

Marcheta Sparrow

Marcheta Sparrow comes to the post of Kentucky Commerce Secretary with more than 30 years of tourism industry experience in both the public and private sector. Before her appointment as cabinet secretary, she served for nine years as President and CEO of the Kentucky Tourism Council where she managed a 575-member statewide association representing all sectors of Kentucky's travel industry.

"As an industry advocate, Marcheta has a sound understanding of Kentucky's diverse tourism product," said Governor Steve Beshear. "She also has an understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by every region from our smallest rural communities to the largest cities."

Before her work with the Kentucky Tourism Council, Sparrow served as Marketing and Public Relations Director at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill for nearly nine years. There she developed and implemented communications and marketing programs for a National Historic Landmark with a 14-building living history museum, 80 overnight guest rooms, 125-seat restaurant, two craft stores, various meeting facilities and a riverboat operation.

Sparrow also worked as Director of Tourism for the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau from 1984-1989 and Executive Director of the Frankfort Tourism Commission from 1983-1984. Prior to that, she served as Communications Director for the Kentucky Derby Festival, one of North America's largest civic celebrations. She also worked as matching funds administrator for the Kentucky Department of Tourism and began her career in tourism as a tour guide at the Kentucky State Capitol.

In addition to serving on Governor's Tourism Advisory Boards for both the Collins and Wilkinson administrations, Sparrow chaired the Harrodsburg-Mercer County Tourist Commission for five years. In 1996, she received the tourism industry's highest honor -- the Kentucky Tourism Council Distinguished Service Award.

She is married to journalist Herb Sparrow. They have three children and three grandchildren.