

BEYOND THE BORDERS FIND THE LIMELIGHT IN KETCHUM, IDAHO

texas

meet + events

MEETINGSMAGS.COM // SUMMER 2020

Rocking THE MIC

3 TEXAN EMCEES
DISCUSS THEIR CRAFT



MEET IN THE
PANHANDLE

Destination: Amarillo {16}

Summer 2020

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Multifaceted emcee TiWanna "TK" Kenney says she loves connecting with audiences. **Photo by Romina Olson**

PHOTO: BEAU BUMPAS

MIC DROP



THREE TEXAN MASTERS OF CEREMONIES TAKE CENTER STAGE.

By Teresa Kenney

Great lighting is key. Smart décor is a must. But the mood of any gala, auction or awards ceremony lies largely on the shoulders of its master of ceremonies. Who you choose to represent your cause or organization on stage can be the difference between an event that is “ho-hum” or “electrifying.”

Texas Meetings + Events reached out to three of Texas’s favorite emcees. They shared with us how they got where they are—and what they’re doing now—along with some sage advice.

STEVE KEMBLE

Event planner and emcee Steve Kemble, known as "America's Sassiest Lifestyle Guru," was recently profiled in The New York Times and has been named one of the top 10 event planners in the world by Departures magazine. He has thrown bashes for the likes of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, the Dallas Cowboys and Oprah Winfrey, and has made a number of TV appearances on shows ranging from "Extreme Makeover: Wedding Edition" to CBS's "The Early Show."

Kemble's first job out of college was with the event staff for U.S. Congressman Jim Collins. After Collins failed to unseat U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, Kemble joined the Dallas Chamber of Commerce public relations department and later served on the Statue of Liberty Restoration campaign under Lee Iacocca.

At only 26 years of age, Kemble founded his event-planning company, Steve Kemble Event Design. His work has been showcased in publications such as Real Simple Weddings, and, as a celebrity party planner, his tips and advice have been featured in magazines such as US Weekly, People, and Every Day with Rachel Ray. He also founded the Dallas chapter of International Live Events Association and served as the president of the Dallas chapter of Meeting Professionals International (MPI). He has garnered more than 25 industry awards, including MPI Planner of the Year. He has been inducted into the event industry hall of fame and is the youngest recipient of the Special Event GALA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Tell me a little bit about what you do for a living.

Over the past decade, I've expanded my brand to include TV, radio and emceeing, appearing on "Good Morning America," "The Today Show," "E's Oscar's Red Carpet," and NBC's "Globes' Red Carpet," among others.

I'm also active in the National Association of Catering and Events and served on its national board of directors. I was a founding member of the SEARCH Foundation and went on to serve as the chairman of the organization.

What was your first emcee job?

Back in 2008, I was the event planner for a major corporate event, and the emcee for the evening had a flight cancellation due to weather and could not make the event. My client turned to me and said, "I think you would be great! Would you fill in?" I said, "100%!" And with that, I found my love for emceeing events!

What do you like about emceeing?

It is both exhilarating and exciting! I truly believe it is the role of the emcee to send the audience positive and energetic vibes, which will contribute to them having a memorable evening, and in many cases resulting in the organization raising much-needed funds!

What was your most memorable emcee event?

I was the emcee for the Vine & Dine Dinner and Auction to benefit Ability Connection, a nonprofit dedicated to enriching the lives of children and adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. While on the stage during the live auction portion of the evening, a gentleman raised his hand and asked if I would be willing to auction off the jacket I was wearing on stage. (In the emcee world, I am very much known for my wardrobe. I will usually dress in the theme of the event and change four or five times during the course of the evening.) I responded, "Sure I will. Can we start the bidding at \$2,000?" He said, "Yes!" A bidding war ensued, and the jacket I was wearing that evening sold for \$6,500, with all the money going to the charity. That felt so good!

Do you have any tips for event planners looking to hire an emcee?

Make time for a conference call or face-to-face meeting to allow us to get to know each other better and provide information that helps me be as prepared as possible:

- » Date of event
- » Time of event
- » Type of event (fundraising, awards gala, celebratory, etc.)
- » Location of event (venue, city, state, country)
- » Demographics of the audience
- » Run of show
- » Script (even if it's only a draft)
- » Other speakers or notable guests
- » Any "Nos" to avoid (politics, humor, etc.)
- » Other entertainment