

Dear Friends,

Tomorrow, February 15<sup>th</sup>, marks the one-year anniversary of the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Arne M. Sorenson. We wanted to take a moment of pause to remember Arne and share updates on the [Marriott-Sorenson Center for Hospitality Leadership](#), through which his legacy and commitment to the hospitality industry will be honored.

The news of his untimely passing pierced all that knew and loved him. Arne was an exceptional human being, a devoted family man, a visionary leader, a lover of people, and an industry hero. His contributions to the growth, transformation, and success of Marriott International are immeasurable. The depth of his impact and reach was not only felt at Marriott and within the hospitality industry, but across numerous industries.

More than a CEO, Arne was kind, compassionate, and deeply faithful—the hallmarks of his character. His dedication to people, realized through his work in the industry, left a profound mark on the world and our hearts. We are all privileged and better for having experienced Arne.

It was his work to create greater opportunity for all and his commitment to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce, both within Marriott and within the industry more broadly, that inspired the creation of the Marriott-Sorenson Center for Hospitality Leadership. We carry his commitment with us as we continue our work to build the Center. It has been an honor working on this ambitious endeavor, and getting to know so many of you who, from the outset, displayed a tremendous outpouring of support. You shared that the announcement of the Center was a bright light in an otherwise dark time.

Your love for Arne, alongside your big ideas and bold vision for the future of the hospitality industry, inspired the Center's design and roadmap. We are forever connected through this project, and remain grateful for your support and partnership.

### ***Key Accomplishments***

We would like to share some highlights from our work over the last year:

- Raised over \$5M dollars for the Arne M. Sorenson Hospitality Fund to support the future operational and programmatic activities of the Center;
- Designed a vision statement, core program tenets, and the inaugural program pilot tracks;
- Launched the search for the Center Director; and
- Showcased the Center on the mainstages at the MINA & Full-Service Owner's Conference and the New York University (NYU) International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference.

Following the NYU Investment conference, Howard students were energized and excited about the myriad of career pathways in the industry. We heard from students like Corine Houngninou, a sophomore majoring in computer information systems, who shared:

*"Before attending the conference, I didn't know much about the hospitality industry as a whole. I had trouble understanding the connection between the industry and my major. The conference inspired my level of interest and desire for deeper engagement. I now realize how large the industry truly is, and how tech plays a crucial role through the many digital interactions from digital apps for hotel check-ins to room service."*

We are encouraged by the students and their growing enthusiasm about the program. Their voices are at the heart of this project, and we look forward to welcoming them through the Center's doors in the fall of 2022.

### ***Long-term Planning and Sustainability***

Today we are proud to announce the launch of the [Scholarship Fund for Hospitality Leadership](#)—a \$10M endowed fund that will create a pathway for students enrolled in the Center to prepare for and pursue meaningful careers in the hospitality industry. This new fundraising effort aims to reduce the amount of debt Howard students shoulder while pursuing their degree. Studies show that Black and other low-income minority students borrow more money to obtain a bachelor's degree and are disproportionately burdened by student loans than their counterparts. This, in turn, has a long-term impact on their career choices, often forcing students to choose jobs with higher starting salaries over those with longer-term prospects and/or those they are most passionate about.

We are honored and humbled to launch this fund with a lead gift from Arne's family—his wife, Ruth, and their four children Astri, Esther, Isaac, and Lars. Their generous contribution is a symbol of their commitment to share Arne's legacy with the next generation of hospitality leaders.

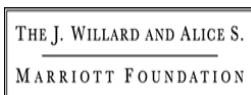
This fund is a critical next step in supporting student development and retention over the life of the program, and we look forward to partnering with more institutions and individuals to reach our goals. We encourage you to visit the [Scholarship Fund for Hospitality Leadership](#) for more information and to join Arne's family in supporting the next generation of industry leaders.

As we move into this official *launch* year, we are reassured by the groundwork that has been laid, the eager and talented students, and the promising partnerships we have forged to bring the Center to life. Be well and know that we will be thinking of you all tomorrow as we remember our beloved Arne.

Sincerely,



Mieka F. Wick  
Executive Director  
The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation



Anthony Wilbon, PhD., PMP  
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