

The Hotel Ezra Cornell

Showcasing Hospitality Education Through Student Leadership

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Cornell Hotel School Annual Industry Conference Features Leaders in Innovation and Sustainability

*Leland Pillsbury, Chairman and CEO of Thayer Lodging Group, to deliver
keynote address at 82nd Annual Hotel Ezra Cornell, April 12-15*

Ithaca, N.Y., February 19, 2007 – Why should hospitality leaders embrace uncertainty, disruption, and risk when the world (and perhaps a boss or two) prizes confidence, calmness, and security? Does innovation *really* pay? And does sustainability?

These questions and many more will be answered at Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC), April 12-15, 2007. The theme of this year's conference is rather fitting for an 82-year-old organization: "Sustainability Through Innovation." When the student leaders of HEC chose the theme, they aimed to answer the question, "What must innovative hospitality organizations do in order to survive and to thrive?" The theme includes, but is certainly not limited to, environmentalism.

In order to fully address the theme of "Sustainability Through Innovation," the HEC 82 program includes a keynote speech delivered by **Leland Pillsbury '69**, Chairman and CEO of Thayer Lodging Group, and a panel titled "Sustaining the Environment," which features six sustainability thought leaders: **Mark Milstein**, Director of the Center for



Sustainable Global Enterprise at the Johnson School of Management at Cornell University; **Stefan Muhle**, General Manager of Orchard Garden; **Ted Ning**, Executive Director of the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) Conference; **Jim Root**, Chairman of ISPA (International Spa Association); **Sandra Taylor**, Senior Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility of Starbucks Coffee; and **Mark Wuttke**, Principal of Wuttke Group.

Leland Pillsbury '69, Chairman and CEO of Thayer Lodging Group, will deliver this year's keynote address on Friday, April 13th at 8:45 AM. Mr. Pillsbury will draw on his vast experiences as a business leader and entrepreneur to describe the relationship between HEC 82's theme of "Sustainability Through Innovation" and his own concept of "Entrepreneurship as a State of Mind."

No one is better equipped than Mr. Pillsbury to talk about entrepreneurship and innovation. Thayer Lodging Group manages more than \$2 billion in hotel assets from many different brands. Before launching his own company, Mr. Pillsbury was Marriott's youngest Executive Vice President and Corporate Officer, leading Marriott into a number of new business ventures, including the time-sharing business, the Fairfield Inn economy segment, and the Residence Inn extended stay segment.

In addition to Thayer Lodging Group, Mr. Pillsbury has founded several other companies. TIG Global specializes in internet marketing, enabling client hotels to keep direct control of their customers' data. EMC Venues arranges corporate meetings and events at hotels, conference centers, and resorts. Thayer's newest venture is a web-



based central reservations platform for China's domestic hotel industry, being created in conjunction with Jin Jiang Corporation of Shanghai, China's largest hotel company.

A faithful alumnus, Mr. Pillsbury is a long-time supporter of the Cornell Hotel School. Most recently, Mr. Pillsbury and his wife, Mary, donated \$15 million, the largest single gift ever made to the School and one of the largest ever in hospitality education. The gift will be used to support the Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship, providing students with the skills and ability to think like entrepreneurs.

In announcing the \$15 million gift, Mr. Pillsbury stated, "Entrepreneurship and innovation have been crucial to the evolution of the hospitality industry and will continue to be so." Hotel Ezra Cornell agrees.

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