

OPENING THE DOOR TO POSSIBILITIES

Get to know the people behind the purpose

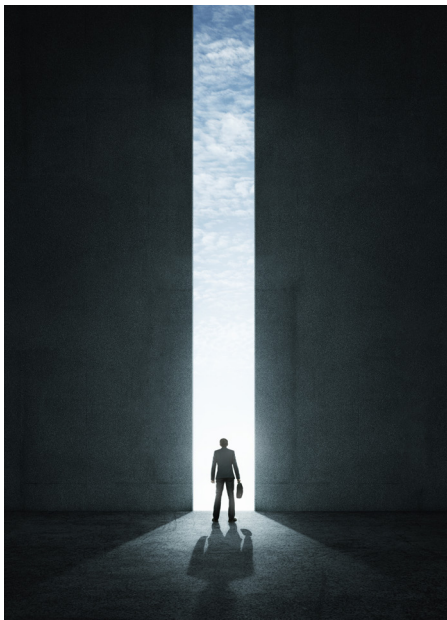


BY JEFFREY JONES, SR/WA

Four years ago, at IRWA's Annual International Education Conference in Hartford, Connecticut, a door opened for me that has led me on a journey I never expected. Since then, I have taken part in the growing of our Association through our purpose and our education. I have felt what a great honor it is to serve our members through the International Executive Committee and now, I have the privilege of serving you as your International President.

If All Begins with Education

My passion for IRWA education started early in my career. After spending 17 years in road design with the Road Commission for Oakland County, the position of Right of Way Supervisor became available and that meant a possibility for change and a



promotion. I was chosen for the position and went to work for Jim Fanzini, P.E., J.D., who showed me that this wasn't just a promotion—it was an opportunity to make a difference. Jim was not only a licensed professional engineer and attorney, he was also an educator to me as he passed on his vast knowledge of the right of way field. A short time later, I was enrolled in my first IRWA course and looking forward to IRWA credentialing.

In the same way that my right of way education has grown and evolved, so too has the IRWA education program. Three years ago, there was a change in the IRWA Professional Development area, which led to the creation of the Credentialing Committee and the Partnership for Infrastructure Professional Education (PIPE). The Credentialing Committee has made it much easier for our Regions, Chapters and members to report continuing education programs. And the PIPE continues to come up with some wonderfully improved courses that center on the student. I was amazed after attending and participating in Course 102: Elevating Your Ethical Awareness. The interactive components of the class made for a truly enjoyable experience. I would also like to call attention to our new two-day Course 100: Principles of Land Acquisition, as well as Course 218: ROW Acquisition for Electrical Transmission Projects. These are just a few of the great courses to take advantage of.

Purpose Drives Our Association

I have personally witnessed how this Association improves the quality of

people's lives through infrastructure development. I have enjoyed visiting our Chapters and Regions and watching as Presidents and Chairs instill that purpose. Along the way, I have heard so many of the empowering stories that our members have to share. Our members throughout the world bring the higher purpose to life with water, roads, power and communication.

For the past year and a half, we have taken a good look at the IRWA overall. We have had meetings which included the insight of members, committees, Chapter Presidents, Region Officers, the Advisory Council and IEC members to come up with models for the IRWA. I ask that all of us—members from all Chapters and all levels of the Association—open our minds and start to think about tomorrow for the IRWA. We have had a nice 84-year run, but that was yesterday. We need to position ourselves for the future. Just like that door that opened for me four years ago in Hartford, we can open a door for the IRWA to take us great places as we journey into our 100-year anniversary.

As Past President Mary Anne Marr, SR/WA, once said, "This coming year is just a small part of something much bigger...our future." Those words have great meaning as we move through the 2018-2019 year. I am committed to serve the IRWA, our members and the growth of the Association. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as International President. I look forward to working with you all to build a better world together. 🌟