

Looking Forward



ABOUT THE SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Melissa M. Lutz, FSMPS, CPSM, is a principal at Champlin Architecture. As the head of all marketing and communications, Melissa is responsible for the firm's brand and image. Additionally, she manages and develops targeted business development and marketing strategies, and serves on the firm's board of directors.

A member of SMPS since 1992, Melissa was named a Fellow in 2010. She has held many leadership positions within the organization at the chapter, regional, and Society levels, including past president of SMPS Greater Cincinnati and the SMPS Foundation. A prolific writer and presenter, Melissa was one of the researchers and authors for the foundation's book, *A/E/C Business Development: The Decade Ahead*.

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"Look forward, not behind. Your best days are still out in front of you. Be focused and keep your dreams alive." —Adedayo Olabamiji

Last August, when I accepted the gavel from SMPS Past President Chris Rickman during Build Business, I could never have predicted what was to come during the year of my presidency. I started my term with a message of "own it" that I hoped would guide our members and friends in their professional and personal lives.

Just six months later, our world was hit by a pandemic caused by an unknown virus. None of us could have imagined something like this happening when the economy was booming, businesses were thriving, and kids were in schools and colleges. My family was planning which NCAA tournament games to attend, and we had just bought tickets for the Cincinnati Reds Opening Day game and to see our favorite bands at concerts and summer festivals.

And then, within a week's time, everything came to a halt. Construction sites shut down, schools closed, businesses allowed only essential personnel, and all sporting and live music events were postponed well into the future.

We then had to shift everything, reinvent our lives, and move forward. SMPS created new content and tools to help members to "Pivot & Focus" toward a new way of doing our jobs. I can't thank the headquarters staff and Society board of directors enough for being amazing leaders, coaches, and collaborators during this time. Together, we've been able to not only accept change, but also to embrace it.

While I wish we could gather in person at Build Business this year for the annual membership meeting, I invite you to join me for our first-ever virtual meeting and gavel pass on August 31. I'm thrilled to present next year's president, J. Douglas Parker, FSMPS, CPSM; President-Elect, Bernice Bako,

FSMPS, CPSM; Secretary-Treasurer, Barbi Stiles, FSMPS, CPSM; At-Large Directors Dana Galvin Lancour, FSMPS, CPSM, Mike Wagner, CPSM, and Kim Thompkins, FSMPS, CPSM; and SMPS Foundation President, Donna J. Corlew, FSMPS, CPSM. The Society and our members are in good hands. We're looking ahead to serving you in 2020–21 and helping to make our vision of Business Transformed Through Marketing Leadership a reality for all of our SMPS family.

I also want to personally thank our outgoing board members and friends, Past President, Chris Rickman, FSMPS, CPSM; At-Large Directors Beth Harris, FSMPS, CPSM, and Catherine McCullough, CPSM; and SMPS Foundation President Brad Thurman, P.E., FSMPS, CPSM.

I'm forever grateful to all of my SMPS friends, chapter presidents (shout out to Vision 2020 class members) and other chapter leaders, the SMPS Foundation Board of Trustees and all of our donors, SMPS committees and task forces, and all of our members and sponsors. You've made my journey as president both exciting and fulfilling.

And finally, to my wonderful family, as well as the leaders and internal team at Champlin Architecture, I couldn't have done this without all of your support.

It's been a wild ride, but we're all going to be better for going through this. Remember how change used to be so difficult? Well, it doesn't seem so scary anymore. You've done it—you've officially flipped the script, shifted, and owned it along the way. If there's anything I can do for you, please reach out, any time. I am so happy to call you my SMPS family, and I can't wait to see what all of us do next!

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