

Congratulations to the Award of Excellence Recipients!



Award of Excellence recipients Raymond J. Mattes, CAE; Jamie H. Mitchell, CMP; Robert D. Holsworth, Ph.D.; and Phyllis Errico, JD, CAE.

On Friday, December 3, over 160 members and guests of the VSAE community came together in-person to enjoy the holiday season at the **2021 Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction** held at the **Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa Short Pump**.

After an outstanding surf and turf lunch, the highly distinguished VSAE Awards of Excellence were presented to four special and deserving individuals who reflect the best in the association industry. Congratulations to the following recipients:

continued on page 4 >



Dr. Holsworth to Discuss Virginia's Political Outlook

Join your VSAE colleagues on Friday, January 6 at the **Omni Richmond Hotel** for our annual luncheon presentation from Dr. Bob Holsworth of DecideSmart, and recipient of VSAE's 2022 Career Service award, as he gives us a glimpse of Virginia's political outlook for 2023.

In addition to Dr. Holsworth, we will be joined by Jeff Evans, ASAE's Director of Public

Policy, who will discuss ASAE's new Power of Association's campaign and its legislative priorities for 2023.

Don't miss their insights on what associations can expect legislatively in Virginia and DC and how to navigate through these always challenging waters.

Register at vsae.org/calendar.

DON'T MISS IT!

2023 VIRGINIA POLITICAL OUTLOOK

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6
Omni Richmond Hotel

SCHEDULE

10:30 a.m.

Registration Opens

11:00 – 11:45 a.m.

Networking Reception

11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Luncheon and Speaker

REGISTER AT
[VSAE.ORG/CALENDER](https://vsae.org/calender)

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23
NOVA Seminar Series
Herndon

THURSDAY, MARCH 2
Seminar with Lunch
Hilton Richmond Downtown

THURSDAY-FRIDAY,
MARCH 23-24
Meeting Planner Summit
Hotel 24 South
Staunton

THURSDAY, APRIL 13
Seminar with Lunch
Location TBA

VIEW UPCOMING EVENTS AT
[VSAE.ORG/CALENDAR](https://vsae.org/calendar)

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Cavalier Resort



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Colonial Williamsburg Hotels



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Embassy Suites by Hilton
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Randy Cummins
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Karen Garrett
Kingsmill Resort



Joe Barrow
Omni Homestead Resort



Sally Noona, CMP
Virginia Beach Convention
& Visitors Bureau

Thank You, 2023 Partners!

VSAE Partners are Associate members actively engaged and financially committed to supporting VSAE and all its programs and services. These Partners have committed to a level of support for 2023 through their advertising, sponsorship, and scholarship.

The 2023 Partners are committed to helping VSAE realize its strategic goals of strengthening our association community and delivering value to members. When looking for industry services for your association, VSAE encourages you to reach out to these Partners first to see how they can deliver value to your association and its members. See page 5 for a list of the 2022 Partners who supported VSAE through another challenging year.

If you are interested in becoming a Partner, there are still advertising and sponsorship opportunities available to make your mark on the society for Virginia's association professionals. Visit vsae.org/partner-program for more information.

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The Virginian Hotel

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE



The Spring CAE Study Group begins Tuesday, February 21 and runs for 9 weeks, ending in time for the exam in May. This is a group facilitated by current CAEs. Candidates who fully participated in a VSAE Study Group have had excellent pass rates. The study group is free for VSAE members, but registration is required.

For more information and to register, visit vsae.org/cae-information. If you have any questions, please contact **Terry Monroe**, Executive Director, at terry@vsae.org or (804) 249-2234.

SPONSORED BY



2023 calendar of events

Visit vsae.org/calendar for all of the 2023 educational and networking opportunities.

2023 Membership Renewal is Available Online

**PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY
JANUARY 31 TO REMAIN ACTIVE.**

1. Log into vsae.org with your member credentials.
2. Click "Mbr Center—My VSAE" on the menu bar, then click on "My Profile."
3. Click "Your Organization"
4. Click "Invoices."
5. Pay online via credit card or print and mail with a check.

QUESTIONS?

Write Tami at tami@vsae.org.

Leadership reflections



Steven Williams, CAE
VSAE President

I'm writing this just having left the VSAE Awards Luncheon. As I told VSAE executive director Terry Monroe, the team at Eisenman & Associates, as well as many VSAE member volunteers, pulled off what seemed to be a perfectly planned and flawless event. The program was first-class, heartwarming, and fun. The hospitality shown to VSAE by the **Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump** was particularly generous.

Congratulations again to our very deserving award recipients. The CEO Award of Excellence was presented to **Ray Mattes**, and the Association Staff Award of Excellence was presented to **Phyllis Errico**. In addition, the Associate Member Award of Excellence was presented to **Jamie Mitchell**, while the Career Service Award was presented to **Robert Holsworth**. As awards committee chair **Scot McRoberts** remarked, "These individuals have risen to the top of their profession and provided extraordinary service to VSAE and its members."

Earlier in the day, I addressed the past presidents of VSAE during a breakfast honoring their service. As I looked around the dining room at each president, I recalled many of their contributions to the association, such as: leading VSAE through significant rebranding and logo development, running the organization virtually during a pandemic, creating valuable peer-to-peer learning opportunities, elevating the quality of content leaders and speakers, making community service a more important part of VSAE life, implementing responsible investment and fiscal policies, and so much more. I thanked them for building the foundation that has gotten us to where we are today.

I also offered a state-of-the-association of sorts to the past presidents. In 2022, VSAE saw the strength of our community and finances as we continued transitioning from the pandemic while developing new programs

**"It's a great
time to be
a VSAE
member."**

and services. Total VSAE membership is at an all-time high, as is executive membership. Moreover, membership increasingly represents all regions of the Commonwealth, with almost 20% of members being 50 or more miles from Richmond. One of my goals as president is to expand the VSAE footprint, and we are doing that. For example, **Beth Stockner** of the Virginia Oil and Gas Association is from Abingdon—300 miles from Richmond.

In 2022, we offered over 100 hours of CAE-approved learning, conducted two CAE study groups for 33 people, and had the highest number of members ever with the CAE credential. The VSAE board of directors reviewed and updated the association's strategic plan; released a VSAE diversity, equity, and inclusion vision and values statement; restarted the early career professionals initiative; relaunched the Association Leadership Virginia (ALV) program; added a "solutions zone" to the Fall Expo; hosted four seminars in Northern Virginia; and launched a series of popular podcasts about work, life, and stories of VSAE members.

Our partners continued to support VSAE throughout 2022. A sincere thank you to: **The Cavalier Resort Virginia Beach, Colonial Williamsburg Hotels, Embassy Suites Hampton Convention Center, Hilton Norfolk The Main, Independence Golf Club, James River Audio Visual Services, Kingsmill Resort, Lansdowne Resort, Omni Homestead Resort, Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, and Visit Loudoun.**

Lastly, we are approaching a very special year. In 2024, we will celebrate our 75th anniversary! It's a great time to be a VSAE member. So in honor of our past presidents, award winners, member volunteers, and many others, let's continue to build on their legacy and position VSAE for even more growth and success in 2023 and beyond.



> Awards, continued from page 1

Raymond J. Mattes, CAE, President & CEO, **Retail Alliance**, is the recipient of the **CEO Award of Excellence**, given to an outstanding association professional in recognition of their leadership and achievement, not just to their own association or VSAE, but to the entire association industry.

Phyllis Errico, JD, CAE, General Counsel, **VA Association of Counties**, is the recipient of the **Association Staff Award of Excellence**, which recognizes an association staff professional for their contributions to their association and VSAE. Criteria for this award include high integrity, professionalism, peer recognition, a record of success in association management, and consistent leadership and service to VSAE.

Jamie H. Mitchell, CMP, Convention Sales Manager, **Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau**, is the recipient of the **Associate Member Award of Excellence**, presented to VSAE member suppliers or vendors who have distinguished themselves through their leadership, professionalism, and customer service.

Robert D. Holsworth, Ph.D., Managing Principal, **DecideSmart**, is the recipient of the **Career Service Award of Excellence**, presented to an individual outside of or retired from the field of association management

who, through hard work, pleasing personality, and dedication, has provided exceptional service to the association community over the years.

SILENT AND LIVE AUCTIONS

New this year, members had the opportunity to bid on three different auctions: online silent auction, in-person silent auction, and a live auction.

The online silent auction featured over 60 items, including getaways at top destinations across Virginia and the Southeast, wine and beer packages, specialty goodie baskets, golf outings, outdoor adventures, professional services, books, tools, and much more.

The in-person silent auction featured 20 baskets containing wine, food items, gift cards, and more.

Two items were auctioned live at the luncheon by a lively and entertaining auctioneer, Ernie Rogers of Blacktie Benefit Auctions.



Congratulations to **Steven Williams** for winning the “Taste of Tuscany Getaway” package, and to **Jenny Crittenden** for winning the “Bali’s Exotic Indonesian Escape” package.

The Community Service Committee selected the **Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation** as this year’s charity. Kirsta Millar, Policy & Development Manager with the Foundation shared the real heroes of their work with a moving video.

Congratulations to the 50/50 raffle winner, **Amy Mawyer**, Vice President, Learning, for the **VA Society of CPAs**. The other half of the raffle proceeds will benefit VSAE educational activities and the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation.

We appreciate all of those who donated 155 pounds of canned and packaged goods that were collected during the event. The food will go to Feed More and will be prepared and distributed to 125 neighbors in need.

Thanks to everyone who made this year’s Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction such a great success, including the Silent Auction Task Force, the Community Services Committee, the Awards Committee, Eisenman & Associates staff, the Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa at Short Pump, and of course, our donors and bidders!

Thank You TO OUR 2022 PARTNERS

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Colonial Williamsburg Resorts
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Convention Center
Hilton Norfolk the Main
Independence Golf Club
James River Audio Visual Services
Kingsmill Resort
Lansdowne Resort
The Omni Homestead Resort
Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau
Visit Loudoun

BENEFACTOR

Greater Richmond Convention Center
Richmond Marriott Downtown
VisitNorfolk

SUPPORTER

Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
Massanutten Resort
Minuteman Press Glen Allen
Norfolk Waterside Marriott
Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel

PATRON

City of Fredericksburg
DoubleTree by Hilton Williamsburg
Great Wolf Lodge
The Greenbrier
Hampton Convention & Visitors Bureau
Hilton Richmond Downtown
Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa Short Pump
Hotel Madison & Shenandoah
Valley Conference Center
Lynchburg Office of Economic
Development & Tourism
Newport News Tourism
Omni Charlottesville Hotel
Omni Richmond Hotel
Personify/MemberClicks
Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk
Waterfront Hotel
Richmond Region Tourism
The Virginian Hotel
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

LET'S RECAP

Association Leadership Virginia (ALV)

ALV Session 2 provided an opportunity to continue to build relationships within the cohort and focus on human resources and finance. The Virginia Society of CPAs hosted the session in their newly redesigned meeting facility and provided lunch as well as thought leadership. **Beth Bickford**, VP, Finance & Administration, Virginia Society of CPAs, was generous and transparent in covering financial topics unique to non-profit organizations. **Maureen Dingus**, Chief Operating Officer, Virginia Society of CPAs, joined us over lunch to candidly share an overview and lessons learned regarding the implementation of DEI strategies with staff and members. And, **Patricia J. Trudeau** (PJ), CHRO for Association of Corporate Counsel, shared her take and led interactive discussions on HR's role in today's workplace. The next ALV session will take place January 4, 2023 and will focus on membership and business development.

Build-a-Bike Day

Thank you to the 23 volunteers (both VSAE members & non-members) who helped assemble forty bikes for Bikes for Kids. The bikes will be distributed through the Richmond Christmas Mother program.



Andrew Mann, President of the Richmond Area


Bicycle Association Foundation, raised over \$5,000. **Rick Eisenman** also donated \$5,000 from the FORE Foundation. "We bought a lot of bikes with \$10,000! Think of all those kids who will wake up Christmas Morning to a brand new bikes," exclaimed Andrew.



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A Better Process for Better Decisions

Leaders who act “from the gut” are often swayed by a host of biases. One Nobel-winning psychologist developed what he thinks is a better way.

Leaders are decisive—part of the reason why they’re in charge is because they’re comfortable making firm decisions amid complex arrays of options. But that doesn’t mean those leaders are always decisive in effective ways.

By now we’ve moved well past the notion of seat-of-one’s-pants leadership. Data matters, we know. In 2017 I spoke with a number of associations that spent time fine-tuning their decision-making processes, using colleagues in the C-suite to decide on appropriate inputs and metrics when it came to big-picture strategic issues. Even so, any leader can be subject to the kind of bias that can lead to poor decisions.

“The Mediating Assessments Protocol system is designed to stifle biases and delay intuition.”

That’s a key message of a 2019 article in MIT Sloan Management Review that points out some holes in leaders’ processes. Consider hiring, say the three authors of “A Structured Approach to Strategic Decisions,” who include Nobel-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman. Organizations gather plenty of information about candidates

via resumes and application questions, but the make-or-break moment is still an unstructured job interview. Such interviews “lead to biased evaluations that have very little predictive value,” the authors write. “That’s because the interviewer forms a mental model (colloquially known as an ‘impression’) of a candidate.” We tend to tune out the information that challenges the narrative we have in our head about a candidate, trust first impressions too much, and give too much weight to cultural biases.

Kahneman further dug into the hiring process in his 2021 book *Noise: A Flaw in Human Judgment*, written with Olivier Sibony and Cass Sunstein, with Kahneman telling *The Wall Street Journal* ahead of its release, “As long as you delay judgment to the end of the process, you can make an overall evaluation of each candidate that includes intangibles or intuition.”

As with hiring, so with many other decisions organizations face. Leaders can be subject to confirmation bias, the authors write, looking for the narrative that best supports their mental models—complicating information be damned. And they can be subject to availability bias, leaning too much on the most recent information or the information nearest at hand. All the research reports and well-delivered presentations are meaningless if they fall victim to such subjectivity.

continued >



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The Case for the Mediating Assessments Protocol

The solution that Kahneman and his colleagues Sibony and Dan Lovallo propose is called the Mediating Assessments Protocol (MAP), which recommends breaking up each big decision into a set of smaller assessments about the issue's individual parts. Their example is a company that's considering making an acquisition, where MAP would require separate studies on cultural, financial, and legal implications. The separation is key because it demands "explicit assessments of each aspect and to use those assessments as the basis for a decision." Those exploring cultural fit are charged with setting impressions about money and liability aside, and so on. From there, each attribute is assigned a percentile score; those scores are then assessed during a final decision-making process.

You're groaning. I can tell. The last thing your organization needs is more layers to your association's agenda, which can already feel overly bureaucratic and time-consuming. But in recent years, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has been employing a somewhat similar system. It's assigned a

three-person team to scrutinize new product ideas and larger strategic decisions, which are run through "gates" designed to assess their viability. Rather than add time and expense, the process is structured to avoid wasting time and resources on poorly-thought-through ideas and to create a culture where those proposing ideas understand the need to gather relevant data.

None of this is meant to make a CEO into a robot; ultimately a decision needs to be made.

"One of the essential purposes of MAP is basically to delay intuition," Kahneman told The Washington Post. Delay, not eliminate. Our brains are wired to create coherence when it's not necessarily warranted, Kahneman argues—and creating a process that breaks up that sense of coherence, separating a challenge into constituent parts, can help steer you away from your biases, which everybody has. What you do with all that information is still up to you.

How has your organization changed its decision-making processes to avoid biases and snap judgments? Share your experiences in the comments.

Editor's note: This article was originally published in 2019 and was last updated in August of 2022.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Athitakis, a contributing editor for *Associations Now*, has written on nonprofits, the arts, and leadership for a variety of publications. He is a coauthor of *The Dumbest Moments in Business History* and hopes you never qualify for the sequel.

New Year, New SIG

The new year brings with it a change to one of the Shared Interest Groups (SIGs). Beginning in January, the Communications and Marketing SIG will be renamed the Membership, Marketing & Communications SIG and be co-chaired by **Elizabeth Nelson, CAE** and **Julia Henderson**.

The decision to expand the SIG to include membership is in response to member feedback and recognition of the increasing linkage between issues, technologies and solutions that apply across membership, marketing and communications.

To learn more about the SIGs and how to get involved, visit vsae.org/shared-interest-groups



450

Members

277

Association
Professionals

146

Associates

84

CAEs

24

CMPs

100.25

CEU Hours Offered

9

Seminar Events

20

SIG Meetings

1,331

Event
Registrations

37

Partners

33

CAE Study Group
Participants

AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH



Congratulations to **The Omni Homestead Resort** and **The Virginian Lynchburg, Curio Collection by Hilton**, winners of the 2022 Historic Hotels of America Annual Awards of Excellence. The Historic Hotels Awards of Excellence recognize and celebrate the finest historic hotels and hoteliers from across the United States of America and around the world.



WHERE TO BE IN '23!



An opportunity for professional Meeting Planners to bond as they share best practices and experience together the newest ideas in event planning. Approximately 6.5 CAE/CMP credits.

Meeting Planner Summit
March 23-24
Hotel 24 South



The entire membership comes together for high-caliber educational sessions, networking at receptions and a banquet, and fun activities in the local area. Approximately 7 CAE credits.

Annual Conference
May 7-9
Embassy Suites Hampton Convention Center



Roundtable and panel discussions to explore the issues unique to owning and working for an Association Management Company. Approximately 4.25 CAE credits.

AMC Summit
July 11
Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center



Top-level decision makers focus in on the current challenges and opportunities in leading their association into the future. Approximately 9 CAE credits.

CEO & Senior Staff Retreat
September 11-12
Kingsmill Resort



Virginia's premiere conference for association executives and meeting planners, offering an Expo with 70+ exhibitors and multiple educational sessions. Approximately 6 CAE credits.

Fall Conference & Expo
October 4-5
Greater Richmond Convention Center and Hilton Richmond Downtown



VSAE's most popular event! Bid on over 100 donated items, then enjoy a luncheon at which the winners of the Awards of Excellence are recognized.

Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction
December 1
Hilton Richmond Hotel & Spa Short Pump

Mark your calendars and learn more at vsae.org/calendar

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