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Contact: Alyssa Harasim  
Michigan Restaurant Association  
(517) 482-3928

## **KEN WASCO RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FROM THE MICHIGAN RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**

LANSING, MI – The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is pleased to announce that Ken Wasco has received the MRA Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor given by the Association. He was bestowed the honor at the MRA's annual Chairman's Dinner, held at the Henry in Dearborn on January 22.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals who have provided exceptional and continuing leadership, vision, and commitment to Michigan's foodservice industry. A recipient is selected by previous Distinguished Service Award winners; a new winner is determined each year from submitted nominations.

Ken Wasco is an "Operator Success Advocate" within the Customer Experience area at Gordon Food Service and has been involved in creating new thinking within the service industries for over 35 years. His experience as a healthcare departmental manager, administrator, corporate marketing executive, researcher and now "Catalyst" have helped him to develop a simple yet powerful philosophy: "Always Through Others... First!" Additionally, within the service industries he has earned the unofficial title of "industry doer".

"This Distinguished Service Award was a total surprise to me," said Wasco. "It is a tremendous honor to be recognized by the Michigan Restaurant Association, an organization that is very near and dear to my heart."

Ken travels the breadth of the USA and Canada annually presenting 250+ times on unique ways to achieve success through a greater understanding of people and the dynamics of consumerism. Ken has been recognized for his foodservice expertise in virtually every state, province and national service industry conference. In total, Ken has conducted well over 6000 seminars and workshops to enhance effectiveness through people and the next generation of foodservice leaders.

"Ken Wasco is without a doubt the most passionate and energetic person I have ever met in my life," said Justin Winslow, President & CEO of the Michigan Restaurant Association. "That his passion and commitment has been focused for so long on our industry and on this association has been to our collective betterment. The decision to select Ken was easy for all involved."

In addition to being a graduate of The School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University, Ken Wasco holds three Master's Degrees in Organizational Systems, Management, Communication and completed doctoral studies in the Psychology of Communication. When not traveling, Ken enjoys spending his time with loving wife Jan of 38 years, his two daughters Shannon and Lauren, his three grandchildren Crosby, Finley, Raegan, and his two son-in-law's Jonathan and Ryan.

PHOTO: Ken Wasco

*Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents approximately 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 421,500 people and generating \$15.4 billion in annual sales.*

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