



SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY

STS Member Spotlight

Thank you for allowing STS to spotlight you in our upcoming Member Enewsletter. This is an opportunity for your fellow travel and tourism colleagues to get to know you, both individually and apart from your destination. Please take a moment to answer the following questions. More importantly, have fun with it and make it yours! At the end of the form, please upload 3 to 5 photos, including your professional headshot, to be used for your spotlight. If you have any questions, please email [Tonja Ray-Smith](mailto:tonja.ray-smith@northlittlerock.com).

Name Karen Trevino
Occupation (Title and Company) President & CEO, North Little Rock Tourism
Address North Little Rock, Arkansas

What inspired you to take on this role?

I've been in the tourism industry since 1979. I was 18 when I went to work for Arkansas Tourism. (Don't do the math, please!) Very early on I decided that my ultimate goal was the job that I am in now. I finished my bachelor's degree and also received a Master's in Tourism. I worked here as the Assistant Director in the early 1990s so I saw what experience and education I needed to be the President & CEO. I worked very hard for many years to reach this goal and I've never doubted my choice.

What's a typical day for you?

After getting a cup of coffee and visiting with staff, I immediately respond (and delete) emails. I check my ""To Do" list and prioritize my day. Then the day totally gets away from me as I handle issues with employees, phone calls, drop in visitors, "fires to put out" and other interruptions. It is a part of the job but it really throws me off my schedule. I usually end up staying late to finish projects. I have started blocking out certain days for work days where I don't schedule meetings. That has really helped with my efficiency.

What advice would you give someone looking to pursue a career in travel and tourism?

Get to know as many people as possible. Definitely in the tourism industry but look outside of that as well. Never stop learning - get certifications, attend seminars, and never pass up an education opportunity. Work closely with your state tourism office, get to know partners across the state, and look to people you respect/admire for their advice.

What would you like your tourism legacy to be?

That I made a positive difference in our industry, in people's lives, and in our world. If I'm not having a positive impact then I'm just wasting my time.

Outside of the CVB, what other roles or hobbies do you have that keep you busy?

I love to do 1,000 and 1,500 piece puzzles. I love to read historical novels (particularly from WW2). Being a very fast reader, I often finish one or two books when I have a free weekend. My favorite hobby is meeting

people and traveling with my husband and daughters.

Outside of your home state, what is your favorite vacation spot within the Southeast?

The beach! But also, anything in the deep south.

What year are you in Marketing College? What has been the greatest takeaway this far?

I just graduated in September, 2023! As someone who has been in the industry for a very long time, I can say that I still learned a lot! It is great to hear speakers who are on the cutting edge of new technology and industry changes. The side benefit was making so many new friends with my classmates.

Tell us a fun fact about you that we'd be surprised to hear.

I grew up as a child of the Air Force. I lived in Spain and in seven different states. While, it was really hard to change schools all the time, it did prepare me for my career in tourism! I find it easy to meet people and make new friends. Also, I try to find joy in most experiences, being flexible and tenacious. This has not only helped me in my career, but those same skills were a big part of my life when going through breast-cancer treatments and surgeries. I never take a day or anyone for granted.

Note: This form cannot be edited once it's submitted. Therefore, be sure to upload your photos BEFORE you click SUBMIT.

The photos will only be used for the spotlight and for no other purpose unless prior permission is granted by you.