

## 2008 Industry Partner of the Year

### Winner – Industry Partner of the Year

The Law Offices of Charles Y. Hoff



Charles Yale Hoff, General Counsel of the Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) and the Green Foodservice Alliance (GFA), serves on the Executive Committee of the GRA Board of Directors and sits on the GFA Advisory Council. Prior to devoting his practice to hospitality law, Hoff served as Senior Vice President and International Counsel for Equifax Inc.

At The Law Offices of Charles Y. Hoff, affiliated with Taylor, Busch, Slipakoff & Duma, LLP Hoff has established one of the nation's largest premier hospitality law practices offering full turnkey legal services to the restaurant industry – from alcohol licensing to franchising. In addition, Hoff operates a hospitality consulting business specializing in guiding restaurants in their growth and development, counseling national chains on pressing industry topics such as menu labeling regulations and compliance. Hoff believes the restaurant industry has helped make Georgia a very attractive destination for tourists, conventions and commercial enterprises. Hoff says "Georgia's national reputation is catching up with what people in the state have long known to be the reality: Georgia is one of the culinary leaders in the nation and is producing the most exciting and innovative restaurant concepts." Hoff thinks there is an entrepreneurial spirit and vibrant commercial environment that has given rise to many of the nation's largest and most successful chains that call Georgia home. Hoff feels the GRA, as the voice for the state's restaurant industry, its vital interests and concerns are heard and understood by both the government and the public at large. Effective Political Advocacy, Professional Development/ Education, and the opportunity to network and learn from peers have been the foundation for the GRA's success. In essence, the GRA provides an extensive "tool kit" to assist restaurants in their profitable growth and success.

When looking at legal-related matters, Hoff predicts several restaurant trends in 2009. Specifically, the dramatic increase in incidences of PCI internal security breaches giving rise to identification theft and fraud; the proliferation of inconsistent menu labeling regulations being imposed on the local level, the rise in local environmental and conservation regulations, troubling wage and hour claims/litigation and an increase in the efforts being made by the local governments to address immigration issues.

Hoff would like to be remembered as a member of the "supporting cast" of the GRA leadership assisting the state's food service industry in its successful growth and development. He finds nothing more gratifying than to have assisted restaurants in being proactive in avoiding the legal pitfalls and unnecessary regulatory hardships that threaten the business. "To have played a role in helping some of Atlanta's most successful

restaurant chains receive funding and strong professional help to grow from one or two locations to become thriving chains and franchisors has been particularly rewarding,” stated Hoff.

Hoff says other than having a wonderful wife and two wonderful children, he is particularly proud of helping the state’s restaurant industry reunite under the umbrella of the GRA and assisting Ron Wolf and fellow GRA board members grow the organization.