



THE MULTICULTURAL FOODSERVICE & HOSPITALITY ALLIANCE (MFHA)

Timeline: 1996 – Present

DATE	EVENT
BIRTH OF MFHA	
1996 Minneapolis, MN	Gerry Fernandez , General Mills, Inc. executive, envisions a group focused on creating career opportunities for people of color in the food and hospitality industry.
September - November 1996 Chicago, IL	Using his vast network of industry connections, Fernandez assembles a group of 17 food & hospitality professionals to discuss and move forward on his concept . Michael Deluca, then editor of Restaurant Hospitality, a foodservice business-to-business publication, commissions the first version of The Multicultural Foodservice and Hospitality Alliance's logo . The MFHA brand is born. Founder, Gerry Fernandez, is elected as the organization's president.
THE EARLY YEARS	
April 1997	It's official: MFHA files its Articles of Incorporation and selects its first Board of Directors. Magaly Petersen-Penn of Flagstar Cos., Inc. is elected first chair of the MFHA Board. She serves as chair from 1997 to 2000. Fernandez becomes executive on loan to MFHA from General Mills.
May 1997 Chicago, IL	MFHA wows attendees at the National Restaurant Association's annual convention with its first Diverse Leadership Reception at the former Michael Jordan's Restaurant. At the time, it's the largest gathering of multicultural industry-professionals committed to diversity and inclusion with more than 350 industry attendees.
1998 Atlanta, GA	MFHA holds its first National Conference themed "Business Solutions Through Multicultural Diversity."
1998	MFHA marks its web presence with the debut and launch of www.mfha.net .
1999	MFHA publishes the first ever Diverse Supplier Directory for the food and hospitality industry to ensure that minority groups can avoid unnecessary barriers when doing business.
2000	Samuel Mathis of Darden Restaurants is elected chair of the Board and serves as chair from 2000 to 2002.
2000 Chicago, IL	MFHA delivers the first Showcase of the Stars™ event. Since 2000, Showcase's panel format has reached more than 15,425 students from 455 schools in 26 cities, nationwide.
2000 San Antonio, TX	Nearly 450 foodservice executives attend MFHA's 2nd National Conference on diversifying executive and professional ranks in the industry.

June 2001 Providence, RI	Fernandez leaves General Mills to pursue MFHA's mission fulltime and becomes MFHA's first employee. The MFHA office moves from Minneapolis, MN to Providence, RI.
2001	In collaboration with The Coca-Cola Company and Nation's Restaurant News, MFHA releases the first Benchmark Survey of Diversity Practices to measure diversity progress in food and hospitality companies.
August 2002 San Diego, CA	MFHA hosts its 3rd National Conference , "Diversity Economics: Turning Difference Into Dollars" and presents three national awards: The Ernest Royal Pioneer Award, The MFHA Corporate Champion Award and The SEED (Strategic Examples of Excellence in Diversity) Award to deserving foodservice and hospitality leaders.
2002	Pat Harris of McDonald's Corporation is elected chair of the Board and serves as chair from 2002 to 2004.
October 2003 Dallas, TX	The first MFHA National Symposium themed "Leading Your Business to Cultural Competence" is held in Dallas and featured four dynamic sessions and six c-suite speakers.
MIDDLE YEARS: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION MATURES	
2004	Catalina Ganis of The Elliot Group is elected chair of the Board and serves as chair from 2004 to 2007.
2004	QuickVue Translation Guides are launched providing managers/employees with multilingual pocket guides developed specifically for the hospitality industry.
2004	The first editions of the Multicultural Marketing Guides are published. These information-packed guides are designed to help industry operators better market themselves and their products and/or services in Hispanic-American, African-American, and Asian-American markets.
2004	MFHA develops an online version of Showcase of the Stars™; www.whatsnext4me.com (WN4ME) is a career exploration website targeted towards high school students that promotes the food and hospitality industry.
August 2004 Washington, DC	MFHA hosts its 4th National Conference themed "Community-Industry-Diversity: A Partnership for Growth" in Washington, DC and officially debuts Sed de Saber at the conference.
2004	With support from The Coca-Cola Company, Brinker International, and Retention Education, MFHA introduces with Sed de Saber an innovative LeapPad™ program designed to help Spanish-speaking employees learn English.
BIRTH OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE	
2005 Atlanta, GA	MFHA hosts its 2nd National Symposium titled "Straight Talk: Lessons Learned and Best Practices" that featured keynote speakers Helen Zia and Herman Cain.
August 2006 Boston, MA	MFHA turns 10 and celebrates the milestone by hosting MFHA's Decade of Diversity: Celebrating an Industry's Commitment and Accomplishments National Conference and campaign.
2007	MFHA hosts its 6th National Conference , titled "Gateway to Results," that delivered workforce, customer, community and supplier benchmark data on the industry.

2008	Terrian Barnes of Yum! Brands, Inc. is elected chair of the Board and serves as chair from 2008 to 2009.
2008 Chicago, IL	At MFHA's Talent Summit , MFHA revises its strategic plan , shifting focus to attracting multicultural talent to the food and hospitality industry and building a Multicultural Resource Bank to develop that talent.
2009	Tony Mitchell of Morrison Management Specialists is elected chair of the Board and served as chair from 2009 to 2011.
2009	MFHA's widely distributed Report to the Community highlights the industry's commitment to multiculturalism by celebrating the outstanding efforts and accomplishments of MFHA member companies.
2009	MFHA initiates a Regional Council Strategy to reach a wider audience. The councils are held to identify regional issues related to multiculturalism in the workplace.
May & June 2010 Chicago, IL & Dallas, TX	MFHA hosts the " Ollin " Conference – Going All Out to Go All In offering professional development, cultural intelligence building, and diversity coaching.
CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE TAKES FLIGHT	
2011	Roy Jackson of The Coca-Cola Company is elected Chairman of the Board and will serve until 2013.
March 2011 Warwick, RI	MFHA, partnering with Johnson & Wales University, launches its first Cultural Intelligence Initiative . The signature workshops and seminars aim to educate attendees and businesses in developing cultural intelligence.
July 2011 Charlotte, NC	After great success from the launch, MFHA and Johnson & Wales present the second Cultural Intelligence event, Cultural Intelligence Experience: Cultural Conversations That Impact People & Profit .
October 2011	The first issue of INclusion INmotion is tested at: www.inclusioninmotion.com . The free online publication is the go-to guide for students interested in a food and hospitality career.
February 2012 North Miami, FL	MFHA starts the year right by hosting the inaugural Cultural Intelligence event, The LGBT Opportunity: Innovative Strategies to Engage LGBT Employees and Guests . The program received high marks from participants and opened the door to new opportunities in the industry.
May 2012	MFHA celebrates its 15th Anniversary as the premier multicultural training and advocacy organization in the nation's food and hospitality industry.

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The Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance (MFHA)

Fifteen years ago, MFHA was established to act as a catalyst for change in workforce diversity. MFHA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the food and hospitality industry that educates, advocates for, and connects its members with opportunities to build their cultural intelligence in order to effectively engage multicultural employees, customers, and communities. For more information, visit www.mfha.net.

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