

## EDITORIAL

Mary Fran Ernst,<sup>1</sup> B.L.S.

### President's Message

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As the Academy begins its 54th year, I wish to thank the membership for the opportunity to serve you as President. I look forward to working with each of you and our dedicated staff to make the Academy the finest organization representing the forensic sciences.

In the past two membership surveys, you have indicated that the Academy should improve its leadership role in advancing, promoting and representing the forensic sciences. The Long Term Planning Committee has spent a great deal of time and effort over the years, developing a plan to accomplish those goals. We have formed coalitions with other prestigious scientific organizations such as the AAAS and the Council of Scientific Society Presidents to strengthen our alliances within scientific community circles. The Board of Directors approved the Academy's membership in the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations which provides to the federal government a unified voice devoted to the advancement of the practice of forensic sciences.

Our *Journal of Forensic Sciences* continues to be the world's premier forensic science journal. The Accreditation and Certification Task Force is now finalizing its efforts to establish the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB), an umbrella organization to accredit qualified forensic specialty certification boards. The FSAB will play a critical role in ensuring the public and judiciary that forensic board certification truly demonstrates proven professional competency and adherence to the highest standards of ethical conduct. A key initiative for this year is for each of us to do our part to promote quality forensic science practice by exhibiting personal professional integrity.

In the past, the AAFS assumed that our membership's proven professional competence and scrupulous standards were recognized and appreciated. Recent experience has illustrated that our



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lack of a formal public relations program has resulted in a deficient national leadership presence. Only with a consistent, continuous and loud voice from each of us can our message of quality forensic science practice be heard and heeded. As Mary Kay Ash said, "If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right."

The Board of Directors is currently focusing on identifying, discussing, and developing strategies for present and future AAFS challenges to fully achieve our goals and continue pointing the Academy in a proactive direction. As we begin another year, I promise to continue to build on our strong foundation of fine annual meeting educational programs and to explore new ways to expand continuing education programs and training opportunities. I will endeavor to enhance member services and benefits and will strive to recruit the finest and most competent forensic scientists eligible for AAFS membership.

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