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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Dear WIPA Atlanta Members,

I was thrilled to kick start our first event of the year as the new WIPA president. If we haven't met, I am the owner and self-titled Chief Party Officer of Atlanta Party Connection where I produce the Atlanta Wedding Extravaganza and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo.

As President, more than anything, what I want to focus on during my time in this role is *CONNECTION*. If you missed our event (or were busy getting food!!!) here's a bit of what I shared with the group and my hopes for the year.

As we all know, our industry is built on relationships—not just between couples and vendors, but between all of us as wedding pros. WIPA should be a place where people feel welcomed, valued, and inspired. I want our programs to be more than just events on your calendar—I want them to spark real, meaningful connections that strengthen our community and keep you coming back. Whether you're a longtime member or new to WIPA, my goal is for you to walk into the room and feel like you belong.

To leave an event not just with business cards, but with new relationships, fresh ideas, and a renewed passion for what we do.

I look forward to building those *connections* with all of you!

Shelly Danz

Atlanta Party Connection

Home of Atlanta Wedding Extravaganza & the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Expo



*Shelly Danz*

WIPA Atlanta President 2025

# WIPA ATLANTA 2025 Board of Directors



**SHELLY DANZ**  
PRESIDENT  
ATLANTA PARTY  
CONNECTION



**MARTIN COLLINS**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
BOLD CATERING



**CAROLINE MICKLEY**  
TREASURER  
BBJ LA TAVOLA



**DAWN TIBBLES**  
SECRETARY  
SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE  
WEDDINGS AND EVENTS



**MATT MITCHELL**  
IMMEDIATE PAST  
PRESIDENT  
MITCHELL EVENT PLANNING



**TORYN LANKFORD**  
MEMBERSHIP  
EXQUISITE SOUNDS  
ENTERTAINMENT



**KIMBERLY ROBERTS**  
MEMBERSHIP RETENTION  
EPTING EVENTS



**SHANTARA STRICKLAND**  
DIVERSITY, EQUITY,  
INCLUSION & BELONGING  
CM PRODUCTION



**KIRSTEN PALLADINO**  
EDUCATION  
KIRAFLORA



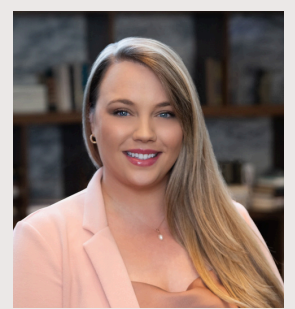
**DABNEY SMITH**  
PROGRAMS  
DABNEY'S DESIGNS



**HANNAH GREENBLAT**  
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS  
AFFAIRS TO REMEMBER



**BANU GATTO**  
SPONSORSHIP  
ATLANTA STYLE  
WEDDINGS MAGAZINE



**SHAWNA ASH**  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
EPICUREAN ATLANTA



FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup> IN THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS

*Forth Hotel - Old Forth Ward*





## Event Sponsors

VENUE, CATERING & BEVERAGES: [@FORTHATLANTA](#)

PLANNER: [@EMPOWER WEDDINGS](#)

SPEAKER: LINDSAY P. SIMS, [@TOAST EVENTS](#)

DESSERTS: [@ITSASWEETLIFEBAKERY](#)

ENTERTAINMENT: [@EASTCOASTENTERTAINMENT](#)

BAND: [@MICHELJONS](#)

RENTALS: [@TLCRENTS](#)

DRAPING: [@EVENT DRAPERY](#)

FLORAL DESIGN: [@MILLBROOKFARMFLOWERS](#)

FLOWER SUPPLIER: [@IFG.USA](#)

LINENS: [@BBJLATAVOLA](#)

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[ADDITIONAL PHOTOS - CLICK HERE](#)



It was a Night to Remember!

The WIPA Q1 event, themed "*The Room Where It Happens*," was a resounding success, selling out early and attracting a record number of attendees. Hosted at the exciting new Forth Hotel, the evening was filled with insightful education and vibrant networking in an impressive atmosphere created by some amazing sponsors!

## **Key Highlights:**

- Introduction of The 2025 Board of Directors for the Atlanta Chapter
- **Educational Speaker:** Lindsay P. Sims, renowned founder of TOAST Events, captivated the audience with her expertise. Her presentation focused on the essential strategies for getting on a planner's "it list" and avoiding their "sh!t list," offering valuable insights into building and maintaining strong industry relationships.
- **Networking Opportunities:** The event provided a fantastic platform for attendees to connect with fellow professionals, fostering meaningful conversations and collaborations.
- **Sponsors:** The event was beautifully supported by fabulous sponsors. Their contributions made the evening both visually stunning and enjoyable.
- **Giveaway:** The winner of the night's stay at the Forth Hotel is **Heather Blackwell**. (WOOHOO!)

## **Post-Event Buzz:**

The event continues to generate buzz, with attendees still discussing the engaging content and memorable experiences shared during the evening. The success of this event underscores WIPA's commitment to providing valuable educational opportunities and fostering a strong sense of community among wedding professionals in Atlanta.

*Dabney Smith*

Director of Programs 2025



# WHATS COMING UP...



**WIPA**<sup>TM</sup>  
Wedding Industry Professionals Association  
**ATLANTA**

Creating Focus in a Noisy World

## REVIVE, THRIVE & Flourish

**Better Habits: Beating Burnout  
and Building Balance**  
Presented by **Gurminder Banga**

May 14, 2025 4-7pm  
The Cellar  
(at Southern Exchange Ballrooms)



[CLICK HERE  
TO REGISTER](#)

WIPA Atlanta is thrilled to be partnering with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta for our Q2 event, featuring a donation drive to support their young patients. By donating items for their Activity Kits, you can make a world of difference in a child's hospital experience. These kits provide children with fun and engaging activities that help pass the time and ease the stress of being in a hospital setting. For many kids, hospital visits can be overwhelming, but having a creative outlet like coloring, puzzles, or games offers a welcome distraction, making their time there a little more enjoyable and comforting.

Please bring one of the items listed below to our event on May 14th, or simply purchase something from the [Amazon Wishlist](#)

**Donation Items:** Coloring books, Crayola brand crayons - 8 to 24 count packs, Crayola brand coloring pencils - 8 to 16 count packs, Play-Doh, Card Games, Sensory/Fidget toys, Slime, Lego Kits - up to 200 pieces  
PLEASE NOTE - All items must be brand new and unopened.



# NEW: MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## **Member Spotlight: Share Your Story!**

We love celebrating the incredible professionals who make our industry thrive! As part of our ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we're inviting members to be featured in our Member Spotlight. This is your chance to share your journey, showcase your work, and highlight how you contribute to the wedding community.

Want to be featured? Fill out our quick form and you could be included in an upcoming WIPA spotlight!

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR STORY [HERE](#)





# The Art of Forever

Discover unexpected bliss at downtown Atlanta's newest wedding venue. Signia by Hilton Atlanta offers everything from rehearsal dinners to spa services and memorable ceremonies.

Choose from grand ballrooms for lavish celebrations or elegant spaces for intimate "mini-monies." Our 976-room property features eight dining experiences, a dedicated wellness floor, an art collection, and Club Signia, a private sanctuary of sophistication.

Let us host the new chapter of your love story.

*Signia*  
by Hilton  
ATLANTA  
GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - VIDEO LIBRARY

WIPA's excellent education is available to you 24/7. Members can replay Lindsay's talk anytime at WIPA's digital library along with all the presentations we've hosted over the years and presentations from our chapters all over the country.

## How to Get on A Wedding Planner's It List (And Stay Off Their \$\*#& List)



# MEMBER'S ONLY EVENT @SHILOH GARDENS



ON APRIL 3RD, WIPA ATLANTA VOLUNTEERS HAD A GREAT TIME WITH FURKIDS, TAKING A TOUR OF THE STUNNING SHILOH GARDENS EVENT VENUE, WALKING PUPS, HELPING WITH LANDSCAPING AND FACILITY UPKEEP, AND NETWORKING WITH OUR FELLOW WIPA MEMBERS. EXCITEMENT IS GROWING FOR THEIR NEW MEDICAL BUILDING AND DOG RESCUE CENTER AS CONSTRUCTION HAS OFFICIALLY BROKEN GROUND.