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AAHOA, industry leaders gather for weekend of professional development

ATLANTA, September 23, 2016 – Feminism is making a comeback, the wage gap is narrowing, and women’s collective voice is stronger than at any point since Congress ratified the 19th amendment. But professional women - and Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) women in particular - aren’t looking for any special treatment. Long recognized among Asian American hoteliers as the glue that holds family and business together, they’re stepping out from behind the front desk and assuming high-profile leadership roles - and the industry is taking note.

Last weekend, nearly 150 women from around the United States travelled to Baltimore, where a daylong professional development event at Choice Hotels International’s headquarters kicked off three days of education and networking specifically for female hoteliers. Over the next two days, the AAHOA Women’s Conference hosted top female executives from global brands Hilton, Marriott, La Quinta, Red Roof, G6, and Choice, as well as the CEOs from Diversey Care and the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association.

The gathering of such big names at a relatively small industry event is symbolic, not just of women’s runaway successes within hospitality, but of AAHOA’s position within the industry.

“I was honored to speak at such a prestigious event and represent my company, Marriott International,” said keynote Seema Jain, Marriott’s director of multicultural affairs. “Marriott and AAHOA share many similar values; the entrepreneurial spirit of our founders, a long-standing multiple generation family focus and the most admired quality in striving for excellence; we are proud to share such a long-lasting and highly valued partnership.”

The Conference also welcomed keynote Dr. Ilham Kadri, Diversey Care’s CEO, who seemed as impressed by the attendees as they were by her inspirational remarks, "When I accepted the invitation to deliver a keynote at the AAHOA Conference, I could not imagine that I would be meeting such an amazing team of talented women leading in the hospitality sector. It was an honor for me to contribute with my humble personal story to their conference objective: achieving financial success through synergies."

Alexandra Jaritz, Global Head of Tru by Hilton, praised the AAHOA women’s “innovative thinking, sense of camaraderie and enthusiasm,” while Marcus & Millichap Vice President and Senior Director, Helen Zaver, lauded the conference as an excellent opportunity for AAHOA women to “be motivated and think outside the box.” Lynn Minges, CEO of NCRLA, echoed the sentiments of many industry executives present, “Our partnership with AAHOA has proven to be a strong alliance on many levels. Our shared values and combined efforts to advance the lodging industry make us stronger together. It was an honor to participate in the AAHOA Women’s Conference and to spend time with smart women with big ideas.”

With the success of the AAHOA Women’s Conference - and the resultant enthusiasm and support from top industry executives - more than ever before AAHOA is becoming the recognized voice within the hospitality industry.

“AAHOA’s future is inextricably bound to the strength of its relationships with industry leaders,” said AAHOA President and CEO Chip Rogers. “The Women’s Conference showed unmistakably that we’re on the right track to realizing and even surpassing our founders’ vision as the industry’s go-to advocate for all hotel owners.”

To learn more about AAHOA’s women’s initiatives or to get involved, contact AAHOA Female Eastern Director at Large and 2016-17 Secretary Jagruti Panwala (jagruti.panwala@aahoa.com) or Female Western Director at Large Dina Patel (dina.patel@aahoa.com).

Founded in 1989, AAHOA (www.aahoa.com) is the largest hotel owners association in the world, with more than 15,000 small business owner-members. AAHOA members own almost one in every two hotels in the United States.

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