Replacing an Icon is Never Easy

By Kathy Kuzava, GFIA President

Finding the right talent for companies is the biggest challenge I hear from GFIA members. Whether you are looking for a manager, a meat cutter, or a sales rep, it is a challenge to find great employees. Imagine Governor Brian Kemp’s challenge when looking for a replacement of a respected icon like Senator Johnny Isakson?

Governor Kemp tried an innovative approach. He accepted applications through an on-line process, not wanting to limit his choices to political insiders. Although many considered Congressman Doug Collins to be a shoe in, especially with President’s Trump’s endorsement, Governor Kemp chose a political outsider, Kelly Loeffler, a financial executive and co-owner of Atlanta’s WNBA team, to fill Isakson’s seat.

Loeffler announced she will seed her campaign account with $20 million of her own money to prepare for next November’s special election to fill Isakson’s remaining two years. The special election means both Loeffler and Senator David Purdue will be up for re-election in November.

Our new senator will also face a 2022 election for a full four-year term. Pundits believe funding these races will take unprecedented dollars, even without any potential runoffs.

Georgia Republicans know they have challenges in the Atlanta suburbs, and feel the choice of Kelly Loeffler may be just what is needed to grow their base. This young executive is not the typical US Senator, and that is what Governor Kemp is betting will help the Republican ticket.

More political surprises were announced recently when US Congressman Tom Graves announced his retirement after four terms. Several Georgia legislators may throw their hat into that conservative North Georgia district. Graves, the most senior member of Georgia’s Congressional delegation, won his election by over 77% of the electorate. He is the 21st Republican to announce his intentions to retire, as compared to only nine House Democrats.

In the Georgia House, Speaker David Ralston certainly has big shoes to fill when appointing a new Rules Committee Chairman, following the November tragic death of Committee Chairman Jay Powell of Camilla. Chairman Powell was a loyal member of the Speaker’s leadership team and replacing him will most likely result in additional chairmanship decisions.

Even with all the new faces in Washington and Atlanta, you can count on the GFIA to represent this great industry. (See page 6 to read about the retirement of one of GFIA’s favorites, House Agriculture Chairman Tom McCall.)

On behalf of the GFIA team, I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and wish you a Happy New Year!
2020 Legislative Preview

Georgia legislators will head to Atlanta on January 13, 2020 to finish the second session of the 155th Georgia General Assembly. Last year, high profile bills that passed included a raise for teachers, more restrictions on abortions, less restrictions on hospital competition, a new touchscreen voting system, Medicaid waivers, rural broadband and expansion of medical marijuana. With 2020 being an election year, politics will play a big role in the issues that legislators choose to address this year. *(See “Redistricting Drama” on pg. 3)*

This summer, the Governor asked each agency to “find efficiencies within their organizations” and to submit budget proposals for the forthcoming budgets with reductions of 4% and 6% respectively. Given these budget charges, we will be looking for legislation that is revenue neutral, regulatory schemes that do not increase the burden on state agencies, and opportunities to increase revenue collections in ways that create a level playing field for brick and mortar retailers.

From a tax perspective, legislators will continue to seek parity between online retailers (and online facilitators) and brick and mortar retailers by ensuring that all required sales taxes are paid. Legislators continue to find ways to improve the system.

Harmful Legislation Still Alive

Bills that did not pass last year, but are still alive for January, include legislation that would increase the minimum wage to $15.00 per hour; require merchants to charge a minimum of a $10.00 fee on money orders and increase the tobacco tax to $1.87 per pack as well as increasing the tax on cigars and other tobacco products.

A harmful labeling issue is still very much alive after passing the Senate last year. This bill would make it unlawful to label, advertise or represent any food product as meat, beef or pork unless 90% of the food was comprised of the animal. It was amended to include eggs, fish and poultry. The bill sits in the House Agriculture Committee.

Lawsuit Reform, Alcohol, Plastic/Packaging Restrictions and More

Last year lawsuit reform efforts began in earnest. Two bills were introduced but failed to pass. Ultimately, legislation did pass creating a Senate Study Committee which is assessing the impact of our existing tort laws on the business community. Grocers provided powerful testimony at one hearing. *(read our Tort Reform article on pages 4-5 for more information on the Study Committee)*

Several alcohol bills are also still alive, including expanded Sunday sales hours for package sales, tasting in package stores, the development of a statewide centralized alcohol license process and wholesaler/retailer relationship changes for small breweries.

Although an alcohol delivery bill was not introduced last year, it will be a high-profile issue for 2020. The GFIA will be working closely with legislators to be sure every retailer, large and small, will be able to offer this service.

With an increase in local government discussions surrounding plastic bag and packaging bans, look for more discussion on potential bans of everything from single use bags, packaging and plastic straws. There has already been one pre-filed bill that would ban the use of single use plastic bags for retailers. Several exceptions would be given, including plastic bags used in the meat and produce departments.

We are grateful for the strong partnerships we have with the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores, Georgia Beverage Association, Georgia Retail Association and the National Federation of Independent Businesses to better represent you at the Capitol. We work closely with coalitions on legislation ranging from tort reform to organized retail crime and pharmacy bills and other issues affecting our industry.
Election Year Politics and Redistricting Drama

Election years will always make the legislative session more interesting, but with redistricting after next year’s census, the outcome of the 2020 elections could shape the face of Georgia politics for the next decade. Republicans have controlled the state senate since 2002 and the house since the 2004 elections.

The Democrats picked up more seats than they have in the last 20 years and hope they can continue the advances. Republicans lost 11 seats in the House and two in the Senate, mostly in the Atlanta suburbs. For the Democrats to gain control of the chambers, they would have to flip at least 16 of the House’s 180 seats and eight of the 56 Senate seats.

The General Assembly will draw new political boundaries for both state and federal legislators in 2021, based on the results of the census, so both parties understand the pressure they are under to keep their constituents happy with their decisions during this upcoming session.

If that is not enough drama, the filing deadline for next year’s elections is March 6 of 2020, which is during this legislative session. Imagine watching someone walking in your building announcing that they are challenging you for your job? With surprise announcements like the retirement of Congressman Tom Graves, incumbent legislators may announce their decision to run for higher office, increasing the drama even further.

Help Feed Our Hungry Senators

The Georgia Food Industry Association will be hard at work representing your issues during the upcoming legislative session, beginning January 13th. We will once again provide food for the senate anteroom and we need your help!

If your company is interested in providing delicious snacks for our senators, please contact Kim Peterson at the GFIA office.

Support the GFIA Pac Fund

As we enter into an election year, we are asking EVERY member to support our PAC fund, Friends in Good Government. The ability to support our legislators with PAC dollars is a crucial component of our lobbying strength, and we need your help! Additional PAC donations may be added to your annual membership invoice, or sent individually. Contact Kim Peterson at the GFIA office to pledge your support.
Georgia’s Legal Climate Needs Reform!

Have you noticed the increase in the number of billboards advertising personal injury lawyers? How about the many commercials that advertise during daytime television?

It turns out that Georgia is the number two market in the entire country for personal injury advertising. Any Georgian watching daytime television or listening to the radio is guaranteed to see aggressive advertising strategies to solicit individuals to bring unnecessary litigation. These cases clog the courts and may bankrupt small businesses, even if the case has no merit.

According to a recently released report from the U.S. Chamber’s Institute for Legal Reform, Georgia’s legal climate has rapidly deteriorated over the past few years to the point that our state is now considered a full-blown Judicial Hellhole. Georgia is now ranked at 44th out of 50 nationally, which is a scary decline of 13 places in the last six years.

The Institute reports that following the Georgia Supreme Court’s lead, trial courts across the state have issued liability-expanding decisions. Outrageous nuclear verdicts have become the norm. Premises liability and medical liability are the areas that have been targeted most heavily. The report urges the Georgia legislature to take immediate action to improve the legal environment if Georgia hopes to reverse the dangerous trend.

Georgia Senate Study Committee on Reducing the Cost of Doing Business (SR 433)

Georgia’s business community is well aware that there is a problem with our legal climate and many legislators agreed. Last year, the Georgia State Senate passed a resolution creating The Senate Study Committee on Reducing Georgia’s Cost of Doing Business. SR433 was created to fully review and study the issue of Georgia’s legal climate and its impact on the cost of doing business and performing healthcare services. Chaired by Senator John Wilkinson, the Committee is comprised of six senate members and nine citizen appointees, and has held five meetings over three months.

The Committee was introduced to the state of tort law and reform in Georgia, with a focus on damages in negligence suits and the effect Georgia’s current tort system has had on the state’s businesses. Testimony showed the increase in premises liability cases, and how standards of negligence for property owners affect all businesses. One attorney explained that the increased litigation could result in food deserts if grocers choose to leave neighborhoods considered to be in high crime areas.

Presentations addressed the rising trend in high damage awards and how this results in higher insurance premiums, negatively impacting businesses large and small.

Other issues presented included the need to reform the necessity of allowing juries to receive crucial information when determining damages awards. Currently, Georgia law does not allow the jury to consider evidence that a plaintiff failed to wear a seatbelt when assessing fault in a personal injury case. Jurors are also only told the sticker price for medical expenses as opposed to the actual amount paid. The difference, referred to as “phantom damages”, is another reason for higher insurance costs.
Can an Insurance Filing Error Cost You Millions?
Georgia Food Industry Association members played a crucial role in sharing the legal challenges our industry encounters. Keith Milligan, co-owner of J.T.M. Corporation, with 17 Piggly Wiggly stores, testified how a simple clerical error cost his company over two million dollars. Due to a filing error, their insurance company was never notified of a lawsuit. The plaintiff’s attorney and the judge scheduled a default judgement hearing during the last 30 minutes of the last day of the term of court. The judge declared a default judgement and garnished the company’s bank account for $2.1 million dollars.

JTM has ten stores in Georgia and seven in Alabama. Unfortunately, the slip and fall lawsuit happened in one of his Georgia stores. At a hearing, the judge explained that although he could see that a mistake was made, Georgia law did not allow him to reverse the decision because of a mistake. Milligan asked the Committee to consider recommending that Georgia law be changed to reflect similar federal and surrounding states’ language that would allow judges, at their discretion, to open a default judgement after the court term has expired.

Tom Coogle, President of Reynolds Foodliner, DBA Piggly Wiggly, educated the committee about the increasingly high cost of insurance for his five grocery stores. He shared the cost of protecting his business against slip-and fall suits, including the cost of discovery, camera systems, years of data storage, and “plaintiff-proofing” their stores.

Coogle also asked the committee to place limitations on document discovery and to limit plaintiffs from waiting years to file suit when evidence is difficult to compile.

The Final Recommendations
After a series of five meetings held across the state, Chairman Wilkinson submitted the Committee’s findings. The report included 19 recommendations for proposed legislation in 2020 in order to safeguard the integrity and balance of Georgia’s Civil Litigation System.

See GFIA.org to read the entire report, as well as the final recommendations.

DRAMATIC EXPANSION OF PREMISES LIABILITY
The Committee heard testimony on several recent cases that are frightening to any Georgia business, but especially to our retailers ---

In 2019 a DeKalb County jury awarded $81 million to a plaintiff that was shot by carjackers in a grocer’s parking lot. The grocer was responsible for paying $69.6 million of the award (just 14% of the fault was placed on the two attackers) despite a security presence. The store had a security guard at the store entrance, but not in the parking lot.

In yet another 2019 case, a Fulton County jury awarded $43 million to a plaintiff who was shot in a drugstore parking lot, where he had arranged to buy an iPad from another person. The store was closed at the time. The prevailing argument was that management knew its store was in a dangerous location yet failed to provide adequate security.

GEORGIAANS FOR LAWSUIT REFORM
The Georgia Food Industry Association is a member of Georgians for Lawsuit Reform, a coalition that is dedicated to legislation that will provide a legal structure that is fair, balanced and assessible. We are looking for examples on how Georgia’s legal climate has been harmful to your business.

Please call Kathy Kuzava at (404) 819-7744 to share your story.
Big Shoes to Fill

By Kathy Kuzava

Changes are never easy for those of us who have developed long term relationships with legislators, but no retirement hit me harder than the news I recently received from a dear friend to our industry. Representative Tom McCall, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, called to let me know he would not be running for re-election next year. As I was telling him how much he has meant to the GFIA and to me personally, I “very professionally” cried like a baby. He and his wife Jane were calling from the car and within minutes we were all in tears.

For those of you who have attended the GFIA convention legislative breakfasts or our receptions in Atlanta, you know how much this man has done for our industry. He has introduced controversial legislation for our industry; he has stopped harmful bills if he knows they will hurt his grocer friends. Chairman McCall is a champion to his constituents in northeast Georgia and a friend to everyone that has had the honor of meeting him. Not to mention, he is just plain funny and not above playing tricks on his good friends.

I will never forget the first time I invited Tom McCall to the GFIA convention. He told me that he was “just a good ole farmer and not a fancy country club type like my members”. When I assured him that our members were the most down to earth and family friendly people he would meet, he and his wife reluctantly agreed to attend for one year. They have come every year since then, and our members are now some of their best friends.

Tom is most at home on his farm in Elbert County, riding his tractor or feeding his many “critters”. He is happiest when he is teaching his two young grandsons about life on the farm. It’s tough to leave the grandkids, but Tom is a devoted public servant. He takes his responsibility as a legislator so seriously, he was sworn in last year from his hospital room, just days after open heart surgery.

Tom McCall’s capitol office is always open to everyone. He has good friends on both sides of the aisle. He is respected in a way that gets harder in a world that is becoming more partisan every day. Tom McCall is a man who believes in common sense, hard work, service to his state and community and who will never go back on his word. While downtown for three months during the legislative session, Tom and Jane drive through Atlanta and pass out blankets to the homeless.

I am very excited for the future opportunities that are coming to this great man, but I will certainly miss seeing him every day during the session. Tom McCall’s constituents will have big shoes to fill when they elect their next representative!

For anyone interested in going to the capitol this year, I will make sure to show you Tom’s office, where you can enjoy some of his freshly popped popcorn and enjoy some true Southern hospitality!
More SNAP Reductions for Georgia

Thousands of Georgians could lose or have reduced food stamp benefits due to new rules proposed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

Federal work requirements for able bodied adults between 18 and 49 who are not caretakers or disabled have been in place since 1996. These recipients cannot receive SNAP benefits for more than three months during a three-year period unless they’re working or enrolled in an education or training program for at least 80 hours a month.

During the recession, many states, including Georgia, were given waivers to relax the rules during times of high unemployment. States could apply to waive the time limits placed on childless adults living in counties with an unemployment rate as low as 2.5%. The new rule will mandate a county to have an unemployment rate of 6% before the work requirement can be waived.

Over 40% of Georgia’s 159 counties still have waivers in place, according to DFCS, and the state pushed back plans to roll out work requirements statewide this year due to the pending rule changes.

An Atlanta Journal Constitution article reported that there are 54,000 childless Georgia adults who receive SNAP and are not subjected to the federal time limits, according to state data. In April, they will fall under the new rules.

Georgia’s October unemployment rate was 3% according to the state Department of Labor. Only three Georgia counties — Clay, Telfair and Wheeler — had rates above 6%, according to the October figures.

SNAP costs the federal government roughly $70 billion a year and helps almost 40 million low-income people buy their groceries each month. Brandon Lipps, the USDA’s deputy undersecretary for food nutrition and consumer services, said tightening the work requirement would save the federal government about $5.5 billion over five years.
CBD Questions Continue - FDA Warns About Lack of Research

Retailers and suppliers understand the significant consumer interest in CBD products, but many continue to question the legalities of carrying the product. The absence of comprehensive federal guidance with regard to CBD products, coupled with a developing patchwork of state laws regulating the products, has created a lack of clarity for both retailers/wholesalers and customers.

The cannabis compound has been widely touted as a harmless way to treat a slew of ailments, such as anxiety, pain and possibly even cancer — without much evidence to back it up. CBD products flooded the market this year after Congress legalized hemp last December.

Our national partners are working closely with FDA to get clarification to this confusing issue. FMI has just released a CBD guide for the food retail industry that includes best practices for food retailers and product suppliers regarding the marketing and sale of CBD products. Both FMI and NGA have held webinars to educate their members on the latest information from FDA.

“We remain concerned that some people wrongly think that the myriad of CBD products on the market, many of which are illegal, have been evaluated by the FDA and determined to be safe, or that trying CBD ‘can’t hurt’,” FDA Principal Deputy Commissioner Amy Abernethy said in a statement earlier in the month.

Abernethy leads a working group at the FDA tasked with crafting regulations to bring legal CBD products to market. The FDA is under intense pressure from the public, as well as lawmakers including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, to come up with a solution.

There are still “a number of questions regarding CBD’s safety — including reports of products containing contaminants, such as pesticides and heavy metals — and there are real risks that need to be considered,” Abernethy said. Companies are adding CBD to creams, oils, food and beverages. However, it’s currently illegal for companies to sell CBD-infused food and beverages and to market any CBD products with health claims the FDA has not evaluated.

The FDA said it “has seen only limited data about CBD safety and these data point to real risks that need to be considered before taking CBD for any reason.” The agency lays out possible risks of using CBD, such as liver injury, drug interactions and possibly even negative effects on male reproductive health.

This month, FDA provided an update for consumers about CBD. Importantly, consumers should know there is limited available information about CBD, including its effects on the human body.

The FDA recently issued warning letters to fifteen privately owned CBD companies for illegally advertising their products as treating diseases, selling products as dietary supplements and adding CBD to human and animal foods.

GFIA will continue to provide information to its members about the sale of CBD products as we monitor this popular topic. Watch for up to date information in our member emails and future newsletters.

ONLINE RESOURCES:
FMI’s CBD guide for the retail food industry can be found at https://www.fmi.org/forms/store/ProductFormPublic/hemp-cbd-and-the-retail-food-industry
FDA’s consumer update about CBD can be found at https://go.usa.gov/xpRbz

FDA KEY POINTS
• FDA is concerned that some people “wrongly” think CBD “can’t hurt.”
• Consumers should be aware that the FDA still has questions about the safety and quality of CBD products, the agency says.
• CBD has been widely touted as a harmless treatment — without much evidence to back it up.
• CBD might not be as safe as the companies selling it say it is, the Food and Drug Administration is warning consumers.
Regulated Industry Chairman Alan Powell Wins Georgia’s First “Brew Across Georgia”

Five Georgia legislators, along with Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan, competed in the first state-level “Brew Across Georgia” legislative beer festival, where they learned the art of crafting a specialty beer. Anheuser-Busch began hosting a national “Brew Across America” brewing competition in 2017, featuring beers created, made and brewed with input from nine Members of Congress. This year’s state level contest was designed to bring the comradery of the national competition to Georgia’s state lawmakers.

The group visited the Anheuser-Busch plant in Cartersville over the summer and collaborated with the brew masters to come up with their own recipes. The specialty beers were brewed in the company’s experimental kitchen, but the state officials did not taste their creations until the November 6th competition, hosted by Anheuser-Busch at Dunwoody Taco Mac.

**Entrees included:**
- Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan – “Lead Off Lager”
- Senator Bill Cowser [R-Athens] – “Chill Bill Blackberry Kolsch”
- Senator Jen Jordan [D-Atlanta] – “Georgia Peach”

The judges and guests enjoyed tasting each of the selections. In the end, Representative Alan Powell’s Ice Cold Beer took the top honor and was presented with the Brew Democracy Award. For more information on Brew Across America and Brew Across Georgia, be sure to follow @AnheuserBusch on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, and join the conversation at #BrewDemocracy.

The GFIA welcomes Kris Jonczyk, Regional Director for the Atlanta division, who was promoted to succeed DiBenedetto as of January 1, 2020.

Joe DiBenedetto, Atlanta Division Vice President at Publix Super Markets and GFIA board member, retired from Publix after 44 years with the company.

“Joe has been instrumental in the continued growth and success of our Atlanta Division,” Publix President Kevin Murphy said in a statement. “Throughout his career, Joe has worked to develop leaders for future opportunities. We wish him well as he begins the next chapter of his life.” Joe served in his last role for eight years.

Jonczyk began his career at Publix in 1986 as a front service clerk in Tequesta, Fla. He became a store manager in 2000 and then a district manager in 2012. He was promoted to regional director in the Atlanta division in 2016. In taking his new role as division VP, Jonczyk has relocated to Atlanta.

The GFIA thanks Joe for his dedication to the association and we look forward to working closely with Kris.
One New Year’s Resolution That Pays A Dividend –
Take Advantage of GFIA’s Member Services

*COMING SOON* Food Safety Training & Testing
We are excited to be developing a new program to offer SafeMark food safety training and testing through our partnership with FMI. The ANSI accredited SafeMark course was developed “for retailers, by retailers,” and offers an alternative to grocers that currently use the ServSafe program. Online and written training materials, as well as exam proctoring will be available to GFIA members. Training materials will be available in English & Spanish. Exams are offered in multiple languages. Watch for an announcement in January!

Food Safety Reimbursement Program
Our Education Foundation funds a reimbursement program for GFIA retailers that will reimburse up to $1,500 per year for food safety training. Visit the Membership/Retailer Benefits page on the GFIA website for more information, or contact Kim Peterson.

Coupon Redemption Program
Retailers, if your wholesaler does not offer a coupon redemption program, we can help! We have a program with American Coupon Services with competitive rates. Contact Kim Peterson for more information.

*NEW* Discount Programs
We have recently worked with two vendors who are offering discounts to GFIA members:

**MemberDeals**
Visit the Membership Benefits section on the GFIA website to gain access to exclusive MemberDeals discounts on business and vacation travel, entertainment, and more with your GFIA membership.

**Staples Advantage**
GFIA has negotiated discount rates on office supplies through a partnership with Staples. Fill out our online form in the Membership Benefits section of the GFIA website to receive a link to sign up.
ASSOCIATE LEVEL
Benestar Brands
Double D Specialty Foods & Services
Hart Dairy Creamery
Ice Cream Specialties
Moet Hennessy USA
New England Wire Products
New Realm Brewing
Phantom Fireworks Store Sales LLC

Precept Wine Company
Quirch Foods
Sterling Packaging

RETAILERS
Benning Giant Foods, Columbus, GA
Davis’ Food Fresh
Gaskins Meats, Adel, GA
Valley Fresh Market, Fort Valley, GA
Women in the Brew

If you have attended any of our 2019 events, you have most likely enjoyed a fresh cup of coffee from one of our new GFIA family members, Don Francisco’s Coffee. They have an impressive lineup of coffee blends, flavored coffee and espresso. Even more impressive is the fact that the Gavina family has been in the coffee business for four generations. We were excited to learn more about the family, and its legacy of women in leadership roles.

We asked 4th generation family member, Jenny Gavina, to share some insight into the family business. Jenny works closely with Lois Colburn, Vice President of Sales, and her aunt Leonor Gavina-Valls, Vice President of Marketing, to learn the business of selling coffee.

*How has the knowledge gained from all the years in the business been passed down through the generations? How do you keep the traditions of the past while remaining relevant for the future?*

Our family is unique because we were coffee farmers before we were coffee roasters. My family’s business started in 1870 when my great grandfather, José Maria Gaviña, and his brother, Ramon, went to Cuba from Spain to find opportunity. They settled in the mountains of southern Cuba and it was on this farm that my grandfather, Francisco Gaviña, was born. My own father and his siblings also grew up on the farm and learned hands on about coffee growing and roasting. For political reasons, they were forced to leave Cuba and when they arrived to the United States, it was not easy for the family at first. When F. Gaviña & Son, Inc. first began, it was a small roaster that would sell to the local Cuban community. My dad Pedro would roast and pack the coffee and my uncle José would sell and deliver it. Slowly it has grown into the business it is today, but it took a lot of grit and persistence.

As the younger generation, instead of growing up on a farm, we grew up going to work with our parents and we were able to witness the hard work exhibited by their generation. We became educated about coffee and the endurance it takes to create a quality product. The fourth generation of Gaviña’s is involved in all aspects of the business from sourcing beans, production, marketing, sales, and much more. We value the tradition that our great grandfather started when he grew great quality coffee in the fertile mountains of Cuba. As the company and our family continues to grow, we remain committed to working hard to provide great quality coffee in every cup.

*Tell us about the women in your family who are leading the company. Who are your family matriarchs, and what role did they play in shaping you for leadership?*

Women have historically played an important role at Gaviña. My grandmother, Anatolia, was president of the company. She would bake for the employees and managed finances. I was very fortunate to grow up in a family of remarkably strong and educated women. Today, my Aunt Leonor is the VP of Marketing, responsible for the brands, and also our philanthropic endeavors. We are able to make an impact on our community because of her work. In addition, she is one of the founding members of the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCA) and formerly served as its first female president. She has also served on the ALZA (Alzheimer’s) board for many years. Leonor has been an inspiration for not only the women in this family, but for all women in the industry.
My cousin, Lisette Gavina López, is a female leader within the organization responsible for the Marketing of our brands: Don Francisco’s Coffee, Café La Llave, Gavina Gourmet Coffee and Jose’s Gourmet Coffee. She has contributed to the growth of the organization through key projects such as our first brick and mortar coffee shop and the recent launch of our NEW Don Francisco’s and Café La Llave espresso capsules. She also serves on several boards including the California Restaurant Association and the Vernon Chamber of Commerce. My cousins Lilly Gavina Glascott and Anna Valls also work within the company and my cousin Yanelle helps with the Family Council.

I also need to give credit to my father. He always included me in conferences and business dinners from a young age. Now as an adult and an emerging leader in business, I am so grateful to have learned how to communicate and connect in such settings.

Would you speak about the importance of quality to the Don Francisco brand, and how that translates to your coffee products?

It starts with the farm. Since we started as farmers, the family understands the struggles that farmers deal with. We recently supported the construction of a wet mill in Colombia, which is a processing facility for the coffee beans. In addition, we also work with a Farmer Assistance project in Guatemala. These initiatives support the farmers to improve their harvest and create a more sustainable growing process.

Providing a great quality coffee is our most important value as a company and as a family. Our brand, Don Francisco’s Coffee is named after our grandfather and we want to honor his legacy with the best cup of coffee possible! We pride ourselves in ensuring that our customers are receiving a quality product.

GFIA has embraced our Don Francisco’s Coffee team as part of their family. Being new in this region, Kathy, Michelle, and Kim started mentoring us from the beginning. We have only been members for nine months, but Jim Cetrulo and I feel like we have been part of this community for the past 20 years! All of the GFIA events are first class and meet all expectations that a manufacturer looks for and needs. If a new client is interested in joining, my counsel would be to ensure that there is a line item in your budget for GFIA. Don’t dip your toe in, jump into this association with both feet! You will not be disappointed!

-Lois Colburn, Vice President of Sales

The Gavina family at their Vernon, CA warehouse
MARK YOUR 2020 CALENDAR FOR THESE EXCITING GFIA AND INDUSTRY EVENTS

Details are at www.GFIA.org/events

**Legislative Reception**
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
GFIA and its industry partners, The GA Association of Convenience Stores and The GA Beverage Association, host a reception for state senators, representatives and policy makers to meet our membership. This is a great opportunity to personally speak with decision makers about the impact of regulations on your company’s operations. [see front cover for more details]

**NGA**
February 23-26, 2020
San Diego Convention Center
http://www.thengashow.com/
The National Grocers Association (NGA) is the only industry association devoted exclusively to the needs of independent grocers. Each year, The NGA Show brings together independent retailers and wholesalers, food retail industry executives, food/CPG manufacturers and service providers for unparalleled opportunities to learn, engage, share, network, and innovate. Given today’s ever-changing marketplace and evolving advancements in innovation occurring in the food retail industry, The NGA Show is a must-attend event.

**Education Foundation Spring Golf Tournament**
Thursday, March 26, 2020
Mirror Lake Golf Club, Villa Rica, GA
Kick off the spring season with our Foundation Trustees as they host their annual golf tournament. This year, we have added lots of excitement with new contests and prizes. Call Michelle Boyer for sponsorship info.

**Day in Washington**
April 28-29, 2020
https://www.nationalgrocers.org/grocers-day-in-washington/
The food industry comes together in Washington, D.C. each year to meet with federal legislators about issues pertaining to the food industry. FMI, NGA and FIAE host this great experience, and we encourage all GFIA members to participate. Contact Kathy Kuzava to be a part of the GFIA delegation.

**GFIA Annual Convention**
July 15-19, 2020
Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
This year, we are “Chart The Course” as GFIA members head to Ponte Vedra Beach for our biggest event of the year! We are continuing the retailer/wholesaler trade show preview, and the “GFIA Gives” charity event for 2020 and look forward to seeing you there! Sponsor renewal packages are coming soon, and online registration opens April 1st.

**Fall Golf Classic**
October 2020
Chateau Elan, Braselton, GA
The GFIA board of directors has chosen Chateau Elan for its 2020 fall tournament. This course is a GFIA member favorite, so mark your calendars now to attend!

For more information about these events visit www.GFIA.org
2020-2021 Scholarship Program Offers Over $150,000 in Scholarships Available to GFIA Members!

Who's Eligible to Apply:

- Children of full-time employees who are currently high school seniors, or college freshmen, sophomores or juniors. Parent must have been employed at least 1 year as of January 1, 2020.
- Full and part-time employees who are currently high school seniors, or college freshmen, sophomores or juniors. Students must have been employed at least 6 months as of January 1, 2020.
- Foundation awards are available to all current GFIA member companies - retailers, wholesalers and suppliers. This includes stores, offices and active representatives located in Georgia. Member offices that are outside of Georgia but are the primary location for the GFIA membership are also eligible.
- Out of state retail stores that are serviced by their Georgia division are eligible for that company's piggyback awards only. Applicants from out of state store locations will not be eligible for other Foundation awards.

Eligibility questions should be directed to the GFIA office at (770) 438-7744. In December, posters were mailed to all RETAIL members (1 per store). ASSOCIATE members will receive a DIGITAL copy of the poster that can be printed and forwarded as needed. If you want a hard copy of the poster to display, they are available by request. (Before distributing, please note the Eligibility Requirements.)

- Apply on-line! Starting January 3rd go to https://aim.applylists.net . Step by step instructions are provided. Lots of info and links can also be found at www.GFIA.org .

In addition to the Foundation awards, many scholarships are awarded to specific companies. This service, Piggybacking, allows a company to fund awards for their employees through GFIA ... you are hands-free of the judging, processing and disbursement of funds. All administrative fees are absorbed by the Education Foundation. It is a tremendous employee benefit for minimal cost. For details, please contact the GFIA office.

We will continue to select scholarship winners on a WEIGHTED SCALE. This process will ensure well-rounded winners. Although the greatest weight will be given to academics, other areas will be considered, such as industry work experience, volunteerism/leadership and extracurricular activities.

- Career Path Award winners will also be chosen on a weighted scale. The essay and industry work experience will be more heavily considered, followed by academics, extracurricular activities and volunteerism/leadership.

- Parent involvement! In the past, we have received many calls from parents who thought their child had completed the process ... and were not happy to find they had not. The 2020 application includes a request for a parent email address so that parents will also receive completion reminders.

- Email reminders are sent periodically to students with incomplete applications, so watch your inbox!

- Winners will be announced in May. Checks are mailed to winners in July.

Make a Difference …Join the Trustees!

The Foundation Trustees are a hardworking group of industry leaders who help chart the course for the Foundation. Take the next step in the GFIA and consider serving! Applications for Trustees are being accepted now through May 1, 2020 at www.gfia.org/trustees-application.html
Board of Directors’ Fall Golf Classic a Hole in One

Over $80,000 Raised for GFIA’s Legislative Efforts

Over 250 retailers, wholesaler and associate members came together on October 16th at Chateau Elan to participate in the GFIA Board of Directors’ Fall Golf Classic. The Fall Golf Classic is hosted by our Board of Directors and serves as a fundraiser supporting GFIA’s legislative efforts.

Legislative and regulatory representation is the Georgia Food Industry Association’s most important service. During Georgia’s legislative session, the GFIA legislative team is at the capitol every day monitoring legislation affecting the food industry. The team meets with officials, attends committee meetings, testifies on issues and builds coalitions.

We appreciate every member who participated in our tournament, whether as a volunteer, a participant or a sponsor.

“While a rainy morning made some wonder if the golf outing would happen, almost every registered golfer showed up to enjoy one of the most pleasant days of the fall. Enjoying a beautiful golf course with good friends and great food made for a nearly perfect day. Thank you to the grand sponsor Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, the ball sponsor Anheuser-Busch, Inc., as well as all other sponsors, volunteers and golfers who made this a very successful event.”

Golf Committee Co-Chair, Darrell Wiley, J & J Foods

Thanks to our

Grand Sponsor

Ball Sponsor

John Rutledge, Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED; Tim Brown, The Kroger Co.
Gold Sponsors

Atlanta Hard Cider Co.
Beatbox Beverages
Bimbo Bakeries USA
Brooklyn Beer / 21st Amendment
Bunzl
Capriccio Sangria
Constellation Brands Beer Division
Creature Comforts
D. G. Yuengling & Son, Inc.
Don Francisco’s Coffee
E & J Gallo Winery
Eagle Rock Distributing Company
Eternal Beverages
Federated Insurance
Flowers Foods
Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q
Frito-Lay
Great Lakes Cheese
Heineken USA
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Ira Higdon Grocery Company
J & J Foods
J.T.M. Corporation

The Kroger Company
MDI
Northeast Sales, Inc.
Pepsi Beverages Company / PepsiCo
Piggly Wiggly Alabama Distributing Co.
Publix Super Markets, Inc.
Quality Foods, Inc.
SpartanNash Company
UNFI
Wayfield Foods
Thank you to the Mulberry Farms for providing breakfast for all the golfers.

Caroline Koch & Nick Snyder, 21st Amendment / Brooklyn Brewery

Kerry Hitchcock, Wayfield Foods; Dan Kelly, Georgia Crown; Mike Faulk, The Kroger Co.

The Bunzl team is excited and hoping to win the tournament.

Alberto Farias, MillerCoors; Scott Allen, Beverage South

David Jones, United Dist.; John Gehring, Publix Super Markets, Inc. handing out hot dogs to the golfers.

Nam Dae Mun Farmers Market team poses with our Grand Sponsor Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED

Matt Crawley, Bob Pendleton, John Gehring, Publix Super Markets, Inc.

Bettina Hall, The Kroger Co.; Catherine Jones, Durty Gurl Cocktail Mixers

Connie & Bobby Banks, CBT, Inc.

Dave Spencer & Lois Colburn, Don Francisco’s Coffee

Vernon Kelly, Stan Paluszewski, Keith Buscemi, Sun City Produce; Allen Hagan, Sherwood Foods

“The Voice of the Food Industry in Georgia”
FALL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Mike Givens & Matt Whitlatch, Matador Dist.; Max Winchester, Red Bull

Lindsay & Tom Koch, Koch & Associates

Darrell Wiley, J & J Foods; Jeff Downing, Foothills IGA; Mark Lord & Dean McDermond, Flowers Foods; Verlin Reece, Quality Foods

Fox Bros. Sauces and Spices team


Milo's Tea Company

Dana Bowen, Frito-Lay; Joe Hartman, Pepsi Beverages Co.; Jamey Leseueur, Food Depot; Kyle Butler, Frito-Lay

Wendell Keeling & David Curtis, Northeast Sales; Angela Magnuson, Mike’s hard lemonade; Dave Black, Northeast Sales

Gene LaPine, Kill Cliff; Robb Finkey, Eagle Rock Dist. Co.; Jerry Barker, Kill Cliff

Daniel Buchanan, Empire Dist.; Samantha Paluch, E & J Gallo Winery; Matt Gomes, Publix Super Markets, Inc.; Jim Nichols, Empire Dist.

Federated Insurance team enjoying golf
GFIA members gathered in the holiday spirit at the 2019 GFIA Holiday Extravaganza on December 3rd. Everyone had a great time playing casino games, mingling with customers, and winning spectacular prizes!

This year, GFIA Chairman Jamey Leseueur of Food Depot selected Coco’s Cupboard to be the recipient of donations collected during the GFIA Annual Holiday Extravaganza. Their mission is to fight for every animal in need, working tirelessly to prevent unwanted litters. The charity works to rehabilitate and find homes for pets that are abandoned or abused. We are incredibly proud of our members, who gave so generously to Coco’s Cupboard this year.

We would also like thank the companies that were kind enough to donate gifts or cash for our give-away packages. All of the prizes would not fit in Santa’s sleigh, so we are grateful that United Distributors sent their truck to transport the gifts to the party. Attendees were excited to win over 25 gift packages containing electronics, designer purses, toys and games, food & wine, and much more!

Such a great event would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors, attendees, donors, and volunteer “elves”. Many thanks to everyone who helped to make this year’s event successful!
We appreciate all of our sponsors - the success of our events would not be possible without their generous support!

Gold Sponsors

Anheuser-Busch, Inc. & The GA Wholesaler Family
Atlanta Beverage / Eagle Rock
Craft Brew Alliance  Essentia Water  Reformation Brewery
Sunshine Beverages
Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, Inc.
Don Francisco’s Coffee
Federated Insurance
Georgia Crown Distributing Company
Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits  O’Neill Vintners & Distillers
The Kroger Company
Mayfield Dairy Farms
mike’s hard lemonade
Pepsi Beverages Company
Publix Super Markets, Inc.
Savannah Distributing Company
21st Amendment Brewery  Creature Comfort
Durty Gurl Cocktail Mixers  Planet H2O
Ste. Michelle Wine Estates
United Distributors, Inc.
BEATBOX BEVERAGES  Boston Beer Company
Fever Tree  Sweetwater Brewery

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Bronze Sponsors

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Sugardale
UNFI
UTZ Quality Foods
HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

The Flowers Foods team enjoys playing black jack

Amber & Mical Heminger, Eternal Water; Kerry & Terri Hitchcock, Wayfield Foods

Bobby Sherman, Gavin & Maureen Richardson, Coca-Cola UNITED

Angela & Keith Everett, Dani & Bruce Humphries, Publix Super Markets, Inc.

DJ Hanlin & Taylor Bussell, Federated Insurance

Antonio Casas, Andrew Winkelmann, Diaz Foods

Clint & Alicia Wood, Sarah & Chad Ross; Atlanta Beverage Company

Jim Centrulo & Kathy Harms, Don Francisco's Coffee

Jack Carlile & Charles Weathington, UNFI

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Wendy & Derek Hulsey, Kristi and Ben Brantley, Quality Foods

Rob Harris & Angela Magnuson, Mike's hard lemonade

Wendell Keeling, Northeast Sales; Jeff Downing, Foothills IGA

Glen & Nicole Wilkins, Walmart; Ryan Souls, Pepsi Beverages Co.

Keith Williams, MDI; Clark Stephens, Quality Foods; David Hayden, Joshen Paper & Packaging

Laura & Jeff Moss, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates


Greg Ozburn, Georgia Crown; Keith Aikman, O’Neill Vintners; Mike Rivers, Georgia Crown

Nick Snyder, 21st Amendment; David Hopkins & Catherine Jones, Durty Gurl Cocktail Mixers

Our members are all smiles as Kerry Hitchcock, Wayfield Foods deals black jack

Mike Coggin, Sherwood Foods; Stephanie Reid, The Shelby Report

Kerry Hitchcock, Wayfield Foods; Rachel Kiley, Monday Night Brewing; Micheal Gay, Foodfresh