

Benchmark Hospitality Announces the 2006 Recipient of The Chairman's Award of Excellence

2006-12-06

Richard Hillway of Cheyenne Mountain Resort Recognized for Work with Children

Benchmark Hospitality International has announced the newest recipient of its annual Chairman's Award of Excellence. The award was inaugurated last year to recognize extraordinary employee contributions to their communities and the organization.

Burt Cabañas, chairman & chief executive officer of Benchmark Hospitality announced that Richard Hillway of Cheyenne Mountain Resort, located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is the 2006 recipient of the top award. Mr. Hillway, an affable, unassuming gentleman with a gracious spirit, was nominated because of his tireless work teaching children the art and joy of tennis. He has had such an important impact on children's tennis programs that the state of Colorado created the United States Tennis Intermountain District Award -- the Richard Hillway Award -- given annually to a high school tennis team for outstanding overall achievement.

"I am absolutely delighted to present Richard Hillway of Cheyenne Mountain Resort with the 2006 Chairman's Award of Excellence," said Burt Cabañas. "This award highlights and honors outstanding employees whose contributions make their property, their community, and our company better places to work and live." Mr. Cabañas continued with, "as director of tennis for Cheyenne Mountain Resort and the teacher of scores of children and young people over the years, Richard has touched countless young lives and brought them the joy of achieving one's best through tennis, adding to their personal discipline and character development."

From Championing Childhood Illness to Helping Children Become Champions!

Richard Hillway's career is especially remarkable when reflecting on his challenging early life. At age eight, he was diagnosed with severe asthma and given less than a year to live. To offer Richard the best chance possible at survival, his parents moved the family from Connecticut to Greeley, Colorado, for the more favorable climate. In Colorado, Hillway not only survived asthma - he thrived!

Drawn to tennis in his new home, Richard started playing early, continuing through high school. He won three state championships in the process. While attending the University of Colorado he was the number one ranked player and won the Big Eight Conference title in 1963. He was subsequently awarded a scholarship to the University of New South Wales in Australia and won the National Collegiate in 1967, playing with the very best in the game since Australia was the world leader in tennis at the time. He had come a long way since his asthma diagnosis in Connecticut!

Returning to Colorado, Hillway began coaching tennis in the early 1960's. In the following years he shaped a losing team into a tour de force, which went on to win 316 consecutive matches and 19 State titles. He has been elected high school 'Coach of the Year' every year he was eligible and served on the board of the Colorado Tennis Association for a decade. During his career, Mr. Hillway developed two players who were ranked Top 10 players in the US, taught two young people to be US Junior Davis Cup coaches, and has been the proud Coach of 31 Girl's and Boy's State Titles for Cheyenne Mountain High School.

Richard Hillway joined Cheyenne Mountain Resort in February 1981 as the coordinator of the junior tennis program, and was promoted to the director of tennis in 1988.

As if this wasn't extraordinary enough, Hillway founded the Colorado Tennis Hall of Fame in 2000 and is now Colorado's state tennis historian. His personal tennis memorabilia collection includes remarkable artifacts, such as every Wimbledon tennis program dating back to 1930 except one, the license plate of Don Budge (the first player to win the grand slam), a tennis racket from Bill Tilden (US Championship 1920-1925), and 1500 tennis books. He also serves as a journalist for Colorado Tennis newspaper.

About Benchmark Hospitality's Chairman's Award of Excellence

The Benchmark Hospitality International Chairman's Award of Excellence is presented annually by Burt Cabañas, founder, chairman and chief executive officer of the company. Recipients are selected from employees nominated by general managers of Benchmark properties globally.

To be nominated for the Chairman's Award of Excellence, employees must meet an established set of criteria, some of which include: providing a truly outstanding act of community service that is recognized by the community; initiating a service or idea that exemplifies the company's entrepreneurial spirit; delivering performance during extremely difficult circumstances that far exceeds job description and job expectations.

The Chairman's Award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who demonstrate excellence with significant impact and exemplify Benchmark's core values.

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