

### “To Foster, Carry On, and Advance...”

John L. Mason

It's an honor and privilege to have been elected as the 42nd SMPTE President. It is also very gratifying to become the 9th executive from the Eastman Kodak Company to serve in this high office. One of these individuals was Kenneth Mason, who served with distinction as President from 1975-1976. This will be the first time in SMPTE history for a father-son term in office as President. This historical footnote adds to the distinction of the honor for me.

As we enter our 85th year and the new millennium, we have much to be grateful for as a Society. We have a proud history, a rich legacy of service, a unique place the world of media technology and engineering, and a future bright with challenge and opportunity. One only has to look at the membership rolls, at the Fellows and Life Fellows, at the Honorary members and those who have received the Society's medals and honors over the years, to become both awed and inspired by those who have served and who are now serving the Society. This would also be true of the sustaining and affiliate members whose ranks represent world-class companies in the fields of film, television, and related media arts and sciences.

Where will we be going in the next two years? For much of the last year and a half, the Executive Committee, Board of Governors, and Headquarters Staff have been engaged in a far-reaching Strategic Planning exercise as part of Long-Range Planning. This effort has constituted a significant amount of time and energy at the Executive level, and is of critical importance to the future of the Society. It is also significant because it has involved input from the Board of Governors to an unprecedented degree.

Many of the Officers have commented about this work in the “Messages From...” section in the *Journal* over the past several months. Six working groups were identified: Technical Orientation, Global Strategy, Core Growth and Development, Internal Communications, Marketing and Advertising, and Systems and Processes. Now that much of the basic assessment work has been completed, it would be my expectation that the standing committees in these areas will continue their work and move on to planning and implementation of action items in specific ways. For example:

For a variety of reasons including globalization, new technology, and deregulation, we know that media production is expanding worldwide. We would expect our member-

ship to grow correspondingly so we will focus on membership growth as one of our key initiatives in the coming months. We think a target of a 5% increase in new members in the next year is not unreasonable, and this includes growth in sustaining membership as well. We need to provide better service and value to our core film and television constituencies as we reach out to practitioners in allied media fields.

Also, our By-Laws and Constitution mandate educational outreach and communication throughout our industry. Given my own background in education and my current work with Kodak, I expect to see renewed initiatives to provide educational outreach to professionals and especially to students. We must increase Student Section representation. We know that both internal and external communications about Society activity—including *Journal* content and delivery—need attention. For instance, look for the Society to start using the power of the Internet and our web site in these areas to improve communications, with possible *Journal* content on the web coming soon. Also as a first, we should start pilot publication of selected *Journal* articles in off-shore publications and in native languages within the year.



These are only a few of the things that we are working on and planning for the future. As Bette Davis put it so well, “Hang on to your seats, boys. It's going to be a bumpy ride,” or something close to that. Nothing of any magnitude or consequence will happen without the continued selfless contributions of the many volunteers throughout the world, Officers and Governors, and Headquarters Staff.

I'd like to thank immediate Past-President Charlie Jablonski for his leadership and friendship these last two years. I'd also like to salute Former President David George for his civility and for the fine example he has set. Thanks, too, to Stan Baron for making me feel welcome when I first joined the Executive Committee. For on-going support and encouragement, thanks to Irwin Young and Richard Smith of DuArt. To Joerg Agin, President of Kodak's Entertainment Imaging Division, thank you for setting me on this journey and for marshaling company support. Lastly and most importantly, of course, I'd like to thank my Dad, for setting the standards, for his uncompromising integrity, consummate professionalism, unflinching optimism, and unabashed love of the business. For showing me the way...