

Leading from the Forefront:

Strengthening and Uniting SMPTE for the Future

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Sitting at my laptop to write this message feels incredibly surreal. Many aspects of my evolving role at SMPTE have been just as unexpected—like last year’s Awards Gala, where you might have seen me moving a camera riser while wearing an evening gown! Transitioning from “SMPTE Sally,” working behind the scenes, to Executive Director, leading from the forefront, is a delicate balancing act.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Board for entrusting me with this role and to all of you for your kind words of support and encouragement. Hearing from members who served on the Board 15 years ago, as well as from student members I recently had the pleasure to meet at MTS, truly warms my heart. Together, I believe we can achieve great things.

Happy New Year, SMPTE!

2025, even in its early weeks, has brought both personal and industry-wide challenges. These challenges urge us to come together, support one another, and uplift our community. The tragic wildfires in Southern California have devastated homes, schools, and businesses, leaving many of us heartbroken for our

friends, colleagues, and the countless strangers whose stories remain untold. Yet, amidst this heartbreak, I’m inspired by the remarkable spirit of the SMPTE community. Our Hollywood leaders promptly provided our staff with resources and information to share with members, fostering connection and offering much-needed support. This resilience and care define SMPTE and its members.

My Journey with SMPTE

I began my SMPTE journey during another tumultuous time in history: September 2001. I was a recent graduate with a degree in Theatre Performance from Northeastern University, working temporary assignments while pursuing a performing arts career. I was thrilled about my assignment to a “film production company” by a temp agency, but I quickly discovered they misunderstood SMPTE’s purpose. My first task was making member retention calls, but I soon moved on to broader responsibilities, including managing the membership function of the University Film & Video Association (UFVA).

At the time, I thought my work with SMPTE might give me an edge in film auditions. To my surprise, many student filmmakers were unfamiliar

with SMPTE, sparking my passion to raise awareness of its benefits among students. Presenting at colleges and UFVA conferences became a priority. Though I'm still a proud member of AEA and SAG-AFTRA, my focus has shifted to championing SMPTE's mission—occasionally in song.

A History of Wearing Many Hats

Over the past two decades, I've worn many hats within SMPTE: Executive Assistant, Office Manager, Benefits Administrator, Website Editor, Database Administrator, Elections Coordinator, Membership Administrator, Sections Administrator, Director of Operations, Director of Events, Awards Ceremony Producer, Scriptwriter, and Lyricist, and of course, "SMPTE Sally!" Through it all, my constant focus has been working with the Board on governance and procedure. Every Board has strengths, challenges, and goals, and I've learned invaluable lessons from each.

Looking Ahead

I'm grateful to the Board for entrusting me with the staff leadership of the Society, and I feel lucky to have a strong sense of partnership with President Richard Welsh and our Executive leadership. Having witnessed SMPTE's evolution through leadership changes, staff restructuring, world events, and technological advancements, I've come to appreciate the truth of Mark Twain's words: "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." My desire to

step into this role stems from seeing SMPTE's immense potential. I've witnessed the camaraderie, mentorship, and dedication that define our members and volunteers, as well as the hard work, creativity, and initiative of our amazing staff to advance SMPTE's mission.

Introducing the "We Are One SMPTE" Campaign

In 2025, we aim to foster a stronger sense of belonging and encouragement through the *We Are One SMPTE* campaign. Although we're a global organization with diverse members, Sections, Regions, and interests, we are united as ONE Society, working toward SMPTE's mission "to inspire technological advancement in art, science, and media everywhere for everyone."

Rather than focus on a singular "face of SMPTE," we aim to empower each of you to be the "face of SMPTE." Your contributions—whether serving on a committee, publishing in the *Motion Imaging Journal*, speaking at conferences, mentoring early career professionals, or leading a Section—reflect the heart of our Society. Together, we can strengthen SMPTE, ensuring a thriving Society for future generations.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Let's make 2025 a year of unity, growth, and progress.

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