Management Institute Program.

The 140-year-old for-profit club, a Cleveland mainstay, boasts 975 members. As part of the club's anniversary, the club in 2013 with the unequivocal support of President Coquillette, launched a campaign to bring in 140 new members. This challenge resulted in 142 new members, reversing a negative trend of the previous five years.

He also identified the need to support and invest in technology and the club's innovative and creative thinking and substantial investment in technology has given the club a competitive advantage in attracting new members, especially those in two new membership categories of Under 35 and Under 30.

The club's commitment to these technological advances reinforces the notion that these are expectations and needs (not luxuries) for Union Club members who work in a fast-paced business world today.

"Mr. Coquillette is, at all times, the epitome of diplomacy and decorum, and when praised for a job well done, receives the compliments with subtlety and humility," explains general manager Caviglia.

"He has always supported me with new ideas that offer increased value to our members, and set a higher service standard. His untiring efforts contribute mightily to the success of the Union Club of Cleveland."

And it is for these many reasons, that William H. Coquillette is one of BoardRoom top president for 2013. [BR](#)

Hong Kong-born Chu was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Law degree in 2007 by his alma mater, Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, for his contributions to sports and leisure developments and community services in China and Hong Kong.

Widely known as "Mr. Golf" in China, Ken Chu has been actively involved in Hong Kong and China charity and community services. He takes particular interest in youth groups and activities, believing it is crucial to nurture future generations to create a better tomorrow for China and the world.

Today, Mission Hills Group has achieved many milestones and become the preeminent conglomerate in the sports, tourism, leisure and entertainment industry under Chu's leadership. He shall spearhead the next breakthrough in the group's evolution to bring its tried and true branding and golf

management services to Beijing, Shanghai, Yunnan, Chongqing, Xi'an and other destinations.

"Boardroom Magazine has elected to recognize Dr. Chu this year for the wonderful leadership that he has demonstrated in not only expanding the Mission Hills franchise but also for his outstanding contributions to the growth of golf in China in particular and Asia in general," said John Fornaro, publisher of Boardroom Magazine.

Commenting on the award, Mike Sebastian, chief executive officer of the Asia Pacific Golf Group, said, "This award, the first for the Asia Pacific region could not have been bestowed on a more deserving man - Dr. Chu is absolutely passionate about golf and how clubs serve up the experience to golfers." [BR](#)