

Nominee Full Name: Jeremy Keith Warriner
Nominated by: Joseph “Mick” La Lopa

Current Title: Consultant, Public Speaker, Coach & CEO; Walking Spirit & Spirit Therapies, LLC; Indianapolis, Indiana

Significant Impact on Purdue & the HTM Industry:

Jeremy Warriner came to Purdue University in the fall of 1993 and immediately immersed himself in what was then the RHIT program as a TA in the Intro to Hospitality course; he was an active member of our student body and the RHIT Society of Hosteurs, which he served as PR Officer for two years, and led as President in 1996. During his senior year Jeremy served as one of two students on the Department Head Search Committee that entrusted Ray Kavanaugh to lead us into the future that would become HTM; that decision was ultimately made by those two students and had a significant positive impact on our program for years to come. Due to his contributions as a student, Jeremy received our department’s Service Award in 1997.

After graduation in ‘97 Jeremy worked as an Assistant General Manager for Winegardner & Hammons, where he was assigned the most difficult properties and left each one significantly improved. Five years later he joined White Lodging Services for the opportunity to be part of the opening team at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown where he served as a vital and versatile member of the Rooms Division Management team through April of 2005, generally managing all the nightly hotel operations five or more nights a week. During his five years with WLS, he developed and refined the productivity forecasting and reporting tool used by the rooms division management team, established Local Standard Operating Procedures for all Front Office departments, standardized Night Audit operations and wrote the Night Audit training manual which was then utilized at multiple WLS properties. WLS also relied upon Jeremy as a Rooms Division Task Force member to help open the Louisville Marriott Downtown. In May of 2005, he joined Sodexo Conferencing to help transition a previously independent property to a university Conference Center with student food service and event facility as Director of Operations at what is now the Inn at DePauw.

Almost six months into that role, Jeremy became a burn survivor and bi-lateral above knee amputee due to severe injuries sustained in a car accident during his commute home. As he recovered, he stayed active in communication with his team and remotely assisted his Regional VP of Operations with executive level interviews for other properties. A year and a half after his accident he returned to full-time status as he was learning to walk on advanced prosthetic limbs, designed a front desk that could be worked from a wheelchair or standing so that he could support his team, and helped develop Sodexo’s Employee Resource Group, “SOAR”, to engage and support Sodexo’s associates with disabilities.

A year later he left Sodexo to further adapt and explore how his acquired disability had changed his life. One of his first advocacy experiences was challenging his local Methodist Church which, as a religious organization is exempt from the Americans with Disabilities Act, to make physical and programmatic modifications that would include people with disabilities in their goal to provide “Radical Hospitality” for their community. This church is a historical building that is

part of the Tourism industry in their community. The improved access has allowed people with disabilities to participate in both faith and tourism activities as a result.

During the next 17 years he served and led the Indianapolis Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability, was Fund Raising Chair in his role on the Board of Directors for accessABILITY Center for Independent Living; an organization that provides Advocacy and Independent Living Services to People with Disabilities. As a member of their Board of Directors he brought his HTM industry experience to the non-profit realm focusing on preserving the respect and dignity of their consumers in their approach to providing services. He has testified before the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee and several Indiana Congressional committees in both Houses, on several topics including fire safety in architectural design which has made numerous facilities in the HTM industry safer. He is also a Charter Member of the international Rotary Club for World Disability Advocates.

Over his 19 years as an Amputee with multiple supplemental disabilities Jeremy has traveled and viewed all aspects of the HTM Industry as a consumer with disabilities who has the education and experience of a Hotelier. Embracing what he learned from these experiences he developed his own business, Walking Spirit, with a mission to consult with hotels and other public accommodations on how to be Accessible in their approach to Guest Services, Human Resources, and both Physical and Programmatic Design to enhance hospitality operations and instill a sense of Belonging in guests and associates that includes the exponentially growing cross-demographic culture of People with Disabilities in our markets.

Through Walking Spirit Jeremy also provides event coordination for non-profits that work with people with disabilities to better facilitate their accessible hospitality experience. He truly believes that the more accessible the Hospitality and Tourism Industry is, the more accessible the world will become through enhanced accessible hospitality and inclusion for all people. Walking Spirit is currently working with the Marriott Indy Place properties, managed by White Lodging Services, on behalf of Jeremy's primary client to develop an advocacy education "unconference" for people with disabilities in Indiana. The planning process has already enhanced the operation's understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and how to accommodate them.

Jeremy is a member of the ADA National Network's Trainer Leadership Network, bringing their curriculum to the Hospitality Industry as part of Walking Spirit's Consulting and Public Speaking Services. Since acquiring his disabilities, he has privately consulted with numerous hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations across the United States to enhance the safety and accessibility of facilities and services experienced by guests, and the equity experienced by associates while reducing turnover, conflict resolution, and liability costs and increasing Guest Service Satisfaction scores, repeat business, and positive word of mouth marketing throughout the disability community for the operations he has touched. He also provides an Adaptability & Advocacy Coaching service for other people with disabilities to help connect them with resources including employment services, which can help to fill vital roles throughout the HTM industry. Jeremy received the Sushilla Sood Champion of Courage award in 2007, the Indiana Assistive Technology Act Assistive Technology Inspiration award in 2009

and was awarded with the Stephen J. Sharp Public Service Award by the American Association for Justice in 2010 for accomplishments and social contributions throughout his journey. He regularly provides peer support in both Indianapolis based Burn Units and is the founder and facilitator of the Central Indiana Amputee Support Group. In 2022 he launched the Disabilities and Conditions of Aging network to create a regular virtual opportunity for Indiana's Disability Culture to connect, coordinate, and better serve the disability culture in Indiana. The more independent this Culture is, the more they can participate as consumers, guests, and associates in the HTM industry. He has returned to Purdue on several occasions to speak in multiple classes (both before and after his accident) and presented on "Accessible Hospitality" at Purdue's 2023 Spirit of Hospitality Summit; focusing his presentation on the importance of including the disability culture, which represents over a quarter of the global population, in HTM industry operations. This presentation can be viewed on his website at <https://walkingspirit.org>

As a result of his studies at Purdue, Jeremy's business model for Walking Spirit takes a broad approach to the HTM industry, including all public accommodations from movie theatres to grocery stores, health care facilities and everything in between. Walking Spirit has been an exhibitor at the Chicago National Restaurant Association Show, bringing Jeremy's message of Inclusive Hospitality to broad niches of the HTM industry. Throughout 2024 he worked with Eskenazi Hospital, the county hospital for Marion County, Indiana to establish an Employee Resource Group, "ConnectAbility", for People with Disabilities within their healthcare system; the group will enhance the patient, family, and associate experience for people with disabilities throughout their health care corner of the hospitality industry and will inspire other health care systems to take similar steps. He also presented three Fireside Chats for Eskenazi and the broader Marion County Health Department on "Disability Origins & the Patient Experience", "Outpatient & Beyond", and "Disability Culture & Best Practices in the Workplace". His most recent contribution to the HTM Industry was presenting on "Inclusive Hospitality; What is It and How to Achieve It" at the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association's 2024 Annual Conference and he is looking forward to speaking to several HTM classes at the Purdue Northwest campus in the spring. Jeremy believes that by educating tomorrow's leaders to embrace Inclusive Accessible Hospitality we can truly change the world through the HTM industry.

As a student Jeremy had a significant impact on our program, and as a Purdue Alumni he has made outstanding contributions to not only the HTM industry, but the broader community that we are there to accommodate. For his achievements, tenacity, and the contributions he continues to make to our industry he deserves a place in our Hall of Fame.