

SHAPING THE FUTURE: TRENDS AND INSIGHTS FOR TOMORROW

November 2 - 5, 2023 ♦ The Hermitage Hotel ♦ Nashville, Tennessee

10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. [What's New in Washington?](#)

Bill Simmons and Chris Andresen, Dutko GR; Bill Perdue, AHFA



Bill Simmons is a managing principal of Dutko GR and has led the government affairs counsel for AHFA since 2010. He started his career on Capitol Hill managing diverse issues including appropriations, transportation, higher education, energy, communications, taxes, banking, agriculture and the environment. Prior to joining the firm in 1999, Bill served as staff director for the House Resources' Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health under Chairman of the Resources Committee Don Young (R-AK). He also served as a legislative aide to Chairman Jim Hansen (R-UT). Bill holds a Ph.D. from Western Governors University and received his B.A. degree from the University of Utah.

Chris Andresen is senior vice president at Dutko GR. He joined the firm in 2006 and works extensively with clients to identify policy opportunities and threats in order to create detailed legislative and executive strategies. His broad experience includes working with companies, universities, non-profits and trade associations, specializing in workforce development, consumer products, manufacturing, retail, biotechnology, renewable energy, criminal justice, mental health, technology and higher education. He graduated from the University of Virginia with a B.A. degree in history and holds a M.B.A. from the Robert H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland.



Bill Perdue is the vice president of regulatory affairs for the American Home Furnishings Alliance. A 1982 graduate of the University of South Carolina, he has 41 years of experience in the furniture industry dealing with air, water and waste regulatory issues. He has been responsible for regulatory compliance oversight with duties that included air permitting, emission audits, emission calculations, reporting, pollution prevention and waste minimization, energy resources, and real estate transactions. He joined AHFA in November 2001 following an 11-year career as Director of Engineering at Pulaski Furniture.

12:00 p.m. [Lunch/Departure for Golf and Country Music Museum](#)

7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. [Optional Group Dinner](#)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6 [Departures](#)

[SPECIAL ACTIVITIES](#)

Hermitage Golf Course – The President's Reserve, designed by architect Denis Griffiths, trails through 300 acres of natural Tennessee wetlands and along the banks of the beautiful Cumberland River. General's Retreat, built in 1986 with architect Gary Roger Baird, hosted the LPGA Sara Lee Classic from 1988-1999. With the beautiful setting along the Cumberland River and a variety of tee placements, golfers of all capabilities will thoroughly enjoy the golf and scenery.

Roaming the course are the renowned Scottish Blackfaced sheep that joined the Hermitage Golf Course in 2012. What started with 12 ewes and 1 ram have now grown to more than 45. These friendly sheep roam the course year-round and if you're lucky enough, you may find yourself right beside the herd.

Kayaking and Scavenger Hunt – Climb in for a two-hour outdoor adventure on the Cumberland River and enjoy spotting wildlife on the riverbank, paddling the bustling river industry that keeps Nashville moving and finishing off with stunning views of the downtown skyline. Kayakers will also relish working to complete a special scavenger hunt crossword puzzle (choose a physical or digital version!) by solving clues based on observations you'll make along the way, directions from our crew, eco-facts, riddles and more. The first person to finish their paddle and correctly complete the puzzle wins a prize!

Walk Eat Nashville – Experience the sights and sounds of Music City and discover Nashville's dynamic food scene with a local touring company that will take you on a behind-the-scenes adventure at some of the city's favorite restaurants, allowing you to savor beloved local dishes and experience the rich tapestry of home-grown flavors. The three-hour excursion features elevated Southern fare with comfort food. Between bites, you'll stroll through the downtown's must-see attractions.

Country Music Hall of Fame – Music lovers will get a firsthand look at what helps Nashville tick at the Country Music Hall of Fame. The immersive afternoon begins with a Songwriter Session with J.T. Harding, who has written chart-topping hits for Dierks Bentley, Kenny Chesney, Jake Owens, Darius Rucker, Blake Shelton and Keith Urban. After lunch is an opportunity to view the Museum's artifacts and exhibits that tell the story of country music.

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ANNUAL MEETING AND CEO CONFERENCE



NOVEMBER 2-5, 2023
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. **Registration** – Grand Ballroom Foyer

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. **AHFA Board of Directors Meeting**
– Grand Ballroom

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Reception** – Veranda

Sponsored by



8:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. **Dinner** – Grand Ballroom

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. **Breakfast Buffet** – Veranda

8:00 a.m. - 8:05 a.m. **Meeting Welcome** – Grand Ballroom
*Joe Johnston, 2023 AHFA Chairman
Johnston Casuals*



Joe Johnston, president and owner of Johnston Casuals in North Wilkesboro, N.C., is a third-generation furniture manufacturer. His grandfather started making coffins at the turn of the century and began creating bedroom furniture in the 20s. That business would then evolve into American Drew furniture. Joe worked at American Drew during his high school and college days. In 1980, he started a metal factory, began to run it and renamed the business Johnston Casuals.

8:05 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. **Global Economic Report and Outlook for 2023**

*Mark Vitner
Piedmont Crescent Capital*



In October 2022, Mark Vitner capped a 30-year career as managing director and senior economist for Wells Fargo's Corporate and Investment Bank and formed the consultancy Piedmont Crescent Capital where he tracks U.S. and regional economic conditions. He is highly regarded for his expertise on residential and commercial construction, regional economies and issues affecting small business. Mark earned a B.B.A. in economics from the University of Georgia and a M.B.A. from the University of North Florida. He completed further graduate work in economics at the University of Florida and completed the National Association for Business Economics Advanced Training in Economics program at Carnegie Mellon University.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. **Spouse and Guest Breakfast**
Governors Salon

Following a buffet breakfast, the Hermitage Hotel historian, Tom Vickstrom, will share an account of the War of the Roses and discuss the property's being named a National Historic Landmark in 2020 for its role in Tennessee's passing the 19th Amendment as well as the hotel where national suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Cass resided in a suite for six weeks.

9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. **Break**

9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. **Celebrity Licensing**
Laura Aldrich, Scott Brothers Global

Laura Aldrich is Executive Vice President of Licensing for Scott Brothers Global, where she has served since 2018 as one of the earliest employees of the company. She leads the strategic vision and day-to-day operations of SBG's consumer products licensing business, a \$1 billion-plus retail portfolio that includes the Drew & Jonathan Home and Scott Living by Drew & Jonathan brands. Laura's retail buying, product development and wholesale expertise spans three decades in the home industry, including executive experience at Fortessa Tableware Solutions, as well as stints at World Kitchen, Venture Stores and Kitchen Etc. She holds a M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.



10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. **The Latest in AI and 3D Technology for the Home Furnishings Industry**
Amra Tareen, ALL3D



Amra Tareen, CEO and Cofounder of ALL3D, is a seasoned entrepreneur who has started groundbreaking digital media companies and pioneered in a variety of fields including 3D, AR and VR, Facebook video, and iOS and Android apps. Her company is dedicated to revolutionize the home industries where products are virtually designed, created, customized, showcased and sold, even before any physical product is manufactured or shipped. The intent is to enable manufacturers and retailers to shift from physical-first to a virtual-first, sustainable solution and give consumers the ability to customize and personalize home products while reducing returns and waste of materials, lowering the carbon footprints and maintaining a happier planet. Amra has a M.B.A. from Harvard University and Bachelor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the University of New South Wales, Australia.

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10:45 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. **Election of 2024 AHFA Officers and Directors** – *Roger Bland, Southern Motion*

12:00 p.m. **Lunch/Departure for Golf, Kayaking and Nashville Tour**

7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. **Reception and Dinner** – Grand Ballroom
AHFA Distinguished Service Award Presentation – *Farooq Kathwari, Ethan Allen*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. **Breakfast Buffet** – Veranda

8:30 a.m. - 8:35 a.m. **Meeting Welcome** – *Joe Johnston* – Grand Ballroom

8:35 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. **Family Business Dynamics & Succession Planning** – *Terry Resnick, Resnick Succession Group*

Business owners need tools and strategies for passing leadership roles, wealth preservation and the eventual transition of assets. Terry Resnick will highlight techniques to assure that the successful business remains just that – successful! Here's our chance to learn the importance of coordinating estate plans with succession plans and addressing active vs. inactive children within a family business – does it make sense to leave the business to all the children? Other topics include liquidity issues, valuation methodologies that will satisfy the IRS while lowering the tax bill, the proper type of buy-sell agreements to allow for maximum tax savings and cost efficiency, plus solutions for insurance funding mistakes that often result in millions of dollars in taxes paid. Terry and his identical twin brother, Lee, are partners in Resnick Succession Group, a nationally recognized business succession, estate planning and life insurance advisory, and implementation firm. Resnick Succession Group works with successful business owners throughout the country assisting in the enhancement, preservation and transition of both their business and non-business assets.



9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. **Break**

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. **Executive Panel** – *Terry Resnick, moderator*



Wyatt P.E. Bassett graduated from Washington and Lee University and joined Vaughan-Bassett Furniture. Having worked summers in the Vaughan-Bassett factories, he gained experience in the customer service and sales and marketing departments before moving to Richmond to work for Heilig-Myers Furniture, where he served in many capacities to gain experience on the retail side of the business. He received his MBA from Northwestern University before returning to Vaughan-Bassett as Vice-President in 1995. He was named president in 2007 and CEO later the same year.

John Bray is chairman of the board at Vanguard Furniture. He is a graduate of Wake Forest University and received a Bronze Star for his service in the U.S. Marines. He began his career in the furniture industry as Vanguard's eighth employee and has overseen the company's growth as a manufacturer and marketer of case goods and upholstery. The company operates facilities in Hickory, N.C., along with a location in Hillsville, Va. In an effort to provide training for developing skilled furniture craftsmen, John helped to found the Catawba County Furniture Academy. In 2016, he was inducted into the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame.



Ron Wanek is the founder of Ashley Furniture Industries, the world's largest furniture manufacturer and retailer. From humble roots of producing occasional tables in the early 1970's, Ashley Furniture expanded its manufacturing techniques and product line to offer a full range of case goods, while also pursuing efficiencies and profitability through global sourcing. Today, the company is a total home supplier and distributes products to independent furniture stores as well as Ashley Home Stores. He was inducted into the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame in 2007.