



Leave the World a Bit Better

By Corey M. Matsuoka, P.E., Chair CASE Executive Committee

“**T**o laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded.”

This poem is often mistakenly attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Many of the words were derived from an essay written by Bessie A. Stanley of Lincoln, Kansas. No matter who wrote it, what is your definition of success? For me, I like to think of these words whenever beginning a new endeavor. Whenever I near the end, I try to reflect on how I did. This will be my last editorial as the Chair of CASE, so here goes...

In my years on the Executive Committee of CASE, I definitely **laughed often and much**. I have been blessed by meeting some exceptional people who know how to have fun. As CASE started to coordinate with the other disciplines within ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies), the laughter only got better. Whoever said engineers are boring has never met this group. We have pictures with animal print bathrobes at a pool bar on the top of a DC Hotel to prove it. This doesn't mean we ignored what needed to be done. It just means you can be wearing animal print bathrobes while you're doing it. Find the fun in whatever you do; it will make everything better.

Hopefully, through my STRUCTURE editorials and my contributions to CASE, I have **won the respect of intelligent people**. To people like Andy Rauch and Dave Mykins who came before me, I hope I have lived up to the high standards you have set. To people like Heather Talbert of ACEC who was always there to help and guide us. To people like you, structural engineers who are no exceptions! I do not know of any group more intelligent. I still do not know how I passed my Advanced Structural Dynamics class or how to determine how a building will react in an earthquake. My utmost respect goes out to all of you who figured it out and work hard to design the structures we need and use in our everyday lives.

While laughter and respect are important, what is most important is asking, did I **leave CASE a bit better** than when I got there? The poem suggests that one way this could be accomplished is with a garden patch. I think that is the perfect metaphor for what we are doing at NCSEA, SEI, and CASE. In the past, the three organizations acted independently from one another and sometimes even in competition.

A few years ago, the leadership of each of the three organizations met in Chicago to determine how we could work together. We now meet two times a year to share our initiatives and discuss how these organizations can assist in meeting those objectives.

What I think of as our garden is the shared vision for the future of structural engineering that we are currently working on. As part of that effort, we are also determining what part each organization will play in achieving that vision. I think of each initiative identified in the vision as a seed we will be planting in our garden. Each initiative will be meticulously cultivated until they blossom by one or more of the organizations. Given all of the amazing accomplishments that structural engineers have made to date, it is exciting to think how much farther the industry will go with the three organizations working together. I genuinely believe we are building something special!

On May 8th, 2019, 9:45 am Eastern Time, my two-year term as CASE Chair will come to an end. Some may say that knowing the exact moment my term is over is proof that I am looking forward to leaving the position. On the contrary, it has been a pleasure and honor to make a small contribution to the premier organization providing risk management and business practices for Structural Engineers. I hope I made CASE a bit better. I know the exact time because I look forward to the accomplishments my successor, Stacy Bartoletti, will surely achieve. He is an incredibly talented leader, and I am excited to see what exciting new heights are reached.

They say the biggest smile is always on the face of the Past-Chair. In my case, that is true. Not because I am happy my term is over, but because I have learned **to appreciate beauty and to find the best in others**. I smile because of the lifelong friends I have made along the way, the garden patch we planted, and the members of CASE we have helped to breathe a little easier. ■



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