

# Joseph Kadow



**A**fter a highly successful career as Executive Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of Bloomin' Brands, the parent company of Outback Steakhouse, Flemings Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar, Bonefish Grill, and Carrabba's Italian Kitchen, Joseph Kadow has decided to step away from daily operations at Bloomin' Brands. He will continue to serve on boards and work with organizations that are of interest to him.

Mr. Kadow was an original member of the Bloomin' Brands executive leadership team and worked with the organization for 25 years. While in this role, he also served as Chairman of the National Restaurant Association in 2016.

Kadow is a graduate of the University of Scranton receiving a B.S. in Accounting. Kadow then attended the Dickinson School of Law of Penn State University and received his Juris Doctor and was admitted to both the Pennsylvania and Florida Bars.

FR&L Magazine Editor, Susie McKinley, had a chance to catch up with Mr. Kadow to reflect on his career in the hospitality industry.

**How did you get started in the hospitality industry?** In October 1983, I moved from Philadelphia to Sarasota to join a law firm there. That same month Gene Knippers, Chris Sullivan and Bob Basham came to the firm, as Gene was friends with senior partner John Meshad. Gene, Chris and Bob were the first area developers for Chili's, and John gave the legal work to me. That started my relationship with Chris and Bob, and when they founded Outback Steakhouse in 1987, they came to me for the legal work. In 1994, I joined the Company as Vice President and General Counsel.

**Early in your career, what was the most valuable lesson you learned?** As an attorney, find creative ways to make deals work. It is easy to be a "deal killer" as an attorney.

As a businessperson, the importance of choosing your partners and always maintaining integrity and fairness with partners. In my experience, it is better to be in a bad deal with good people than to be in a good deal with bad people.

**What is the single greatest factor in the success of your career?** The people I have been fortunate enough to associate with.

**What did you enjoy most about being Chairman of the National Restaurant Association?** The opportunity to speak to state restaurant associations across the country and to advocate for our industry and the importance of the opportunities it provides. Most importantly, opportunities for the two-thirds of the American workforce who do not have the advantage of a college degree at a time when their traditional paths to the middle class are shrinking.

**Is there anything you would like to share with Florida's hospitality industry members?** I would just like them to know how proud I am to be part of the hospitality industry. I love this industry for many reasons, including how much the industry gives back to its communities, but primarily because I have seen it provide wonderful careers for so many people with rapid advancement based on talent and merit, regardless of traditional credentials. And to remind them of the importance of being involved in their state association and local chapters to represent and advocate for our industry.

*Mr. Kadow, thank you for your leadership.*