

## 2017 VISIT FLORIDA Chair

# Maryann Ferenc

CEO/PROPRIETOR, MISE EN PLACE, INC.

*Maryann Ferenc has worked in the restaurant industry her whole life, beginning her career in her parents' Detroit restaurant as a bus girl. From there and with a few stops in between, Maryann established Mise en Place in 1986, along with co-proprietor Chef Marty Blitz.*

**How did you get started in the hospitality industry?** I grew up a restaurant brat; my parents were in the industry. I tried to get out of it, (laughing) but when I met Chef (Marty Blitz) and we ended up in Tampa, what we saw there was really an exciting opportunity for fine dining, and I realized it was part of the Master Plan.

**Early in your career, what was the most valuable lesson you learned?** My Mom taught me that the customer is always right and is always the focus. My Dad taught me that in this business, every nickel, dime and penny counts.

**Do you have any mentors who were instrumental in helping you achieve your goals?** My mentors were my parents. Although they are not here any longer, they gave me my foundation and demonstrated to me what it takes to be successful. And spiritual leaders in my life have kept me on track.

**What is the single greatest factor in the success of your career?** The key to success in our case is that the partners, Chef and I, both really like what we do. He looks forward to cooking every day, and I look forward to the service aspect of our business. We are both willing to work hard. We show up for more than just the job, because we love this business.

**How have your philanthropies and giving back to the community affected your business decisions?** Since the beginning, we have always tried to find those things between the community and our business that we both cared about. And we focused in on that concentric circle and put our time and energy there, and it has paid off. We believe this has something to do with sustaining our business.

**Is there anything you would like to share with Florida's hospitality industry members?** It is really important to use the broad experience and immense talent that exists statewide in Florida as a foundation to build a future that might look different than our past.

