



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SGMP Names 2018 Distinguished Award Winners

Recognizing Achievements in Government Meetings Industry

ALEXANDRIA, VA—July 6, 2018—The Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP), the premier national organization for the government meetings industry, announced **Michelle Milligan**, MSW, LMSW, CGMP, as the Sam Gilmer Planner of the Year and **Mark Richardson**, CGMP, as the Sam Gilmer Supplier of the Year at its 2018 National Education Conference (NEC). Recognized as the government meeting planning industry's highest distinction, the Sam Gilmer Award celebrates excellence in government meeting planning and the advancement of education and professionalism across the industry.

Sam Gilmer provided the motivating force, vision and leadership toward the founding of SGMP in 1981. These awards are presented in recognition of service over a period of 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 former Sam Gilmer Award winners.

Planner of the Year **Michelle Milligan** has been SGMP's national president since July 2016 and works at the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan, Clinic for Child Study. "Michelle Milligan is a steady force of leadership within the national board and advocates SGMP's core values with integrity and honesty," her nominator said. "Her positive outlook on the future of SGMP boosts the excitement and encouragement in other members."

She has continually served SGMP at the national level, including four years on the national board of directors, and received the President's Award in 2013, while serving as Michigan Chapter president. She spent multiple years on the Michigan Chapter board, where she was president from 2011-2015 and received the Chapter Planner of the Year award in 2013.

Supplier of the Year **Mark Richardson** is sales manager with DoubleTree by Hilton Colorado Springs. He has spent countless hours volunteering to help military-related causes, an important group of the government sector. He served on SGMP's Nominations & Election Committee and serves as a Gilmer Institute of Learning trustee responsible for fundraising for scholarships. He is a member of the SGMP Rocky Mountain Chapter and has been honored with the chapter's President's Award and named the chapter's Supplier of the Year in 2014.

The SGMP Rocky Mountain Chapter appointed Richardson to fill the vacant Treasurer's position. "His first assignment was to hold two silent auctions that year to raise funds for the chapter education programs and scholarships," said his nominator. "He exceeded the dollar goal by 10 percent for both events. He took that same level of initiative and enthusiasm in raising funds on the National level soon after being elected as a Gilmer trustee."

## **The President's Award**

**Andrew Silver**, CGMP, received the 2018 President's Award, serving as inspiration and support to President Michelle Milligan, who attributes Silver for introducing her to SGMP and her growing leadership in the Society. Silver has served in many national and chapter board leadership roles, most recently as a Gilmer Institute of Learning trustee. He also steps in quickly for special projects, such as creation of NEC brochures, sponsor videos and award logos. Silver is the director of education, training and compliance of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Office of Recipient Rights and a past president of the SGMP Michigan Chapter.

## **The Partnership Award**

SGMP's National Board of Directors selected the **Eastern Research Group (ERG)** for the 2018 Partnership Award for going above and beyond with their outstanding service coordination of SGMP's National Education Conference for the last two years. ERG, based in Lexington, Mass., has proudly supported government conferences since 1984. Lauren Lariviere, ERG vice president and SGMP's contract meeting planner; Laura Harwood, ERG vice president; and Erin Pittorino, senior conference planner, accepted the award on behalf of ERG.

Milligan, Richardson, Silver and ERG were honored at the Sam Gilmer Awards Banquet on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, in Norfolk, Va., during SGMP's 36<sup>th</sup> annual National Education Conference (NEC). 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 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 2,000 plus members in more than 20 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).*