

# A GROWING FAMILY

The benefits of reaching out to others

BY JEFFREY JONES, SR/WA

I was working on my column for this edition of *Right of Way Magazine* when I received news of the passing of William (Bill) Reid, SR/WA, who served as International President in 1976-1977. This news brought on reflection and I found myself deleting everything I had already written to start over.

Bill was a long-time member of Michigan Chapter 7, Region 5. Although we developed IRWA's unified higher purpose to improve people's quality of life through infrastructure development, everyone has their own way to relate to and interpret it. I believe Bill carried out this purpose by focusing on providing IRWA members with a quality membership experience. Bill was a great leader, IRWA Instructor and mentor. For me, I will always remember Bill as a patriarch of the Michigan Chapter 7 family. I have many great memories with Bill—from my very first installation as a Chapter treasurer to my memory of Bill as the installing officer when I became President of Chapter 7. Needless to say, he will be missed by our IRWA family.

## Through Thick and Thin

I have often heard our members referring to our Association as “our IRWA family,” and this description is so true. We may only get together

a few times a year and we may even be dysfunctional at times, but in the end, we still come together to be a family. We go about our work lives through the year and when something comes up and we need help, we often turn to our IRWA team members for guidance. This all starts in the Chapter level.

When I was a new member, I was lucky enough to have a boss that insisted on and funded attendance for Chapter events. As IRWA members, we all need to be mentors. We need to reach out and encourage attendance at Chapter events and also encourage participation in the Chapter Committees. Being part of a Committee or Community of Practice will broaden your awareness of the IRWA and provide insight into the Association. The Leadership page of this magazine will give you a list of International Committees and Communities of Practice. Also, check your Chapter newsletter or website for Chapter Committee opportunities.

## Get Involved

The next step to growing in the IRWA family would be to get involved in the Chapter executive offices. Step up and become a leader in your Chapter. It is quite rewarding to go through the Chapter offices and learn the ins and outs



of the IRWA. As Chapter President and International Director, you are the voice of your Chapter at the Region and International level of the Association. You become an important part of the Association and a voting member of the International Board of Directors. Most importantly, you help in providing direction for the IRWA.

Most of us were not born into the right of way profession, but we all adopted the profession and the IRWA. I encourage those of you reading this to participate in your local Chapter meetings, education programs and classes, as well as social events. Through our networking, we develop many professional contacts that we can reach out to for guidance and advice. This is our IRWA family. And if I wasn't already convinced of this, as I was scrolling through social media in the midst of writing this article, I came across a post with the line: “Thanks to my IRWA fam.” Take a chance, spend some time at your Chapter's events and become a part of our family. 🌟