

Global  Links  
BUSINESS LUNCHEON

# 2024 Global Links Business Luncheon

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024 | THE GLOBAL AMBASSADOR



PHOENIX  
**Sister Cities**  
Discovery Changes Everything.

# LUNCHEON PROGRAM

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## **11:30 AM    Opening & Introductions**

MELISSA WERNER

Chair, Board of Directors  
Phoenix Sister Cities, Inc.

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### **Welcome Remarks**

EMILIO GAYNOR

Chair, Business Relations Committee  
Phoenix Sister Cities, Inc.

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### **A Conversation: Sam Fox and Mike Ebert**

SAM FOX

Founder, Fox Restaurant Concepts and Author & Edit Hospitality

MIKE EBERT

Managing Partner, RED Development

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### **Mayor's Export Awards Presentation**

THE HONORABLE DEBRA STARK

Vice Mayor of Phoenix

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## **12:30 PM    Closing Remarks**

EMILIO GAYNOR

Chair, Business Relations Committee  
Phoenix Sister Cities, Inc.

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## WELCOME



### **MELISSA WERNER**

#### **CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS PHOENIX SISTER CITIES, INC.**

Melissa Goitia Werner CSEP, is Executive Director of the Office of University Events & Protocol and the Office of University Ceremonies. She is a Protocol Officer at Arizona State University and the co-founder of the North American Association of Commencement Officers [naaco.co] (NAACO) a professional association for commencement and graduation planners from across the United States and Canada. Melissa has more than 30 years' experience in event production and has produced commencement and other ceremonies for ASU for more than 20 years.



### **EMILIO W. GAYNOR**

#### **CHAIR, BUSINESS RELATIONS COMMITTEE PHOENIX SISTER CITIES, INC.**

Emilio W. Gaynor serves as Senior Director of Strategy and Relationship Management at Chicanos Por La Causa, where he is charged with strategic relationship building, the creation of partnerships and development of sustainable revenue opportunities to ensure CPLC's economic and political empowerment mission is fulfilled. In previous roles at CPLC, he headed the international partnership and relationship development focusing on Mexican business, philanthropic and community organization partners with Mexico and within Mexico. He has extensive experience in international relations and development having managed and headed high-level business and government missions to Mexico connecting trade, investment, business and philanthropic partners in Mexico and Latin America for over 28 years. Serving the social sector, he has led cross border collaboration between non-profit organizations and foundations. Emilio served in the executive branch for two governors as representative of the State of Arizona in Sonora, Mexico and as Executive Director of the Arizona Mexico Commission in the Office of the Governor. Emilio proudly serves as Phoenix Sister Cities Commissioner where he also serves as Chair of the Business Relations Committee. Emilio's previous and current community and civic contributions also include serving as Chair of the Phoenix Planning Commission, Community Committee Co-chair on the Arizona Governor's Arizona Mexico Commission, Chair of the Los D-backs Hispanic Council, board member of Global Ties Arizona, incoming Chair of the Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, advisory committee member of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition and is an Honorary Commander at Luke Airforce base 56th Fighter Wing. Emilio received an honorary Doctor Honoris Causa at Mexico's National Autonomous University.

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## A CONVERSATION: SAM FOX AND MIKE EBERT



### **SAM FOX**

**FOUNDER, FOX RESTAURANT CONCEPTS AND  
AUTHOR & EDIT HOSPITALITY**

Sam is a 12-time James Beard Award nominee, a *New York Times* best-selling cookbook author, and was named one of the 50 most influential people in the restaurant industry by Nation’s Restaurant News for five consecutive years.

He launched that first FRC concept, Wildflower, in 1998, but became a household name after putting healthy dining on the map when he partnered with Dr. Andrew Weil to open the first True Food Kitchen in Phoenix in 2008. In 2017, Fox successfully sold True Food to Centerbridge Partners. Today, Oprah is a partner. Sam has now developed over 20 unique concepts, 12 of which currently operate under the FRC umbrella, including Flower Child, Culinary Dropout and The Henry.

Each and every menu item goes through a tasting with Sam. He has been profiled by numerous media outlets, including Forbes, CBS News and CNBC.

To further his pursuit of combining unmatched hospitality with culinary excellence, Sam formed his new company Author & Edit Hospitality. The properties are authored with an extraordinary vision and meticulously edited to create offerings that are not only seen but felt. Author & Edit’s two properties are original and created through a global lens and connected to the diverse communities, cities and neighborhoods in which they reside. The company’s collection includes The Global Ambassador, an internationally inspired hotel in the heart of Arcadia as well as the remarkable The Twelve Thirty Club at 5th and Broadway in Nashville, which garnered national headlines when it opened.

Sam generously gives back to the communities his restaurants serve through FRC’s charitable arm: Feed the Soul and the Fox Family Foundation.



### **MIKE EBERT**

**MANAGING PARTNER, RED DEVELOPMENT**

As a founding partner, Mike Ebert has shaped the company’s ongoing success leading projects across the country since 1995. His keen insights and knowledge about the qualities that come together in a compelling property are an essential part of RED’s continued evolution as a developer of one-of-a-kind mixed-use and retail developments. His visionary leadership has not only transformed RED, but also reshaped city skylines through forward-thinking projects marking

monumental progress. Ebert spearheaded the groundbreaking public-private partnership with the City of Phoenix to develop CityScape, the high-profile, 1.2 million square foot, mixed-use urban destination in downtown Phoenix that is a signature project for both the company and the city. He also played a pivotal role in CityScape’s expansion with Block 23 – adding 200,000 square feet

of mixed-use development to the urban core of the city, including the first grocery store in the downtown area.

Ebert's extensive understanding of the industry has continued to help grow RED's development pipeline with additional noteworthy projects in Phoenix, including the mixed-use redevelopment of the former 100+ acre Paradise Valley Mall and The Grove, the 18-acre mixed-use site at one of the most high-profile intersections in the Valley at 44th Street and Camelback Road.

His expertise extends beyond Arizona and has further developed RED's footprint in other states through notable projects such as The Union Dallas, which transformed the Dallas skyline and brought the first urban grocery store to the market.

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## 2024 MAYOR'S EXPORT AWARDS



### THE HONORABLE DEBRA STARK

Debra Stark serves as the Vice Mayor representing District 3 on the Phoenix City Council. Stark was first appointed Councilmember in 2016 and elected by voters in 2017. She secured her reelection in 2021.

Stark has spent her entire career as a public servant in local government. Her first career position was a planner for the city of Phoenix after receiving her Master's in Planning from Arizona State University. She then went to work for Maricopa County as the Planning Manager where she supervised the Planning Division and worked on the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan. She then took her knowledge to the city of Peoria as Community Development Director where she managed the operations of the Community Development Department and worked with the Mayor and Council to implement the first design review ordinance for the city of Peoria.

Following her tenure at the city of Peoria, Stark returned to the city of Phoenix as the Planning and Development Director, serving 7 years as Director before retiring from the city of Phoenix in 2012. Never a woman to stay idle, she returned to Maricopa County and served as the Planning and Development Director until resigning in May 2016.

Stark also remains active in the planning industry and her community. She was president of the Arizona Chapter of the American Planning Association and a board member for the Arizona Council of the Urban Land Institute. She is also a former member of the Maricopa County Trial Court Selection Commission, a past board member of Valley Partnership, the Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS, and Charter 100.

Stark currently serves as the chair of the Transportation, Infrastructure and Planning Subcommittee and is a member of the Economic Development and Housing Subcommittee. She co-chairs the Fast Track Cities Ad Hoc Committee.

Stark is married to Brian and they are proud parents of a son and daughter.

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## 2024 EXPORT CHAMPION OF THE YEAR



### **ROBERT VERA**

#### **FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CENTER FOR INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY**

Robert Vera, is the Founding Executive Director of Grand Canyon University's Canyon Ventures Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Established in 2019, Canyon Ventures educates, mentors, and connects startup ventures with the right education, relationships and resources needed to flourish. The organization develops companies that transform people, industries, and the world all from the heart of West Phoenix, Arizona. The Canyon Ventures accelerator includes Founders Forum, a highly focused entrepreneur educational series that delivers unparalleled startup success. Under Robert's leadership Canyon Ventures has assisted in raising \$13.1 million in equity for its ventures and has launched six companies into the Arizona community with a combined valuation of nearly \$300 million.

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## 2024 EXPORTER OF THE YEAR

### **CLEARFLOW GROUP US**



Originally from Edmonton, Alberta, Clearflow is an Indigenous-based company that manufactures and supplies large mining operations and industrial and municipal operations with leading-edge water treatment processes and products. Clearflow focuses on offering reliable, high-quality flocculant solutions for industry from their headquarters and production facility in Phoenix, Arizona. In the past five years, they have started exporting to Australia, UK, Brazil, Peru, Canada, and are currently working with Chile, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and India

Jerry Hanna - Clearflow's Founder, President & CEO - is Metis and a member of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business.

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## 2024 EXPORT SERVICE PROVIDER OF THE YEAR

### KNIGHT-SWIFT TRANSPORTATION



Knight-Swift Transportation Holdings Inc. is the result of a 2017 merger between Knight Transportation and Swift Transportation, creating the nation's largest full truckload company. Since that merger, the company has further expanded with the acquisition of LTL (Less-than-Truckload) operations in the southeast and northwest, as well as the purchase of national truckload carrier US Xpress Enterprises. Headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, Knight-Swift Transportation employs over 30,000 people providing a full complement of truckload, LTL, warehousing, dedicated fleet, rail intermodal, cross-border, expedited, and logistics services throughout the US, Mexico, and Canada. The company has developed a key role in domestic and international trade by providing vital transportation and logistics services across all modes of transportation in North America. This is accomplished thanks to the extensive fleet of over 27,000 tractors and close to 100,000 trailers serving a wide range of customers in a broad array of industries.

Knight-Swift's economic impact ranges from providing employment to thousands of workers in the transportation industry, to the distribution of goods for purchase throughout the North American Continent, the purchase of goods and services supporting Arizona businesses, the financial support of charities including the Phoenix Children's Hospital, as well as significant fee and tax revenues originating in the City of Phoenix. The executive management team of this company which is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange offices in the City of Phoenix and lives in the greater Phoenix area.



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# PHOENIX GLOBAL FORUM

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**350 +  
International  
Executives &  
Global Leaders**

**30+  
Speakers &  
Subject-Matter  
Experts**

**10+  
World-Changing  
Topics**

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**CHICANOS POR LA CAUSA**

Is proud to support:

**2024 GLOBAL LINKS BUSINESS LUNCHEON**

with Sam Fox

&

Congratulations to  
**THE MAYOR'S EXPORT AWARD WINNERS**

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A DIVISION OF CHICANOS POR LA CAUSA




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**LONDON**  
SERVICE 2X A DAY WITH BRITISH AIRWAYS AND AMERICAN AIRLINES

**GERMANY**  
FLIGHTS TO FRANKFURT RETURN IN MAY 3X A WEEK WITH CONDOR AIRLINES

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### WITH ADDITIONAL THANKS TO:

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City of Phoenix Community & Economic Development Department  
JCL Immigration Attorneys

With utmost appreciation to the Global Links Business Luncheon Committee:  
Chair Louie Lujan, Bret Aldieri, Megan Blood, Ken Booth, Cindy Braun,  
Caroline Lobo, Rick Gerrard, and Karla Moran.



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CALGARY, CANADA

ESTABLISHED 1997

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CATANIA, ITALY

ESTABLISHED 2001

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CHENGDU, CHINA

ESTABLISHED 1987

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ENNIS, IRELAND

ESTABLISHED 1988

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GRENOBLE, FRANCE

ESTABLISHED 1990

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HERMOSILLO, MEXICO

ESTABLISHED 1976

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HIMEJI, JAPAN

ESTABLISHED 1976

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PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

ESTABLISHED 2013

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RAMAT-GAN, ISRAEL

ESTABLISHED 2005

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SUWON, SOUTH KOREA

ESTABLISHED 2021

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TAIPEI, TAIWAN

ESTABLISHED 1979

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*Phoenix Sister Cities fosters relationships  
between the people of Phoenix and our  
Sister Cities around the world to promote  
friendship, peace and prosperity.*

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[phoenixsistercities.org](http://phoenixsistercities.org)

### **Phoenix Sister Cities**

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For more information, or a copy of this publication  
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Phoenix Sister Cities at 602-534-3751.