

Founder of Womens Food Alliance Trailblazes into Georgia



Leigh Cort, Founder, Womens Food Alliance.



*Womens Food Alliance Coastal Georgia Leadership Council
(L-R) Donna McPherson, Rebekah Lingenfelter, Barbara Ryan.*

With the recent launch of Womens Food Alliance Coastal Georgia, Leigh Cort brings full circle a hospitality career that began in NYC's Trump Tower in 1983.

This is how it started.

Film producer and restaurateur Dino deLaurentis thought Leigh could handle the “party director” position at his new restaurant DDL BISTRO. It was nestled inside the iconic Fifth Avenue building at the base of the Trump Tower waterfall. At the time, she really didn't know how to create a huge gala for thousands of guests. But when you meet Leigh, you will understand that this simple fact did not stop her.

Leigh's first party hosted 1,500 guests honoring famed sculptor Erté—the Russian born French artist celebrating his 90th birthday. Imagine coat racks for 1,500 furs and overcoats with 50 people to organize the arrival of guests. Leigh directed a staff of 200, executing every detail to make this “talk-of-the-town” event a raving success.

And she hasn't stopped since.

Forty years later, Leigh has rightfully earned her place in the hospitality industry having created Womens Food Alliance (WFA) in northeast Florida ten years ago. WFA is an expansive hospitality organization with members in food and event-related businesses that include hoteliers, chefs, farmers, event

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planners, cookbook authors, entertainment and food service, culinary leaders, vintners, venue owners, and media. Its mission is to “cultivate and advance education, collaboration, and networking for women in all fields of the hospitality industry.” Now, more than 150 members enjoy the benefits of a sisterhood designed to foster success for every member. And, thankfully, Leigh had the vision to expand her Florida roots to Georgia.

Recently, Leigh hosted an impressive Golden Pineapple Gala Awards event at the World Golf Hall of Fame, celebrating WFA’s 10th year anniversary and honoring 20 special women who have “blazed trails and created food trends, mentored up-and-comers, and followed their dreams of success.”

The formation of Womens Food Alliance Coastal Georgia was announced at the event with introductions of Georgia’s founding Leadership Council including Donna McPherson, owner of Golden Isles Olive Oil Culinary Center (St. Simons Island), Rebekah Faulk Lingensfelder (author of “Some Kinda Good” (Savannah), and Barbara Ryan (publisher of “St. Marys Magazine”).

Leigh continues to be the “event-planner extraordinaire” orchestrating dinners and lunches that showcase members’ venues, special events, food and spirit tastings, culinary focus groups, introduction of new food products, food competitions, and hospitality expos.

“The Hospitality/Food Industry throughout Florida and Georgia continues to explode with talent, creativity, and passion,” Leigh said. “The knowledge, hard work, respect, and fellowship that we share leads us to believe that more women in the industry could benefit from and contribute to the Womens Food Alliance.”

She said, “Each WFA member offers something unique, and it’s an exciting journey to see and understand what their pride and joy is offering.”

For more information, visit www.WomensFoodAlliance.com, email leigh@leighcortpublicity.com, or call 904-806-3613. ■