



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SGMP Names 2021 Distinguished Award Winners

Recognizes Achievement in Government Meetings Field

ALEXANDRIA, VA—October 29, 2021—The Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP), the premier national organization for the government meetings industry, announced **Annette Wallace, CMP, CGMP**, as the 2021 Sam Gilmer Planner of the Year and **Wayne Callis, CGMP**, as the 2021 Sam Gilmer Supplier of the Year at its 2021 National Education Conference (NEC) held in Huntsville, Alabama. Recognized as the government meetings industry's highest distinction, the Sam Gilmer Award celebrates excellence in government meeting planning and the advancement of education and professionalism across the industry.

Immediate Past National President Michelle Milligan, MSW, LMSW, CGMP, gave a 2021 President's Award to all member suppliers who are each an integral ingredient to the strong partnerships between government planners and suppliers. Milligan bestowed another 2021 President's Award to **Marie Arighi, CMP, CHSP, CGMP**, former SGMP National 2nd Vice President, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Task Force Chair, and a leader of the National Communications Committee.

Sam Gilmer provided the motivating force, vision and leadership toward the founding of SGMP in 1981. The Sam Gilmer Awards are presented in recognition of service over time, especially at the national level, that has significantly contributed to the Society's growth and development and enhanced the professionalism of the industry. SGMP members nominate potential recipients who are then selected by a panel of previous Sam Gilmer Award winners.

### **Sam Gilmer Planner of the Year**

Planner of the Year **Annette Wallace, CMP, CGMP**, currently serves as the National President of SGMP. An Event Manager for the Hawthorn Foundation in cooperation with the Missouri Governor's Office, Wallace organizes the Governor's Conference on Economic Development and the Kit Bond Citizen Leadership Award Dinner.

Prior to her election as SGMP National President, Annette Wallace served as 1st Vice President in 2019-2021 and as a National Director from 2017-2019 while serving on numerous committees and taskforces. Locally, she served on the SGMP Missouri Capital Chapter board as President, Treasurer and Director.

Annette Wallace has served as a National Board Liaison to the National Membership Committee where for several years she helped plan the Joint Leadership Meeting, Joint Leadership Session and strategic meetings to train chapter leadership. Additionally, she implemented Chapter Leadership Training for chapter committee chairs and leaders to help them understand their roles and how to work together with other chapter leaders and committee chairs on a local level. Wallace also co-chaired the Sponsorship Committee for the National Education Conference which exceeded goals in 2018 and 2019.

Her nominator said: “I can confidently confirm that Annette is an exemplary leader and solid team player. Her leadership, stewardship, and consistent contributions to SGMP over an extensive period of time are the primary reasons why Annette Wallace is deserving of SGMP's Sam Gilmer Planner of the Year.”

### **Sam Gilmer Supplier of the Year**

Supplier of the Year **Wayne Callis, CGMP**, currently serves as an SGMP Gilmer Institute of Learning Fundraising Trustee and is a Sales Manager for VisitNorfolk, where he oversees the government/military market. “Since joining SGMP in 2013, Wayne has become one of our most avid volunteers and has made significant contributions to our Society,” wrote his nominators. “His position as a GIL trustee has come during one of the toughest times in our industry, yet he has kept pushing forward and developing unique ideas.”

Most recently, Callis spearheaded a cookbook fundraiser to celebrate the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has been instrumental to the SGMP online auction's success. Proceeds from both fund member scholarships. As a GIL trustee, he volunteered to moderate SGMP national webinars and proctor Certified Government Meeting Professional examinations. He has served on the National Board's finance and audit committee for three years and served on the national online auction committee for the last three years.

He has been an active volunteer on two chapter boards, SGMP Old Dominion and SGMP National Capital, serving in leadership roles for both. He served as Treasurer for SGMP Old Dominion Chapter, receiving national recognition for his achievements. SGMP Old Dominion named him Supplier of the Year in 2018 and presented him with a Members Choice Award in 2017.

Prior to joining VisitNorfolk, Callis held previous positions with Westin Hotel Virginia Beach Town Center, Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel and Norfolk Waterside Marriott. He also serves in leadership roles for the Navy League of the US, Hampton Roads Council and the USO Hampton Roads/Central Virginia.

### **The President's Award**

**Marie Arighi, CMP, CHSP, CGMP**, former National 2nd Vice President, 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Task Force Chair and a leader of the National Communications Committee was presented the 2021 President's Award by SGMP Immediate Past National President Michelle Milligan, MSW, LMSW, CGMP.

A meeting professional with 30 years of experience, Arighi received the award for helping to coordinate and promote the Society's hybrid 2021 National Education Conference, elevating the Society's social media presence and orchestrating the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities. Over her career she has been a member of three SGMP chapters and helped charter one of those chapters.

Arighi is the Director of Sales and Event Services for the Von Braun Center in Huntsville, Alabama. In addition to SGMP's Rocket City Alabama Chapter, she is a member of the Army Aviation Association of America – Tennessee Valley Chapter, Alabama Automotive Manufacturing Association, Alabama Council of Association Executives, Association of the United States Army – Redstone/Huntsville Chapter, Huntsville/Madison County Hospitality Association and Women in Defense Tennessee Valley Chapter.

Milligan also recognized **Rob Coffman, CGMP**, who served on the SGMP National Board as National President and then Immediate Past President, for his long-standing contributions to the Society, chapters and members over the course of many years. Coffman is Senior Advisor, Treasury Operations for the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Wallace, Callis, Arighi and Coffman were honored at the Sam Gilmer Awards Celebration during SGMP's 39<sup>th</sup> annual National Education Conference (NEC), held in Huntsville, Alabama, and virtually this year. SGMP's award recipients can be found at <http://www.sgmp.org/honors>.

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*The Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) was founded in 1981, celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and is the only national organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to individuals who plan and*

*execute government meetings. We deliver our membership value of education, resources and networking to nearly 1,500 members in 19 chapters across the country. Our mission is to enhance and promote the expertise of government meeting professionals. For more information, please visit [www.sgmp.org](http://www.sgmp.org).*