Tourism brings benefits around the globe

By Dr. Richard Kelley

Earlier this month, I traveled to Dallas, Texas, to attend the Global Summit, an extraordinary gathering of many of the world’s Travel & Tourism leaders. Organized by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the theme of this year’s event was “Travel Beyond Boundaries.”

The program focused on how Travel & Tourism can and should respond to the biggest issues of the moment including migration, climate change, terrorism, security and border policies.

The speakers included an extraordinary group of CEOs of the world’s leading Travel & Tourism businesses as well as key figures in national and regional government bodies. All demonstrated a serious commitment to Travel & Tourism.

David Scowsill, WTTC president, said: “This year’s Global Summit addressed how our industry can continue to grow and be a force for good, while facing up to the major issues that are having a profound impact on the world. We had speakers of the highest caliber on stage.”

The speakers came from both within and outside the Travel & Tourism industry. They included:

- Barry Diller, Chairman of IAC/InterActiveCorp and Expedia, Inc.
- Karen Katz, CEO, Neiman Marcus
- Enrique de la Madrid, Mexico’s Minister of Tourism
- Bill Marriott, Executive Chairman and Chairman of the Board, Marriott International
- Penny Pritzker, U.S. Secretary of Commerce
- Taleb Rifai, Secretary General, UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

I particularly enjoyed the interview of Bill Marriott by Sir Geoffrey Kent, CEO of Abercrombie and Kent, one of the world’s great safari and tour operators. Included in the online recording are heartwarming film clips of young Bill Marriott and his father.¹

¹APRIL 23, 2016
Also notable was the presentation by Fabian Cousteau, grandson of SCUBA pioneer Jacques Cousteau.

It was gratifying to see members of several Travel & Tourism families attending the Summit. My daughter, Anne Marie Brown, attended as a representative of Denver-based Inspirato where she is director of experiences and real estate. I chatted with Ted Balesteri and Ted Jr., the father-and-son team representing Cannery Row and several hotels in California’s Monterey Bay area. I also spent some time with Nick Hentschel, the son of Gordon and Noel Hentschel, owners of Americantours International, one of the largest inbound tour operators in the United States. Of course, the family name of keynote speaker Cousteau is legendary in oceanic exploration, and featured speaker Penny Pitzker’s family name is equally well known for its connection with Hyatt Hotels.

The Tourism for Tomorrow Awards honored a number of firms and individuals who are doing remarkable things to use their tourism companies and facilities to bring education and economic opportunities to remote areas of the world while at the same time reducing the environmental impact of their activities.

Excellent video recordings of the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards and most of the presentations and individual interviews at the Summit are available free of charge online.²,³,⁴

I hope as many as possible will take advantage of this opportunity to learn and better understand why, in so many parts of the world, Tourism Is Everybody’s Business. 😊

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2 www.wttc.org/summits/the-global-summit-2016/video-recordings/
3 www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLHEVxiQCHUwGI5NEuavgDqkvikK7Eullz
4 www.wttc.org