



DEBRA SMITHART-OGLESBY

Lead Independent Director

Debra Smithart-Oglesby was elected to Cedar Fair's board of directors in 2012. She currently serves as the lead independent director and is a member of both the Audit and Compensation Committees. Debra, a former CPA with more than 35 years of financial and corporate leadership experience, is a seasoned veteran in the food service and retail industries. She has a successful track record in managing corporate transitions, is valued for her ability to navigate complex issues in a prudent manner and has an uncanny knack for bringing order to business chaos.

Since 2000, Debra has served as president of O&S Partners, an investment capital and consulting services firm that invests in and provides consulting services to early stage and transition hospitality and retail companies. Prior to O&S, she helped launch Dekor, Inc., a startup company in the home improvement and decorating retail segment, serving as its chief financial officer. From 1997 to 1999, Debra was president, corporate services and CFO of First America Automotive, Inc., a new and used auto retailer sold to Sonic Automotive.

From 1985 to 1997, Debra was executive vice president and CFO of Brinker International (NASDAQ: EAT), one of the world's leading casual dining restaurant companies and owner of the Chili's franchise. Over Debra's tenure at Brinker, Chili's expanded from the originally acquired 22 restaurants to a portfolio of restaurant concepts including: On The Border, Macaroni Grill, Maggiano's Little Italy, and Corner Bakery, totaling more than 1,100 store locations worldwide. During that time, Debra shattered several glass ceilings as a woman at Brinker, an organization with a history of all-male leadership. She was Brinker's first female CFO and first female to occupy a board seat, a position she held from 1991 to 1997.

From 2006 through 2017, Debra served as board chair of Denny's Corporation (NASDAQ:DENN), a full service, family-style restaurant chain with approximately 1,700 eateries throughout the United States and nine countries. She joined the Denny's board in 2003 and after a contested proxy contest became the company's interim CEO from 2010 through 2011.

Debra has a B.S. in Accounting from the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) and an MBA from Southern Methodist University (SMU). With her nearly countless business successes, Debra is a cancer survivor, representing her life's most significant success story.



On her own since age 14 and working at Taco Bell to get by, Debra acquired her grit and determination at a very young age. A few years later, as a single mom, she continued working entry level jobs while she completed high school, then went on to earn an accounting degree by attending night classes. Years later, as an accomplished corporate executive and board director, Debra has openly shared her gutsy personal story at commencement addresses and with other large groups, highlighting as "case-in-point number one" that there is nothing in life too difficult to tackle – whether proxy contests, or battling cancer.