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Resources

- Laws & Regulations
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- Publications
- Dining Guide
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- Gift Certificates
- News & Alerts

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2018

Chico Pope of the Buckhorn Supper Club Named 2018 Restaurateur of the Year

MILWAUKEE, WI –Chico Pope, owner of the Buckhorn Supper Club in Milton, was honored as the Restaurateur of the Year by the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. The Restaurateur of the Year (ROY) award is the industry’s top honor. Pope was announced as the winner at the Association’s annual **Awards Gala**, held at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee on March 13th in conjunction with the Midwest Foodservice Expo.

The Restaurateur of the Year award is given to an operator who demonstrates participation and service to the restaurant association, success within their own restaurant and contributions to their community. The winner is selected at a private meeting of past Restaurateur of the Year recipients and is kept a secret until the official announcement at the Awards Dinner.

Pope got his start in the restaurant industry as a busser at age 12. At 22 he began Howard Johnson’s management training program. Over the years he’s managed family restaurants, supper clubs, truck stops, fast food restaurants, convenience stores and cafeterias. He also was an educator in the culinary program at Blackhawk Technical College for many years.

Pope opened the Buckhorn Supper Club with his wife Dawn in 1997. Pope works alongside his wife and their grown children, Shelley and Kevin, at the popular supper club which is located on the shore of Lake Koshkonong. Loyal customers are partial to their lobster boils, fish fries, steaks, peanut butter pie and of course Old Fashioneds. Another popular option for guests is an outing on their pontoon boat.

Pope has been involved in the Blackhawk Chapter for many years, holding a variety of positions on the chapter board. He received the Blackhawk Chapter Outstanding Restaurateur of the Year (OROY) award in 2002. In 2014 he was honored by the WRA Education Foundation as the **Salute to Excellence** Restaurateur Award recipient.

At the state level, Pope served as Chair of the WRA Board of Directors in 2016 and is a PAC Trustee. In addition, he has taken a leadership role in lobbying on behalf of small restaurants at the state and national level and has been instrumental in the success of several important WRA fundraisers including the Southern Shoot and Slam a Salmon events.

Pope and his family are active in the community and recently helped organize a fundraiser for a fellow area restaurant operator who suffered a stroke.

WRA CEO Ed Lump described Pope as “a dynamic and forward-thinking leader,” and added that Pope can always be counted on to advance the restaurant industry. Pope is also known for his good nature and sense of humor.

The Buckhorn Supper Club was featured in a Department of Tourism television commercial about Wisconsin supper clubs and was voted as a Top 10 Supper Club in the Travel Wisconsin Supper Club Throwdown in 2017.

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Since 1933, the Wisconsin Restaurant Association has been dedicated to the promotion, protection and improvement of the foodservice industry.



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 About
 Board
 Chapters
 Staff

Member Info
 Members Only
 Industry Suppliers
 Online Store
 Calendar

Hotline
 Dining Guide
 ServSafe
 Expo
 NRA



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