

Michael Leven

Former Chairman and CEO
The Georgia Aquarium

Michael Leven is the former Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Aquarium. A major player in the hospitality industry, Michael has helmed seven companies in addition to the aquarium, including Americana Hotels & Realty, U.S. Franchise Systems, Las Vegas Sands LLC and Las Vegas Sands Corp., Holiday Inn Worldwide, and Days Inn of America.

He is also the founder of U.S. Franchise Systems, which managed all franchise rights for Microtel and Hawthorne Suites from 1995 until 2008, when Wyndham Worldwide purchased U.S. Franchise Systems. Michael also founded The Asian American Hotel Owners Association. With more than 19,000 members, AAHOA is the nation's largest association of hotel owners.

Michael has been involved closely with Kennesaw State University for many years. He became the largest single donor in the University's history when he endowed and named the Michael A. Leven School of Management, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality at the Michael J. Coles College of Business. In addition, AAHOA has established an endowed scholarship partially in his name. The Michael Leven and Lee Dushoff AAHOA Scholarship for Compassionate Leadership supports Kennesaw State students in the hospitality management program.

Since retiring from the aquarium in 2019, Michael has continued his philanthropy through co-founding the Jewish Future pledge dedicated to supporting Jewish causes. He also recently wrote the book *Can't Do It Yourself: How Commitment to Others Leads to Personal Prosperity*.

Michael earned his undergraduate degree from Tufts University and his graduate degree from Boston University. He has been married for 60 years to his wife Andrea. They have three sons and seven grandchildren.