



IAAS Walks of Life 2010

Dennis Roche

After Dennis Roche became president of Positively Cleveland in 2003, he played a major role in implementing significant changes at Cleveland's destination marketing organization.

First, after much research, the bureau, along with TeamNEO and Greater Cleveland Partnership, launched a new regional brand—Cleveland Plus. Then the organization moved to new offices in the historic Higbee building on Cleveland's Public Square, providing an opportunity to open a Visitors Center in a highly visible location.

Next, following an industry trend, the Greater Cleveland Convention and Visitors Bureau adopted the Positively Cleveland name, a shorter, more memorable moniker that complemented the Cleveland Plus initiative.

Under Roche's leadership, Positively Cleveland was among the first destination marketing organizations accredited by Destination Marketing Association International. The organization now has 35 employees and operates on an annual budget of \$8 million. In 2009, *Tradeshow Week* named Roche one of the country's top convention and visitors bureau leaders.

Prior to joining the group, Roche was chief operating officer for the Greater Cleveland Growth Association. He also served as assistant general manager for finance and administration at the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, and as director of the Cuyahoga County Office of Budget and Management. He designed and implemented Cuyahoga County's current budget process, which has won three national awards for excellence.

Roche, one of six children, grew up in St. Vincent de Paul Parish on Cleveland's West Side. His mother's mother came to America from Tipperary as a teenager and held a ticket for a return trip on the Titanic. One family relative is Sean Numan, the first ambassador to the U.S. from the Irish Republic.

After graduating from St. Edward High School in 1965, Roche attended Cleveland State University where he earned a bachelor's degree in English and master's degrees in accounting and urban studies.

Roche's community service includes serving on the boards of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, the Cleveland National Air Show, the Greater Cleveland Film Commission, the Greater Cleveland Sports Commission, Medical Mutual of Ohio, and the Cleveland Clinic Western Region Community Hospitals.

Roche and his wife, Kathryn, have three children: Kate, Brian and Megan. The couple lives in Lakewood.

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