

Laurie B. Burns

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Board Member | Division President | C-Suite Executive | Strategy | P&L | Real Estate

Laurie Burns has led the growth and transformation of restaurant and hospitality businesses throughout her career. Laurie's experience spans a wide range of brands through multiple business cycles, all growth stages, and acquisitions and divestitures, providing a broad perspective and significant expertise in optimizing growth and performance in multi-unit operating companies.



Laurie currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Service Properties Trust (Nasdaq: SVC), a real estate investment trust, or REIT, with more than \$12 billion invested in two asset categories: hotels and service-focused retail net lease properties. She chairs the Compensation Committee and serves on the Audit Committee. Additionally, she is a Board Advisor to Salon Lofts (a portfolio company of Audax Private Equity) which is the leading salon suite rental concept with thousands of Loft Owners in 245+ units. Committed to the highest standards of boardroom excellence, Laurie is a National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) Certified Director.

In 2016 Laurie founded LBB Growth Partners, a real estate advisory firm which collaborates with restaurant and hospitality businesses to maximize their growth potential. Throughout her career Laurie has developed over 600 restaurants and 27 limited-service hotels.

Laurie spent 17 years in C-Suite and senior executive positions with Darden Restaurants (160,000 team members, 1,800 full-service restaurants, \$8 billion in annual sales). As Chief Development Officer reporting to the CEO, Laurie optimized real estate value through the separation of a portion of the real estate assets by completing the spin-off of 424 properties into a separate, publicly traded REIT (Four Corners Property Trust, NYSE: FCPT), and selling 64 properties individually as sale leasebacks, enabling Darden to retire ~\$1Bn in debt. Leading development for Darden's specialty brands, she drove total sales growth of 58% and 25% in successive years. Laurie served as President of Darden's Bahama Breeze Island Grille business unit for ten years where she led the turnaround and return to growth and success for the brand. As Darden's most senior gay leader, she also co-led the formation of the Pride Alliance (LGBTQ+ employee resource group) and served as its Executive Advisor.

Prior to Darden Laurie held real estate development positions of increasing responsibility in the hospitality industry, including Regional VP of Development at Homestead Village (rapidly growing extended-stay hotel company), Director of Real Estate for Apple South (then the largest Applebee's franchisee), and various development positions, including Director of Real Estate for the Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada during eight years at Taco Bell (then a subsidiary of PepsiCo).

Laurie served in various board leadership roles for the Women's Foodservice Forum (WFF, an 8,000-member restaurant industry not-for-profit organization) for eight years. During her tenure as Board Chair, she successfully guided the organization through a leadership transition following the unexpected death of the President & CEO.

Laurie is also actively involved in her local community. She currently serves on the City of Orlando Historic Preservation Board and is Past Chair of the Board of The First Tee of Central Florida, a youth development organization which teaches life lessons and leadership skills through the game of golf.

Laurie received a B.S. in Business Administration and an MBA from the University of Florida. The University's Warrington College of Business recognized Laurie as a Distinguished Alumna and she currently serves on the College's Advisory Council.