



DICK J. BATCHELOR  
MICHAEL J. MURPHY  
DUSTIN A. WATKINS

## ARDA

*Dick was very instrumental in my early days as the Chairman of ARDA Florida in guiding us as we successfully presented and passed a comprehensive regulatory solution which later became a model for the country. His work for the vacation ownership industry was critical to our success in Florida. Dick is a very experienced and highly regarded professional by all that know him.*

- Rip Gellein, Chairman, ARDA

The American Resort and Development Association is a consortium of vacation ownership developers, including Disney Vacation Ownership, Marriott Vacation Ownership, Hilton Grand Vacations, Resorts Condominiums International, Interval International, Starwood, Wyndham, and others. I represented them for almost 20 years as a public relations and governmental affairs consultant, helping the industry identify legislation that was good for their customers and for them. In this capacity, I gave ongoing direction to the lobbying team in Tallahassee and helped secure favorable language in a major federal tax bill for the vacation ownership industry in Washington.

With the Association's planning group, I also advised on strategic legislative matters and helped focus public relations and all outreach to alliance groups necessary to the ARDA's agenda.

More importantly, however, I consulted with them on the public relations aspect, helping them to communicate the industry's incredible story of transformation to the general public. My job was to communicate to elected officials and the public that timeshares had substantially changed – from what was then the less-than-respected timeshare industry to what had become a very well recognized, formidable, and successful vacation ownership industry. That was quite a daunting challenge.

One of the things I suggested was that we hire an economist to do reports on the fiscal and economic impact of the industry in Florida, demonstrating the amount of taxes being paid by the industry, the number of employees, and the customers' level of satisfaction with the product. Working with the media, we then took these reports and scheduled a press conference with the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, accentuating how far the industry had come from its not-very-well-respected roots to what had in fact become very different, a respectable and vital component of the economy with very major and reputable companies involved.

Through these reports, we also found out that the vacation ownership industry, as a whole, pays more in taxes than it takes out.

With these fiscal impact studies demonstrating the importance of the industry, we were then able to

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say to policymakers, “If you’re going to pass legislation, let’s make sure that it’s not inadvertently counterproductive...because you really have a new, growing, substantial interest that employs a lot of people, has a lot of satisfied customers, and pays a tremendous amount of taxes.”

This strategy was very successful in helping my client for many, many years.

– **Dick Batchelor**

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