

Wynn Tyner

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John Wintersteen and Paul Dembow from the Historical Committee are here to interview Wynn Tyner.

John - May we have your permission to quote you in part or in all of our conversation today?

Wynn: I think so – yes

Paul: Are you a native Arizonan?

Wynn: I am not

Paul: Where are you from?

Wynn: I was born and raised in Washington DC but have been here now 30-31 years.

Paul: In Paradise Valley 31 years?

Wynn: Just recently, about 2 years ago this weekend, we down sized out of PV but we lived in our Paradise Valley home for 28 – 29 years.

Paul: Did you raise kids here?

Wynn: We moved to Paradise Valley when our kids were 4 and 6. We arrived Christmas Eve day, 1985. Temporarily, we lived at Camelback Inn for 2 months. When I arrived on December 24, the Marriott family was coming for a 3-month stay. I was General Manager the next morning and I didn't even know where the bathrooms were.

Paul: Am I correct that this is the only Marriott Resort that the family owns themselves?

Wynn: It's a one of a kind somewhat complicated arrangement but Marriott bought Camelback Inn in 1967. Shortly there after, Bill Marriott Sr. the founder of Marriott and Chairman of the Board, had the vision that he wanted to "condominiumize" (make each room it's own Condominium) Camelback Inn which in 1967 or shortly there after was just unheard of in the hotel business. It's the only one of its kind in the Marriott system. It is very successful. Marriott owns some of the property as a long-term management agreement to manage the property. All of the units are privately owned condominiums.

Paul: What were the chain of events that brought you to the Camelback Inn? It seems that Washington DC is where Marriott is headquartered. How did you get this position?

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Wynn: I had moved around a lot with Marriott previously. When I finally came to Camelback, it was my 11th move. I had been here once before as the Resident Manager for about a year and then transferred to open up a resort in Palm Springs. I was settled with my family in Dallas at the time and was very happy. So when they ask me to consider the job at Camelback Inn I really wasn't that interested. I didn't apply for it. So they came after me. I came out and fell in love with Camelback Inn again and the area. I never regretted the decision. It was one of the best decisions I made in my career.

John: I recall that you were in the army

Wynn: I was, yes

John: Was that before you started with Marriott? Or did you have a break in Service with Marriott?

Wynn: No, I had gone to a military school for 3 years and finished at Penn State. The day I graduated, I immediately went into the Service and was commissioned. I spent 7 years in the Army. I was still single and planning on making the Army a career. At the time, I was stationed at the Pentagon. Just for the heck of it, decided before I committed to stay on, I would interview with some civilian companies just to make sure I was making the right decision. I used to work for the Marriott during the summers as a lifeguard and bellman in Washington DC. So I thought that Marriott was one of the companies I ought to talk to. One thing led to another. I talked with them and they offered me something that was interesting. I was a Regular Army if you know what that is and resigned my Commission and started with Marriot a week later.

John: That was fast. I also recall that you were a military police officer?

Wynn: I was commissioned as an Armor Officer, Regular Army, which is the equivalent of somebody out of West Point, Regular Army Commission. You had to request three branches that you preferred and Armor was always my first choice. I put down Military Police as my second choice. I don't remember what my third choice was. So I was detailed Armor for three years. I went to Armor School. I went to Germany in Armor and then reverted to my permanent branch military police.

John: What other properties did you serve as Resident Manager / General Manager before you became an institution here in Paradise Valley?

Wynn: I started in sales with Marriott – sales and marketing. At the time they offered me that position, I had no idea what marketing was. They said, "Hey we want you to interview for a job in our marketing department at a hotel." I was like, ok great, but I had no idea what marketing was. So we interviewed at the hotel in the cocktail lounge

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with two of the other sales people. I thought, "I could do this. This is ok." I moved around a number of times in the sales capacity as Director of Sales / Director of Marketing and then became Resident Manager. The first Residential Manager was at Camelback from Dallas. Then I was Residential Manager. I opened Rancho Los Palmas in Palm Springs. Afterwards, I became General Manager at two hotels in Dallas and then came to Camelback Inn.

John: Did you stay here because you wanted to or because Marriott wanted you here?

Wynn: My wife and I fully expected, as we had always done, to stay somewhere two or three years at the most and then move on. I assumed I would be here for 2 or 3 years and then whatever came about there after, we would move again. One thing led to another and I ended up staying here for 20 years.

Paul: Was every year a surprise that you didn't get the call to move to another hotel?

Wynn: Once I got here and I realized the importance of the job and the value of the job, I wasn't going to leave until I was ready to leave.

Paul: What major accomplishments did you have at the Camelback Inn, either in staffing or building? Is there anything with the Town that you are proud of?

Wynn: I think when I got here, December 24, 1985, the world was about to change and I really didn't understand it at the time or at least my business community was going to change. Camelback Inn had been an institution for a long. As the sign says out front "Where time stands still" and literally time has stood still there for quite awhile. When I got here, I shortly realized that the Phoenician was under construction and soon to be built, the Hyatt was under construction and soon to be built, the Princess, the same. In order to compete, we really needed to do some looking at ourselves; where do we want to position ourselves? It was a long journey over that twenty years but I think we reacted quickly. We kept true to our roots of being America's premier authentic southwestern resort experience, which is what we positioned ourselves, and we have been very successful over the years. We didn't lose market share. We reacted to the market conditions; we got the support of our condominium owners as well as Marriott to make some significant enhancements over the years. We transformed the resort from what it was with astro-turf and nice accommodations but nothing to compete with the market place as it was transitioning also.

Paul: When you said you got the support of the condominium owners, what did that mean?

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Wynn: The condominium owners own all of the units. Marriott manages the condominiums and gets a management fee. The condo owners own a majority of the land but they don't own the land of the golf course or the spa. Any time improvements would be recommended for rooms and or areas that they owned, I would not only need their approval but I would also need their money as well as Marriott's money which a lot of times Marriott contributed based on a percentage basis of ownership. I had to report to two Boards, a condominium board and the Marriott hierarchy. I had great relations with both. I don't remember the final tally but it's well over 100 million dollars of capital investments we made to the property.

Paul: How does that work if someone wanted to buy a condominium, is there is a market for those?

Wynn: Yes, we have a number of units. They are all privately owned; families own a number of them. When I was there, a family owned 10 units; each of their children had one; each of the grandchildren had one, etc. There is a lot of longevity in that respect but at the same time, for a variety of reasons, units will come on the market and then people will buy them. They can't decorate them themselves or anything like that stuff. It is strictly Marriott's to decorate.

Paul: Is there a financial arrangement where there is a return on investment?

Wynn: Yes, the owners get a distribution, depending upon their unit size not whether their unit was occupied. Marriott would combine all of the revenue from the rooms. And then based upon the type of unit that they had, size of the units, some people own suites with pools, some have smaller units, there's a percentage of allocation minus expenses such as salaries, engineering etc. and it's distributed. Probably the biggest selling feature that people like is the vacation component. As an owner, you are allowed to have up to 30 days of vacation at any Marriott or Ritz Carlton in the world. The only down side is if you choose to go to Paris for a week or some other place, then your revenue for a week is removed in the distribution. Where else would you be able to travel like that with all the arrangements made by the office at Camelback Inn. You just call and say, "I want to go to Paris for a week, take it out of my income." A lot of people really enjoy that. At the highest level, platinum or gold, all owners at the Camelback Inn have the top customer loyalty in Marriott which is a small number of people. So anywhere they want to go in the world, even if a hotel is sold out, the Marriott has to accept their reservation.

Paul: What do the condo's sell for – between what and what – or approximately?

Wynn: I've been gone for 10 years now so when I was there probably the least expensive unit was probably \$175 (thousand). I don't remember what the suites with

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the pools went for, but they were pretty expensive. They were good investments. People didn't end up buying them to get rich but they had a steady stream of income. You could block out your unit for a week up to 30 days. A lot of our owners came back to Camelback Inn for vacation. That was one of their benefits.

John: You said the ownership of the land is mixed; that the spa and the golf course are owned by somebody else. Does Marriott Corporation own the land?

Wynn: Yes and no. It's interesting. When the property started in 1936, John Lincoln of Lincoln Hospital, Lincoln Drive, Joan Lincoln's family, sold 120 acres for Camelback Inn to get started at \$100 an acre. John Lincoln, several years before that bought that same acreage for \$4 an acre.

Paul: Wasn't the golf course developed before 1985?

Wynn: Yes the golf course was already here before I came.

Paul: Did you know Bruce Merrill? He had one big piece of property and he wouldn't let the Marriott Corporation have it.

Wynn: I know Merrill had all of the water rights to the golf course. I wasn't involved and don't have much knowledge in that. But to your question, when Marriott bought the property in 1967, the vast majority of the land belonged to the condominium owners as an entity. Marriott owns the land and takes all sales and profits from the golf course and the spa. The Marriott gets all of the food and beverage revenues from the resort even though those functions take place on condominium owner land. Although the condominium owners own the bulk of the land, in 1987, as part of this drive staying competitive, we convinced a lot of owners to build the spa at Camelback Inn which at that time was kind of crazy. The (permit) to build the spa was granted by the Town in exchange for land at the top of Mummy Mountain that Marriott owned. Marriott donated that portion of the land as unbuildable to the Mountain Preserve in exchange to build the spa.

John: That's the interesting history. If you hadn't said it and it hadn't been recorded, no one would ever know. Some place buried in the archives there is probably a Town Council action on that but nobody would have ever put that together with the whole resort.

Wynn: I have always felt quite proud to live here and to work here. For Paradise Valley, its size, the resources that it has here with world-class hotels, Sanctuary, Camelback, the properties in and around us here, it is amazing. When I talked to customers about scheduling meetings or conferences they would question, "should I go to Orlando, or

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should I bring my meetings to Arizona, or Camelback?" There's no greater concentration of top tier resort properties in such concentrated area – the Hyatt and the Princess. It really sets Paradise Valley apart. The resorts, which I am really proud of, help to maintain the residential lifestyle of our residents.

Paul: Do you have any interesting stories to tell about things that happened at the Camelback Inn while you were General Manager?

Wynn: I can remember one story. It's about Sandra Day O'Connor and my last expansion, which was the ballroom, and getting the permit to build it from the Town. I thought we had great relations with the Town while I was there. There were multiple meetings, with multiple presentations on this major project and it ultimately came down to the Town saying, "we approve it but there's one condition – you have to get approval from Colonial Miramonte." So we talked to their board. There were two homeowners whose houses directly abut the Camelback Inn property line where all of the work was to be done. The Town said as long as you get their support and approval, we would approve this major redo. One of the homeowners was Sandra Day O'Connor. I contacted her. My office and John Baranosa's was up some very tiny stairs. Sandra Day O'Connor and her husband, John, came up to my office. I had all of my drawings and charts to show them. I will never forget it, it was just great reflecting back on my marketing days – ok we are going to do one of these deals. It was going well. She was very cordial and nice. She looked at me and said, "Well that's all good but how is this going to affect my house?" I'm thinking, here I am a hotel manager pleading my case before a Supreme Court Justice and with no legal experience and never before the Supreme Court, or never even been in Traffic Court, but it was a great outcome. She said let me think about it. Within a matter of days, she got back and said she supports it and we proceeded with it. Had that not happened, it wouldn't have happened but to her credit and vision and support, it happened. It could have been a career breaker for me.

Paul: Were there ever any emergencies at the resort, a fire or anything that was during your tenure that was caused real panic?

Wynn: Actually not, though I do remember a guest who was staying at another hotel had come over, an older couple, to use the spa. The husband had dropped the wife off at the spa and as you probably know this, the spa is on a little bit of a hill. Unbeknownst to her, the husband started heading down the hill. At the bottom of the hill there are some units and he decided not to turn or didn't know and jumped the embankment. He drove his car half way into one of the units. Fortunately no one was in it or hurt. The fire department came with cranes and Jaws of Life trying to get him out of the car. We finally tracked down his wife later in the day. Her first question was "I don't have a car. Can I pick up the rental car?" He was driving the rental car which now had the roof

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taken off by the Jaws of Life. She wasn't overly concerned about her husband only how she would get around and the rental car. I had to tell her the Jaws of Life had consumed the rental car. But anyways, that was one story.

John: I remember that day. I was there and the Town did a quick structural review before they could do anything else. Of course the room couldn't be occupied until some fairly major rebuilding. That was a big day for Paradise Valley Police.

John: I recall that you are a lover of peacocks. You and I have had many conversations about peacocks so I thought I would ask you. That's one the "what's it's like to live in Paradise Valley" stories that first hand from you would be good to tell.

Wynn: We bought a house on the interview trip and fell in love with the house right off of San Juan. It was part of a former orange grove and there was a large house there that was sort of a master house. I don't know if you are familiar with it. It's probably 4 or 5 acres. There's a series of about 12 or 15 houses on individual acres that used to be part of a large parcel. The people that lived there were a doctor and his wife. They had peacocks on the property and this big enclosure for peacocks. The never kept the peacocks in the enclosures so after we moved into our house we heard this weird noise. We looked up on the parapet of our house and there were a bunch of peacocks up there. For the first couple days, the kids thought it was really exciting. We thought it was neat to have this animal life and nature. But then after a while, they were depositing in my yard and waking us up so I sought the help of John (Wintersteen). John explained that the ordinances were primarily for issues addressing dogs but there was nothing that talked about peacocks. I forget how we ultimately resolved the issue but I think one of my children with a BB gun helped. At any event it was resolved but it took a while.

John: When you first came to Camelback Inn as Resident Manager, you weren't out in the community like you were as General Manager to start with but what was your impression of the Town?

Wynn: You know it was such a whirlwind when I was here. When I first came to Camelback Inn, we bought in McCormick Ranch. My wife was still living in Dallas. As a Resident Manager, it is really focused on operations so you're day-to-day job is with the troops and in the various departments. You're not involved in what a GM is only involved in. I knew if I ever came back, I would want to live in PV because that is where you want to live. Fortunately it worked out for us very nicely. We had as many "redo's" at my house as I think we did at Camelback thanks to my wife.

John: One of the first things I did when I first came to Paradise Valle, was to have a meeting with all of the General Managers and Loss Prevention Security. I asked whom

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to talk with and I was told John Dawson and Wynn Tyner. If they support something, it's going to happen. It was very clear to me that you were the informal leader in the resort community here. Could you tell us what the resort community management as a whole was like?

Wynn: My primary focus was Camelback but you know we talked, we met, we strategized – everybody had the same mission and vision. As I used to say, you are either making the dust or eating the dust. I would prefer to make the dust. It was one of what are we going to do at Camelback and then beyond that, what can we do as a community of resorts to really showcase and say who we are? There was never anything like what happens in other markets, there was no backstabbing. We worked together really well. We mutually supported each other. We assisted each other on overflows and helped each other if we were under construction. Various properties in the area would help us with our guests and we would in turn reciprocate when they were doing things. It was an excellent working relationship and it seems it's still that way now.

John: Were there any differences because there were three Marriott properties in town while the other hotels were lone properties in terms of their management or their ownership?

Wynn: When I got here, there was Camelback Inn and Mountain Shadows. I think we had a property in Tucson that we managed. That was basically it for the entire state of Arizona. When you stop to think what has happened, I've lost total count, but between Camelback Inn and Mountain Shadows and Desert Ridge, which has been a real success story, Town Place Suites, Fairfield Inn's, Residents Inn's, there's probably 25 or 30 Marriott properties in the greater Phoenix area and then Flagstaff and Tucson and points all over the place. It's amazing what has transpired. I do remember, I think it's a real compliment to Paradise Valley and particularly a compliment to Camelback Inn, Mr. Marriott and the Marriott family always spend his birthday at Camelback Inn – they have never missed a year. He comes with his extended family, which could be 20-25 rooms or more and they just love the resort. They grew up there. His father came here when it was Jack Stewart's in the 40s and brought Bill Jr. and his brother here. So there is this legacy from when Camelback first started with Marriott's as guests. They got to know the Stewart's and the Lincoln's. Ultimately, they had a commitment that if and when they ever sold this individual property, the Marriott's would have the first opportunity to buy it and that's how Marriott ended up buying it.

John: You mentioned that on your very first day as General Manager, the Marriott family came for three months. How did that change the dynamics of the resort to have this be the personal favorite, the destination of choice when they had a huge choice all over the world?

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Wynn: I thought it was a real compliment to the property. It's interesting, having worked at many other properties of Mr. Marriott. He is a fabulous boss and person to work for. He would be on vacation at Camelback Inn, on "vacation", and he would take several days and visit 10-15 Marriott properties. He would get picked up at 6 in the morning and come back around dinnertime – travel the area and meet the associates – go back into housekeeping and back into the kitchens – wherever that might be - that's what he's about. He might show up at a property for a visit to just walk through for a couple of hours, or maybe as he would do in Dallas, maybe spend the night. It's a pretty big deal. You know that he is coming a couple weeks in advance. Everybody is on high alert. When the Marriott's come, you can't gear up just then, you have got to be good all of the time. We really didn't do anything different for them. They came. They were guests and they just loved the place. You would never know what they were doing. It was interesting because they would come in March with their family. They live very close with their family in Washington DC but when they come to Camelback, it's almost like they haven't seen each other for a year although they see each other almost every day in Washington. I would always go down at lunch time, they were all out there eating and I purposely tried to determine where they might be going at night just to make sure that we're prepared in case they showed up with 15 people for dinner. We would have a heads up. I would go down at lunch and go to the end of the table and say, "so does anyone have any plans for the night that I can help you with?" Bill Marriott would look at Donna and say, "Donna, you got anything you want to do?" Donna would say, "I don't know." Then she would say, "John, what do you guys want to do tonight?" It was like this mixing bowl and at the end of it say, "I don't know what we are going to do tonight." I would go down at 5:30 or 6 and there would be 10 Marriott's standing in line for the early bird special - but they are great to work with.

John: It wasn't a high stress time for you and the staff when the Marriott's were in residents?

Wynn: Oh yes – you're there. You know my son was in a military school at the time on the east coast and he would come back for spring break. I hardly ever saw him because I was there 7 days a week or maybe 6 days a week but that's all good. You wanted to be there – it's your busiest time of the year.

Paul: Do you have anything else you would like to say on the record - or that you would like to add that we forgot to ask that you made in your notes?

Wynn: When Camelback first started in the late 30s, early 40s, it was out in the middle of nowhere. There was a dirt road – Lincoln Drive was a dirt road. There were stables on the property. They had 10 horses and cowboys and ranch hands so people could check in and go down to the stables and pick up a horse from Camelback Inn and ride

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out to the desert. There was nothing at all between Camelback Inn and the Camelback Mountain. We have pictures of the Inn. A lot of Hollywood Starlets sought it out. There are pictures that are framed up there with Dwight Eisenhower, Arthur Godfrey, Hop-a-Long Cassidy and Jimmy Stewart. In those days, the guests would come because it was a destination. Unlike today where they come out for a meeting, back then Camelback was just a destination resort. Now people come in for a long weekend or an overnight. Then, people would come for weeks and weeks, in some cases families would come for the entire season and put their children in the Judson School. Then the staff was hired typically from Europe, the waiters and waitresses. There was staff housing on the property that people lived. When it first opened, the single rooms were \$10 to \$16, which included meals and entertainment. The double rooms were \$18 to \$25, which included your meals and entertainment. When I say entertainment, it was self-contained - everything happened on the property because there was nothing around it except if you wanted to ride a horse. There was entertainment all the time by the hotel – shows and presentations. I have pictures of Jimmy Stewart doing the limbo in the lobby surrounded by all the other guests. It was a self-contained property.

Paul: How many rooms were there back then?

Wynn: When they first opened, there were 77 rooms.

Paul: Was it a year round property?

Wynn – No they closed in the summer. I don't remember the year, it was prior to when I got there but they opened year round which was extraordinary, risky but they sort of championed that and obviously everybody does that now.

Paul: What year did they get air conditioning?

Wynn: I don't know. I would assume that it would have happened before the Marriott's bought it. It has it's own chapel that the Stewart's built that is still there.

John: Is there is a single message that you would like people to remember for you and your 20 years

Wynn: Registered guests could come to the Camelback Inn and have lunch for \$1 and dinner was the outrageous price of \$1.50 and those were good meals. Everything was made on the property. Even when I got here, we had our own butchers on the property. We had this massive pastry shop for all of our breads and pastries. It was very special.

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Paul: I heard that when they did the redo for the gold room or the main area for dining that they realized that there was no foundation and it drove the cost up significantly more.

Wynn: A lot of the main building is made out of adobe and when the property was constructed back in the mid 30s, they actually made the adobe on sight. The lobby is still made out of adobe.

John: I wanted to give you the opportunity to summarize and say if there is one thing out of this interview that you would really like people to remember you, about the Camelback Inn and what would it be?

Wynn: It certainly wouldn't be about me because we had a saying that we were all in the same boat at Camelback; everybody's war was the same size. Even though it was /is a great resort, we always used to, in my travels, people would say "you work at Camelback Inn!" Our staff was almost conditioned to say to senior management we are just humble people living in the desert. We didn't get caught up in what or who we were. It's a fabulous property that spans the space of time. There are very few properties in America that have that history that are still successful. There are the Greenbriers and the Broadmoor's, properties like that but they are very few. I think Camelback has maintained its heritage; it's traditions, its roots. To me, it's if someone is coming to Arizona and wants true Arizona American Indian history experience, you go to Camelback Inn because it still has that sense and feel. It's been modernized to address the needs of the changing customer profiles and meeting planners. There are very few places you can go in the state that immediately you know you are in Arizona. A lot of places you go to, you could be anywhere. Camelback could not be anywhere. The only place it could be is in Arizona and more importantly Paradise Valley

Paul: Thank you for your time.