



Butch Spyridon ACCOLADE

Looking Back with Butch Spyridon, Nashville CVC

Shares Memories, Lessons Learned from Illustrious 32-Year Career

It's the swan song for the man who has long captained the destination-marketing organization in Music City.

As Butch Spyridon approaches retirement from the Nashville CVC (NCVC)—a departure that will take place at the end of June—he can look back on a fruitful career with the organization spanning 32 years. For most of that time, the 68-year-old industry leader has held the title of CEO; he also served as President before 2022, when that role was transferred to his successor, Deana Ivey.

After he joined the NCVC in 1991, Spyridon quickly learned it would be an uphill battle trying to assert the organization's role as chief marketer in Tennessee's capital city. The NCVC had been subser-



vient to Gaylord Opryland, which operated a huge hotel, theater, and theme park and had far more money to spend than the NCVC. Spyridon said it was a "rude awakening" for him.

"Just because I had a title, it didn't mean squat," he said in an interview with *USAE*. "They were in control, and they didn't want any help. They had built the leisure and tourism industry and convention industry there, and they did whatever they wanted. It was eye-opening for me."

Spyridon presented a plan of action during his first 90 days to the seven-member commission that oversaw the NCVC, but the commission balked at his intentions.

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Memories and Lessons: Favorite Stories Regarding Butch

As the head of the Nashville CVC (NCVC) for more than a generation, Butch Spyridon has unequivocally become Music City's front man.

As many of the guitar slingers and vocalists who've passed through Tennessee's capital during his tenure are instantly known by a single name; nobody asks: "Butch, who?" in the meetings community. With his retirement approaching friends and peers

have provided their favorite Butch stories and congratulatory notes.

William Pate, President & CEO, Atlanta CVB

"I have many great memories with Butch over the years despite the fact that he's an Alabama fan. I pull for the Georgia Bulldogs and when I became chair of the board of directors for Destinations International, Butch

and Al Hutchinson awarded me an Alabama football. They told me that since I didn't know what it was like to be a champion, the football would allow me to be a winner by association.

"Of course, I've gotten the last laugh since Georgia is the two-time reigning National Champion. During

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Elks/Club Baron to shine again in Music City

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Butch with some of his favorite people.

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CONGRATS, BUTCH

We will miss
you on our
musical ride!



Nashville
MUSIC CITY



ACCOLADE

Dear Butch,

As the kids and I reflect back on what your career has meant to us a family we shared laughs, happy tears and most of all a lot of great memories.

The hospitality industry has provided us so many wonderful experiences as a family and we are all so grateful to have them.

The sacrifices you made for our family helped shaped us all into who we are together and individually.

You are a giver and a fixer of all things and even on the days we wanted more of you in the moment, we knew the greater good would show us all the love and the guidance we needed. Watching you be so gracious to everyone you encounter makes us all so proud.

The demands of the day to day pulled you in one million directions yet you always made time for your family and made us your priority.

The accolades that come with building one of the top destinations in the world speak for themselves and are incredible, you have earned them all with hard work, taking risks and a lot of determination.

Congratulations on your tremendous career, we are so proud of you and cannot wait to see you relax, do a lot of fishing and enjoy whatever else retirement has in store for you.

We love you so much,

Sunny, Garrett, Megan, Alyssa and Emily



The Spyridon Family: Garrett, Sunny, Butch. Alyssa, Megan and Emily.





ACCOLADE

Butch

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When Spyridon pushed back, one of the commission members said they should just give him “enough rope to hang himself.”

“My answer was: ‘Perfect—that’s all I’m asking for,’” said Spyridon, who was inducted into the Events Industry Council’s Hall of Leaders last year. “If what I’m proposing doesn’t work, you won’t have to ask me to leave; I’ll find my way out.”

Spyridon acknowledged, however, the NCVC wasn’t offering a lot of value at the time. The organization’s sales team had to be rebuilt and expanded so the NCVC could deliver more leads and support for the community.

“That’s when we hunkered down and reorganized, and we began to produce,” Spyridon said. “I thought if we booked a lot of business and were collaborative we’d get a seat at the table.”

That turned out to be the case. Today, Gaylord Opryland is owned by Ryman Hospitality Properties, and Spyridon says the relationship has never been better. Although the NCVC has sparred with ownership over the Music City Center, Spyridon says both have flourished.

The opening of the Music City Center was Spyridon’s hardest-fought accomplishment. The project lasted 14 years from first conversation to ribbon-cutting, as the NCVC navigated its way through the tenure of a mayor who wasn’t supportive; the objections from Gaylord Opryland, which saw the facility as a competitor; and general “not in my backyard” sentiment from some residents.

“I’m not a very patient person,” said Spyridon. “Having to learn that big things take a long time but are worth it if you do it right was tough. We had multiple monumental hurdles to clear.”

Eventually, those hurdles were cleared. The Music City Center opened its doors in May 2013 and will soon celebrate its 10th anniversary. Spyridon says it has been a boon for Nashville over the

years, even bailing the city out with surplus funds during COVID.

“I can’t find the critics anymore; they’re nowhere to be found,” Spyridon said. “So when people say a city doesn’t benefit from the hospitality industry, we’re a shining example of that’s not true. Done right, these things benefit everybody.”

Perhaps Spyridon’s fondest memory involves the Houston Oilers moving to Nashville in the late 1990s. The NCVC was deeply involved in the multi-year

“So when people say a city doesn’t benefit from the hospitality industry, we’re a shining example of that’s not true. Done right, these things benefit everybody.”

process to land a National Football League team for the city, a huge undertaking that also involved a political campaign to get the move passed by referendum. In 1999, the team played its first game as the Tennessee Titans.

“Just to sit back and realize out of nowhere this unassuming, unsuspecting city became an NFL city,” Spyridon said. “That was a game-changing, beyond rewarding moment. The Titans gave me field passes so, looking up at a packed house roaring, it was the ultimate satisfaction.”

The team’s first game also marked a very special occasion for Spyridon: the first date between him and his wife, Sunny. The pair have been married for 21 years.

The Titans also achieved something extremely unlikely in their inaugural season: a Super Bowl appearance. Although they fell to the Rams (then of St. Louis) by a score of 23-16, the fledgling franchise immediately earned respect around the league. And much like the Titans in that game, Spyridon sees himself and his city as an underdog making its mark.

“The city was always competing under long odds,” said Spyridon. “It became we’re going to use this as motivation

and assume we don’t have a chance as to whatever we’re doing, so we have to outwork everybody, and we can’t take anything for granted.”

Of course, not every venture has been successful. For example, the NCVC ultimately failed last year in its pursuit of hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2026, an effort that was stymied when the organization couldn’t say whether the game would be played in the existing Nissan Stadium or a newly built, domed facility the city planned to construct.

But even an experience like that can teach you a lesson in staying motivated but humble, said Spyridon, who will start a two-year contract as a strategic consultant for the NCVC upon retirement.

“Having an underdog mentality, staying hungry, being transparent, always being mindful that results matter, giving away the credit, and taking responsibility when there are hiccups, those things lessons I learned are how I was able to survive 32 years here,” said Spyridon. “These are a huge part of how you survive in this industry.”



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THANK YOU, BUTCH,
for making Music City the
capital of SMASHVILLE!





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Stories

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football season, Butch and I text back and forth on Saturdays ribbing each other

about our teams. I look forward to the witty comebacks he will have this fall with more



William Pate

time on his hands! I'm wishing Butch and Sunny the best in this next chapter of retirement."

Brian D. Stevens, Executive Chairman, ConferenceDirect LLC.

"Butch invited us to his house for dinner. It was Roy Evans, Peter Shure, and the [Eddie] Webster's. During dinner we ran low on wine and Butch told me to go in the cabinet and grab some. Of course, I grabbed a bottle

of 1979 Opus One which he and his wife had been saving for a special occasion and which he never even flinched when we opened it. Enjoyed it. What a gentleman."

Michelle Mason, CAE, FASAE, President & CEO, ASAE

"On behalf of ASAE's many stakeholders who have benefited from his talents, vision and hospitality, we want to express our heartfelt

thanks to Butch Spyridon and wish him a happy retirement. Butch has been the face and heartbeat of Nashville hospitality for several decades and has contributed immeasurably to Music City's top-tier status in the meetings industry.

ASAE is particularly thankful for Butch's longtime support of ASAE signature events like the Summit Awards Dinner and the ASAE Annual Meeting and is grateful Butch stuck around to ensure the 2022 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition in Nashville – our first in-person Annual Meeting in three years – was a resounding success. Best wishes, Butch, and please do stay in touch with your ASAE family."



Michelle Mason

Rick Antonson, author, former President & CEO, Tourism Vancouver

"I sent a note to Butch the moment I heard about his departure. He's been a great friend for a long time – and in fact there was an IACVB (that long ago) board meeting where the chair made the two of us sit apart instead of beside one another because we were laughing too much and being disruptive to others. (It felt like grade 4 all over again – two class clowns.) But that was in the years before both Butch and myself matured somewhat and became the board chair ourselves! I've still got the cowboy boots Butch sent to Janice and me for our wedding in 1999."

Butch,

There aren't enough words to express the gratitude your team has for you. You have taught us, supported us, and fought for us through the years. Your loyalty to Nashville and our team has never wavered. Your passion is contagious and your optimism is admired. You have always believed this city could compete with the best and made sure we punched above our weight every single time. You have the uncanny ability to see the big picture while also focusing on every little detail. You always made the right choice for Nashville even if it wasn't the most popular. You have pushed us beyond our own boundaries and always knew that whatever you threw at us we could do, even if we didn't always think so. That is a true leader.

Your work is evident in all that you've spearheaded from branding Nashville as Music City to creating the largest fireworks show in the country to producing a five-hour CBS broadcast and not to mention a couple of award-winning documentaries and the best NFL Draft in history. All of this while driving record-breaking numbers in every category every year.

Nashville owes you A LOT, but you never expect or even want the credit. We've watched you take the back seat for the praise when everyone knew you were the one that made it happen – whatever it was.

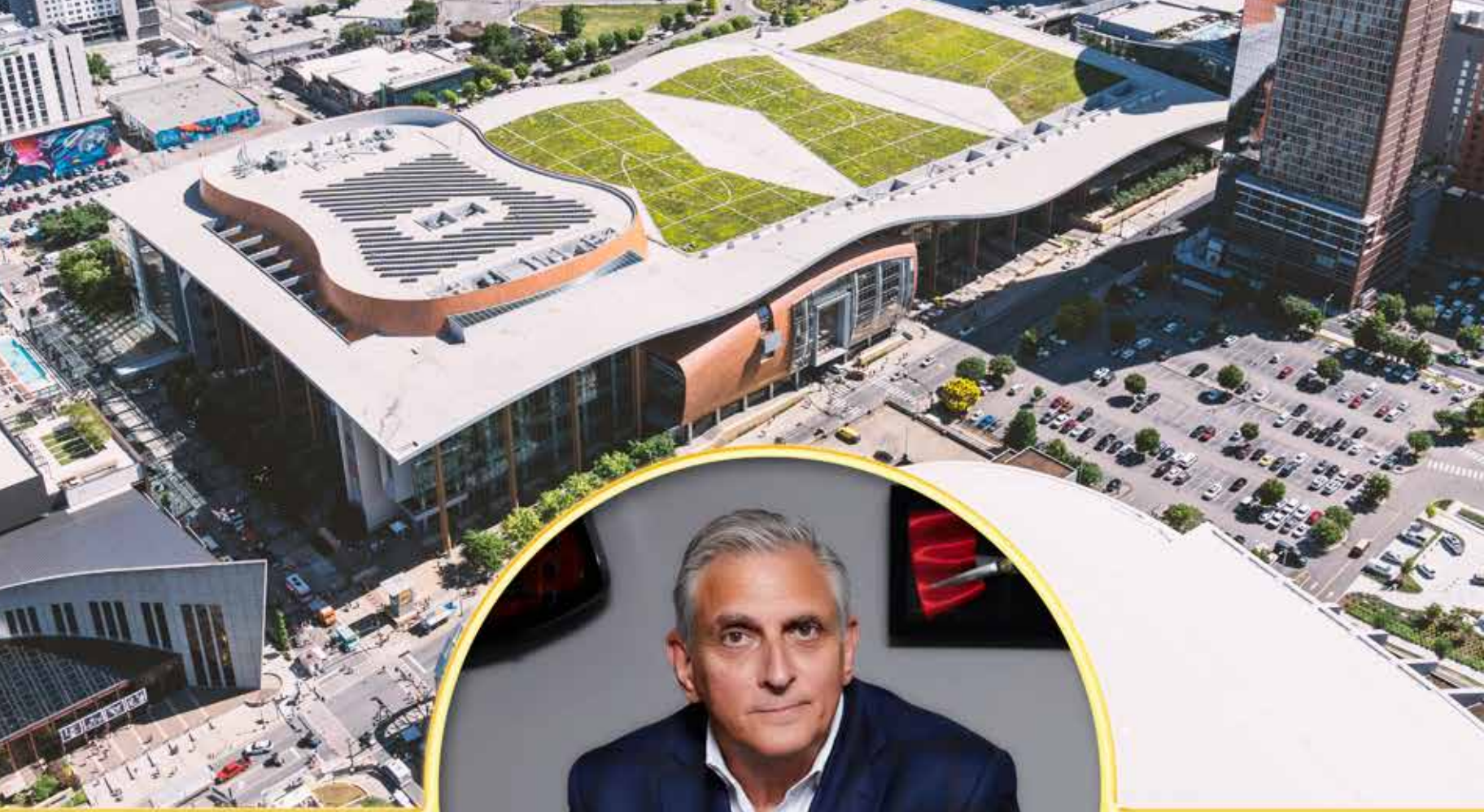
Your perseverance and tenacity are unmatched and Nashville has been the beneficiary. As once was said, "everyone needs a Butch" and we are the lucky ones that had you for 32 years.

We wish you all the best in your "semi" retirement. Personally, I feel like big brother is going off to college. You'll still come home sometimes, but it won't be quite the same. I will miss your crazy antics and wild ideas. I'll miss you sitting in my office on your cellphone for hours at a time and asking if I've done something 10 seconds after you initially asked me to do it. I'll miss laughing at you and competing with you on who is the funniest. But most of all I'll miss your big heart and watching you take care of people.

No one deserves to go fishing more than you. You've already caught all the big ones, now it's time to enjoy the sunset.

Deana and YOUR NCVC Team





Congratulations, Butch!

We wouldn't be here without you.





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Elliott L. Ferguson, II, President & CEO, Destination DC

“I’ve had the honor of knowing Butch for most of my career, which spans three decades. There are so many incredible stories that I could share including interviewing to work for him in the 1990s. Most recently, my wife and I had the pleasure of spending New Year’s with Butch and a few thousand of his friends, including Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban and Stevie Nicks. Only Butch can get my wife to climb scaffolding several stories high in her signature stilettos on a 20-degree evening in Nashville to showcase his amazing city. Butch is the epitome of hospitality.”

Stephen Perry, retired President & CEO of New Orleans & Company

“Over the past two decades, Butch Spyridon became one of the most significant, powerful and successful figures in American tourism and hospitality. What Butch did in building Nashville into one of America’s greatest destinations is unprecedented in scope since the emergence of Las Vegas many years before. Butch has been a terrific partner on our joint international marketing and an impossibly good friend. He is a ferocious competitor, yet always with complete grace. I love him and will miss him although we will likely see each other more

and play more in retirement. With Butch’s retirement, a true giant will have left our industry, although he’ll never be far away.”

Ross E. Heller, Founder & Publisher, USAE

“I and my late wife, Anne Daly Heller, first met Butch shortly after he took over as boss of the NCVC. It was during a breakfast at Miss Pittypat’s Porch at the Gaylord Opryland during one of ASAE’s inaugural Spring conventions. We

welcomed Butch to the ASAE meetings community and we’ve been friends ever since. It’s just one of those things you don’t forget.”

Tammy Canavan, FCDME, President & CEO, Visit Seattle

“In 2016 the Sobranes Fire burned for months in the California Big Sur Wilderness, cutting the community off from schools, medical care and supplies. It was at the time one of the largest

and most expensive fires in U.S. history, and an incredibly emotional time for Monterey County. Hearing of this, Butch sent a pallet of ‘Music Water’ for the thousands of first responders who had convened to fight the fire. He doesn’t like to admit it, but Butch has a gigantic, compassionate heart. He has been generous with his time and friendship, and we’ll miss him at industry events.”

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Yo
com

Congratulations on yo



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Mark Ezell, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

“Butch is clearly a tourism/
community superstar who
has led Nashville (along
with the Nashville tourism
team) to become an icon-
ic, nationally recognized

visitor brand in America. His ingenuity, passion, and risk-taking on the big bets truly helped Nashville and the state of Tennessee gain transformational visitor market share these last many years. Both our wonderful state and this great city owe so much to him, the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation and his significant involvement in the Tennessee Tourism Committee. I personally have benefitted tremendously by his wisdom and expertise. And the team at Tennessee’s Department of Tourist Development and me are so grateful for his contributions. We wish him God’s richest blessings.”

Leonard Hoops, Visit Indy President & CEO

“Butch Spyridon is a CEO’s CEO. I think great leaders need to have vision, judgment, persuasiveness, and resilience and Butch has demonstrated all of those in building up Nashville to where it is today. He deserves every accolade a DMO guy could ever earn and I look forward to him retiring ASAP.”

Bonnie Carlson, President & CEO, Bloomington CVB

“Butch, you are a one-of-a-kind leader who over the last 30-plus years has contributed so much to the growth of Nashville and also to our CVB industry as a whole. Thank you, you will be missed.”

Greg Heidrich, CEO, Society of Actuaries; Chair, Association Forum

“Butch and I served together on the Board of Directors at



The Nashville CVC was busy rolling out the red carpet for the 2022 ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition. Left to right: R.J. McMahon, Balin Ali, Hannah Webster, Scott Wright, Laurel Bennett, Deana Ivey, Will Rehberg, Randy Kidwell, Butch Spyridon, Staci Flores, Adrienne Siemers, and Michael Glover.



our leadership for the hospitality
community and for Nashville has been
legendary.

our retirement Butch!



ACCOLADE

Nashville CVC Resurrecting Historic Black Music Venue

In 1963 a young, Black guitarist Nashvillians called “Marbles” strolled into Club Baron. You may know him as Jimi Hendrix and he was about to lose a duel. More on that to come.

Hendrix wasn’t the only legend to grace the club’s stage with Etta James, B.B. King, Ray Charles, Muddy Waters, Little Richard and Fats Domino amongst those also appearing at the heralded Jefferson Street venue, now home to Elks Lodge #1102.

A staple of the once pulsating Jefferson Street music scene – described by the Nashville CVC (NCVC) as the city’s premiere live music corridor for Black artists – Club Baron and its neighboring joints have sat silently for roughly 50 years. Today the Elks/Club Baron stands alone, boasting the lone performance stage of the 11 existing during the Jefferson Street’s golden age.

But now, the NCVC is leading an effort to not only preserve the building but also revive Club Baron’s rightful stature as a place for musicians to continue to shine in Music City. More than \$300,000 has been raised.

“Renovating the Elks Lodge and former home of Club Baron was a project of passion and branding,” said Butch Spyridon, CEO, NCVC. “If we can’t protect and preserve our musical heritage, we have no business proclaiming ourselves as Music City. Fortunately, the Elks Club and the community agreed.”

WKRN, an ABC affiliate in Nashville reported a new roof, floors, stage, and bathrooms featured amongst the renovations. The NCVC said in 2021, the property was included on Historic Nashville’s “Nashville Nine,” a list of history-filled properties that are at the highest risk to disappear from the community.

Spyridon was the front man for an education and fundraising campaign. Working with policymakers and other civic leaders, he also raised awareness via speaking engagements and media interviews.



The mural at Elks Lodge #1102 commemorating the 1963 guitar duel between Jimi Hendrix and Johnny Jones at what was then Club Baron. (Photo by Tennessee’s Department of Tourist Development).



Butch Spyridon, President & CEO, Nashville CVC (NCVC); and Marie Sueing, Chief Diversity Officer, NCVC; met with Elks Lodge leaders during a staff retreat at the former Club Baron. Shown here (left to right): Darrell Bradford, Spyridon, Leslie Jones, Candace Jones, Yvonne Joyce and Sueing.

Back to the duel which pitted Hendrix against blues icon, Johnny Jones.

Hendrix had a residency at the Del Morocco club and worked around Nashville, which he credited as being the place where he really developed and honed his guitar playing proficiency, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development noted.

Trading licks, Jones is said to have won the six-string showdown, partly because Hendrix was still developing his genre-shaking sound and partly

because Jones had the more powerful amplifier, the NCVC said.

“I told him the next day, man he didn’t do bad, it’s just that I was louder than he was,” Jones told Gibson Guitars. “So, that’s the shootout between me and Jimi Hendrix.”

Today, the duel’s commemorated with a mural painted by Dough Joe and Yusef Hubb on the side of the Elks Lodge.

Find more on the NCVC’s efforts at visitmusiccity.com/clubbarondonation#. 🎵

NASHVILLE SC CELEBRATES

BUTCH SPYRIDON

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT



VANDERBILT HEALTH

VANDERBILT HEALTH

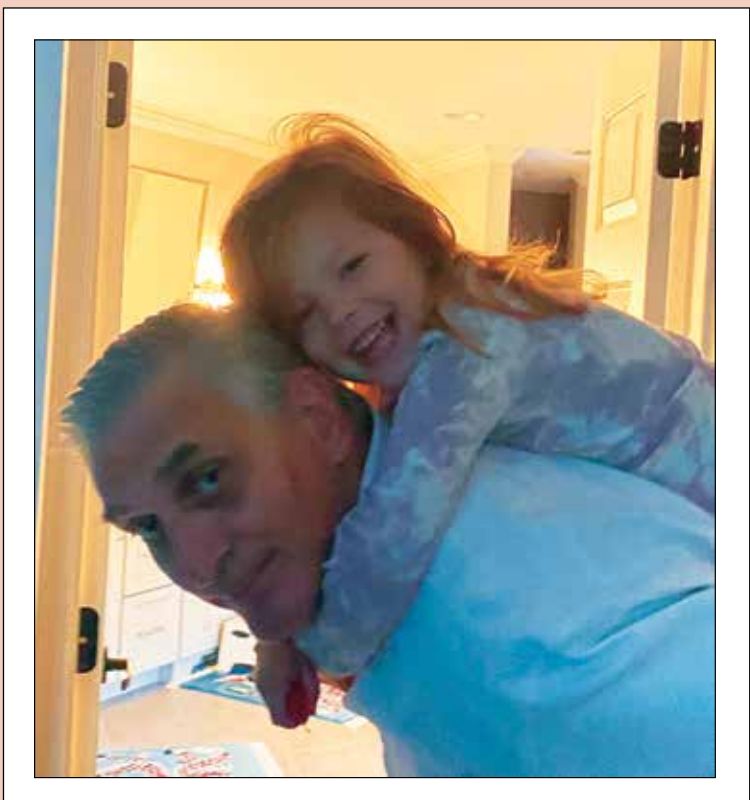
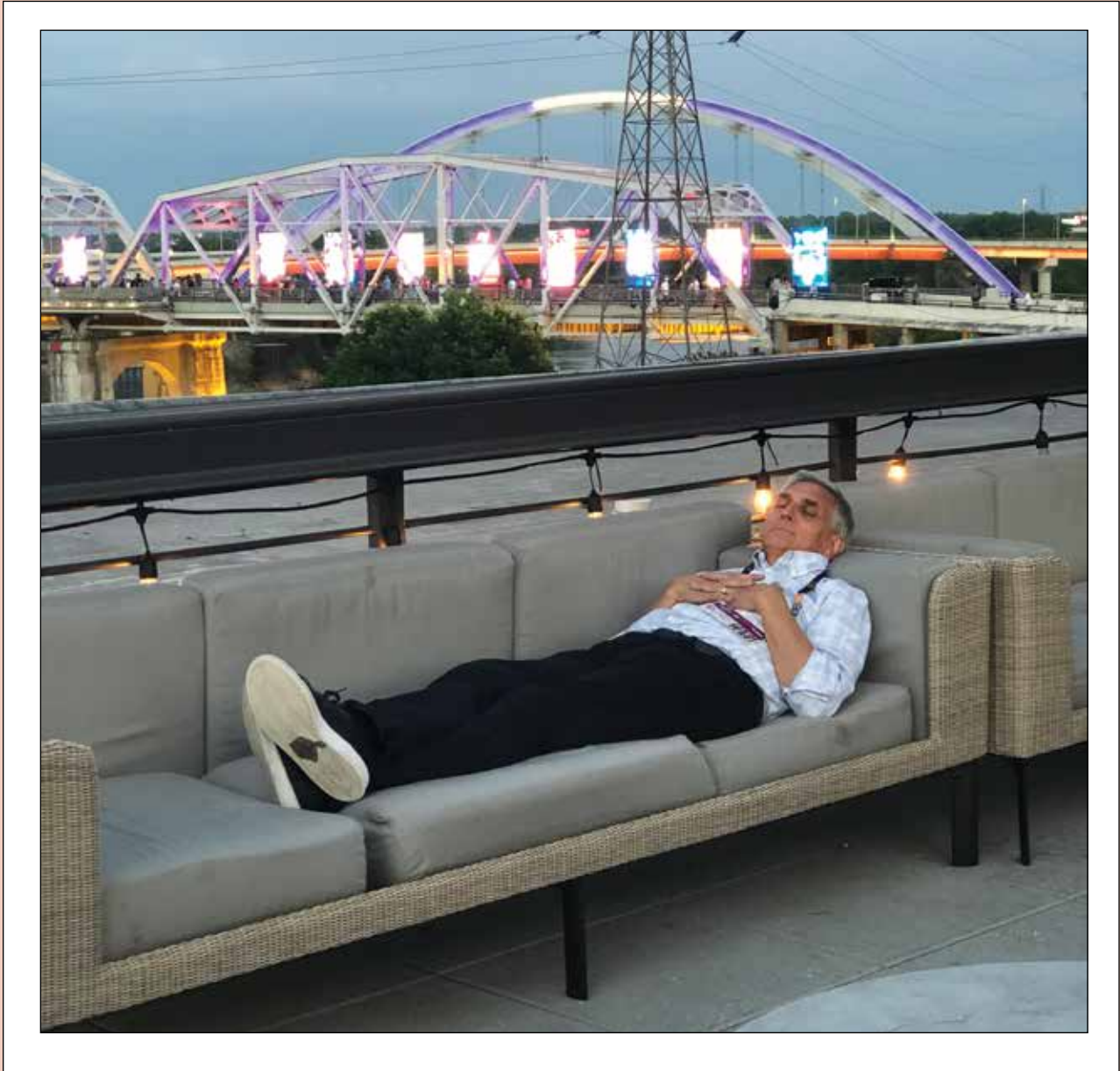




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“I cannot be more grateful to Nashville for the honor of being part of this community that has given me so much, from my college degree at Vanderbilt to meeting my wife to leading this extraordinary organization,” Spyridon said.

“As I begin to reflect on my tenure, without question, my greatest professional accomplishment is the team we have assembled at the NCV. They are second to none. And anyone who knows me knows I won’t be slowing down.”



CONGRATULATIONS, BUTCH SPYRIDON

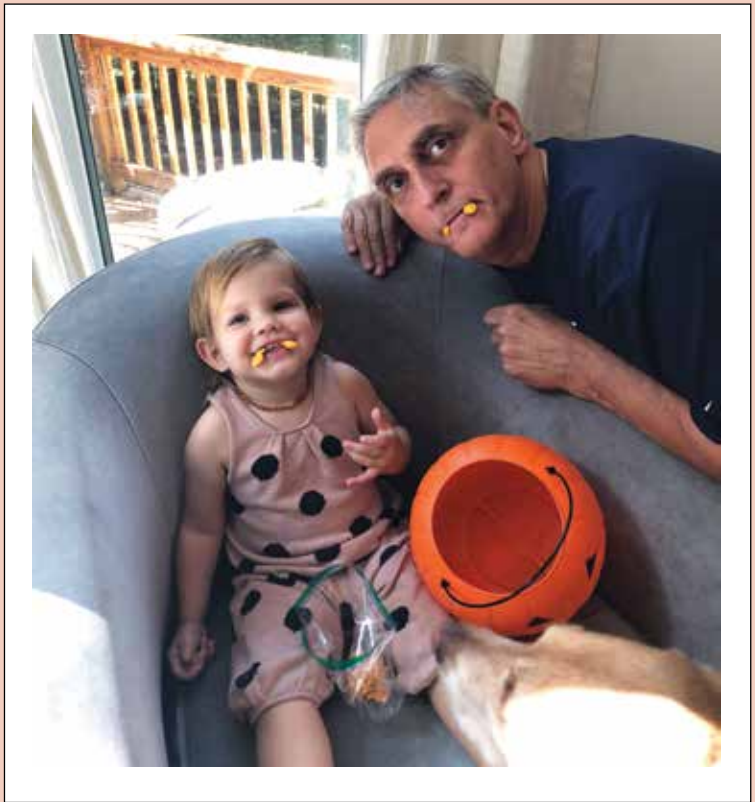
Omni Nashville Hotel would like to thank Butch Spyridon for his work as CEO of the Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation. Spyridon's impact and influence on Nashville's growth has been remarkable over his 32-year tenure. We thank Spyridon for his service and we look forward to our continued partnership with the NCVC.

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From Your
Friends
at *USAE*



JW MARRIOTT
NASHVILLE

THANK YOU FOR ELEVATING MUSIC CITY TO NEW HEIGHTS.

All of us at JW Marriott Nashville would like to extend a heartfelt congratulations to Butch Spyridon, President & CEO of the Nashville CVC, on an extraordinarily remarkable career. Here's to you, Butch, and your well-deserved retirement.





ACCOLADE

Stories

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Association Forum. During that time, I saw his dedication to both the city of Nashville, as well as the work we do in the association industry. Butch values people and puts them at the center of everything he does. Congratulations on a lasting legacy!”

Cleo Battle, President & CEO, Louisville Tourism

“As I congratulate Butch, I want to take this opportunity to recognize how highly respected his contributions are; not only to the city of Nashville, but to our industry as whole. In his 30-plus years with Nashville, the city’s product development has exploded and much of that success can be attributed to his vision to transform Nashville far beyond country music by expanding downtown development, engaging professional sporting teams and championing diversity by curating cultural visitor experiences like the National Museum of African American Music. Butch is a visionary leader who may not have set out to create a legacy but ultimately has throughout his steadfast dedication to our industry.”

Paul Van Deventer, President & CEO, MPI

“Through his vision, leadership and passion Butch has been the catalyst behind the reshaping of Nashville, a force for advancing our industry, and the inspiration

behind the development of countless professionals who will lead our industry forward. If Butch is ‘Old School’ then our industry would benefit from more “Old School.” Thank you Butch for the incomparable legacy you leave us.”

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Charles Starks,
President &
CEO, Music
City Center;
and Butch
Spyridon,
CEO,
Nashville
CVC, appear
onstage.



BNA[®]

Nashville International Airport
proudly celebrates the retirement of
Butch Spyridon and his great work
and lasting impact on Nashville and
throughout the world.





ACCOLADE



Butch Spyridon and Leesa LeClaire, President & CEO, Greater Nashville Hospitality Association, pose with a wax Keith Urban.

Stories

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Charles Starks, President & CEO, Music City Center

“I have known Butch since he interviewed for the position in Nashville.

Without a doubt, the Music City Center would not have happened without Butch. Thank you for everything my friend, and remember I still have your phone number. Cheers!”

Leesa LeClaire, President & CEO, Greater Nashville Hospitality Association

“In 1991 Nashville boasted 25,000 hotel rooms according to STR data. In 2023, more than 57,000 hotel rooms are in Nashville’s inventory.

“John C Maxwell says ‘while a good leader sustains momentum, a great leader increases it’ – your leadership and vision for Nashville certainly resembles that remark, earning you a *master leader* title!”

“Butch, on behalf of the greater Nashville Hospitality Industry, we celebrate your love of and advocacy for ideas great and small that have shaped our industry and community! Your mark on the increased momentum of our city exceeds all forecasts and expectations. Thank you for your vision, leadership, support and friendship!”

Cassandra Matej, President & CEO, Visit Orlando

“Whether it was PCMA, MPI, ASAE or another event, Bruce always knew how to throw a party or a client event that left impactful memories of his destination for all of us fortunate to



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Stories

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attend. I think he may have the record on hosting the most industry events. Always an over-achiever. And of course, he brought the entertainment. Thanks for introducing me to Lady A!

“While calling him competitive is an understatement, he always has a kindhearted spirit. He has texted me as he was in a customer’s office, taunting me as he was taking business away from me.

“He is always a great counselor – whether you wanted advice or not.

“I am grateful to call him a

mentor, a friend, and a colleague. The industry is better for having Butch as a leader and, because of his legacy, has a strong future ahead.”

**Sara Beth Urban,
CEO & President,
HospitalityTN**

“Congratulations Butch on an exceptional career! Nash-

ville wouldn’t be where it is today without your leadership, and it has been an honor for our association to work alongside you. Thank you for being a hospitality & tourism champion!”

**Don Welsh, President
& CEO, Destinations
International**

“I have had the privilege of knowing Butch since I started my destination organization career in Seattle. We became closer during my time in Chicago and most definitely since joining Destinations International (DI) in 2017.

“Butch needed to be convinced that his time and support of the organization was worthy and warranted. Quickly, Butch fully engaged with our organization as we developed a new team and very focused strategies supporting destination organizations.

“His service to DI during my time at the organization has been nothing short of miraculous. He has been instrumental in the financial stability and growth of the association and has served in multiple board positions including the first-ever chair to serve two terms as the association board chair. Butch is a humble, servant leader who purposely shies away from the spotlight and prefers that it be directed to his team and destination.

“Under Butch’s leadership over the past 30 plus years, Nashville has grown to a global destination with a purpose-built focus on the meetings and events and music industry. He has led the city of Nashville through many challenges and crisis situations over



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Southwest Airlines® is dedicated to Nashville.

Our mission is to make the connections that empower communities to thrive. Whether in the air or the ground, we believe community is more than a place – it’s at the Heart of what brings us together.

Butch, thank you for 32 years of leadership and unwavering dedication to Music City! From all your friends at Southwest Airlines, congratulations on soaring into retirement!

Southwest

**CONGRATULATIONS BUTCH,
ON YOUR RETIREMENT AND INCREDIBLE CAREER.**





ACCOLADE

Stories

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the years and has worked with the community for Nashville to come out stronger each time.

“Congratulations, Butch on a game-changing career and a well-deserved retirement.

Your work has been truly legacy building.”

**Bradley Jackson,
President & CEO,
Tennessee Chamber of
Commerce & Industry**

“On behalf of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, we commend Butch Spyridon and his

tremendous career. Tourism is vitally important to the economic growth and success of Nashville and it is a staple of our overall identity as a state. Butch has been at the forefront of implementing a tremendous vision that has thrust Nashville as a premier destination for tourism and national conventions. His dedication

and focus to make this happen has impacted countless people and businesses rippling across the entire state and we are thankful for his vision and service.”

Roger Dow, CEO, DOW GLOBAL | Tourism Partners, Co-Founder, FutureWRX Solutions, Past President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association

“Butch has had an extraordinarily positive impact on Nashville. His tenacious effort to develop the Music City Center – despite a great deal of naysayer opposition – was a visionary game-changer. It was the fulcrum for Nashville’s meteoric growth, unparalleled by any other U.S. city. I’ve learned when Butch quietly speaks there’s a ton of thought and follow-up commitment and energy behind his words. I’m honored to call him a trusted advisor and cherished friend.”

**Kathleen M. Ratcliffe,
President, Explore St Louis**

“Butch and I first met when he was in Baton Rouge but it will always be Nashville with which he will be identified. He turned Nashville into a mega-meetings destination, well before the new Music City Center was approved and I can only stand in awe for the tremendous job he has done for that community. I will miss his sardonic wit, his directness on issues of importance to DMOs, and our industry in general, and seeing his wry smile at every meeting industry event in the future. Congratulations on a job amazingly well done, Butch!”



NASHVILLE
WOULD NOT PLAY THE SAME
WITHOUT YOU,
**BUTCH
SPYRIDON!**

SINCERE
THANKS
FOR ALL YOU’VE DONE
FOR OUR CITY
FROM THE
**MUSICIANS
HALL OF FAME
& MUSEUM.**



**WE SALUTE
BUTCH SPYRIDON
ON A
TREMENDOUS CAREER
AND HIS MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
CITY OF NASHVILLE.**



RYMAN
RYMAN HOSPITALITY PROPERTIES, INC.

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ACCOLADE



Butch Spyridon, Nashville CVC; Casandra Matej, Visit Orlando; Christie Tarantino, International Food Technologists, and Doug Dean, Davidson Hospitality Group join Lady A's Dave Haywood, Hillary Scott and Charles Kelley.

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**Mike Gamble,
President & CEO,
SearchWide Global
| Tourism Diversity
Matters**

“What I love most about Butch is he is never afraid to say what most others would not, which epitomizes his authenticity. It is hard to think of another indus-

try leader who has had the vision, impact, creativity, courage, and longevity to build a global brand like Butch has done. He is fearless, hard-working, funny, and very generous with his time and resources. I want Butch in my bunker because he will have plenty of ideas on how to win, (and he will bring cold longnecks.) Thank you, Butch, for all you have done for the travel, tourism, hospitality, and events industry!”

**David DuBois, CMP,
CMP-F, CAE, FASAE,
CTA, President & CEO
of IAEE**

“I consider Butch a dear and longtime friend. His dry sense of humor and incredible intelligence is contagious, and he is a blast to hang around with at industry events. We wish he and Sonny great health and enjoyment.”

**Al Hutchinson,
President & CEO, Visit
Baltimore**

“Not only did Butch’s leadership prove to be successful for Nashville, but quietly; yet impactfully his leadership elevated the careers of many in this industry including mine. For this I will forever be grateful to Butch! His unapologetic and unafraid voice will be missed, especially during these times! All the best my friend!”

**Robert A. Gilbert,
CHME, CHBA,
President & CEO,
Hospitality Sales &
Marketing Association
International**

“Butch has been the quintessential destination marketing leader for Nashville. He



CONGRATULATIONS BUTCH SPYRIDON

**Thank you for your 32 year commitment
to the Nashville community.**

**It has been a privilege partnering with you.
Wishing you all the best in your next chapter!**



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had led the way for promoting travel and tourism for the destination – and will leave a legacy for hosting industry groups in a way that showcases the best that the destination has to offer.”

Joseph Marinelli, President, Visit Savannah

“Butch and Visit Nashville

have been at the top of how destinations in the South position and market themselves for leisure, conventions, sports and entertainment for many years and it’s been fun to watch, observe and learn from how they do what they do. Thank you Butch!”

Artesha Moore, FASAE, CAE, President & CEO, Association Forum

“Association Forum extends

sincere congratulations to Butch Spyridon for a long and influential career. Butch’s work to champion and strengthen the city of Nashville is clear. He also believed in the work of associations and served on Association Forum’s Board of Directors from 2016-2019. Butch’s contri-



Artesha Moore

butions to the association industry are numerous and will have a lasting effect. We wish him well in his next chapter.”

Sherrif Karamat, CAE, President & CEO, PCMA and CEMA

“Butch is, and always has been a fantastic supporter of PCMA and our global business events community. His uncanny ability to find the bright spot during some of the darkest days in our industry is only one of so many amazing qualities he possesses as a phenomenal leader. Butch, thank you for being such an integral force for our industry. Enjoy what your next chapter holds for you, friend.”

Amy Calvert CEO, Events Industry Council

“My favorite memory of Butch will always be the most recent experience we had celebrating his lifetime achievement as he humbly and thoughtfully accepted his Hall of Leaders recognition. Patiently waiting until the close, he helped wrap the night with a short and sweet ‘thank you and a toast to all.’

“Not one to prioritize the limelight and recognition for himself over his team and community, it was truly special to see Butch recognized for the incredible contributions; he has always quietly committed to modeling the way for us as leaders supporting a unified effort to advance our industry and our people. I am so grateful for his leadership and friendship!”



April 21, 2023

Dear Butch,

Congratulations on 32 years leading the Nashville Convention & Visitors Corp and Music City’s hospitality industry. We wish you the best on your much-deserved retirement.

We are grateful for your hard work and the deep impact you made on Nashville and the state, guiding Nashville into a top global destination and making Tennessee a must-see state for visitors from around the world. It’s hard to imagine a more successful destination brand than Music City. This would not have happened without you, and we’re grateful to you for that.

The economic vitality of Nashville’s hospitality industry is incredible, and we recognize the key role you played in recruiting and producing major events, bringing professional sports teams and venues to Middle Tennessee, and creating a thriving hospitality and entertainment scene in Middle Tennessee with world-class restaurants, retail, live music and attractions.

We are eternally grateful to the legacy you leave behind.

Sincerely,

Bill Lee



NASHVILLE HISTORY THANKS YOU

In honor of his retirement, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum extends heartfelt congratulations to one of Music City's most resounding voices for more than thirty years.

Thank you, Butch Spyridon.





ACCOLADE

Destinations International held its CEO Summit on April 3-5 in Greater Victoria, BC, Canada. Summit attendees wore sunglasses to pay tribute to Butch Spyridon, CEO of the Nashville CVC. Left to right in front: Joe D'Alessandro, President & CEO, San Francisco Travel; Tammy Blount-Canavan, FCDME, President & CEO, Visit Seattle; Spyridon; and Don Welsh, President & CEO, Destinations International.



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Geoff Freeman, President & CEO, U.S. Travel Association

“No one person is more responsible for the Nashville of today than Butch Spyridon. Congratulations on a storied run that will serve as a model for destination building. When Chris Stapleton sings his goodbye to Nashville, your friends will think of you:

*So long, Nashville,
Tennessee*

*You can't have
what's left of me*

And as far as I can tell

*It's high time I wish
you well*

*You built me up, you set
me free*

*And you tore down my
memories*

*So you be you, and
I'll be me*

*So long, Nashville,
Tennessee 🎵*

BUTCH, THANKS FOR GIVING NASHVILLE YOUR ALL, FOR ALL THESE YEARS!

We appreciate your endless efforts to spotlight all the people and places that make Nashville such an incredible place to visit, and live. Our city will continue to benefit from your visionary leadership for decades to come. Thank you for putting Nashville on the world's stage.

You will be missed!



Deana Ivey, President, Nashville CVC; and Butch Spyridon, CEO, Nashville CVC at the ASAE Summit Awards.



ACCOLADE



Butch,

Thanks for being the visionary that
helped transform our city!

Cheers,

Hilton Nashville Downtown



Congratulations
BUTCH SPYRIDON



Nashville
MUSIC CITY

Thank you for your 32 years of service
and taking Nashville to the Top of the Charts!

NASHVILLE CONVENTION & VISITORS CORP BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF