



As an association, 2019 ended with positive momentum after an energizing Convention in Virginia this past fall. Though there were many great takeaways and memorable moments from the Convention, my favorite memory of our time together was the same it has been for the more than 20 years I have attended the Annual Convention. It always happens during the Awards Luncheon. Once again, I found the standing ovation we extend to the volunteer of the year incredibly touching and a defining moment in time that sets our industry apart! As we rise to honor those who serve, it is as if time stands still for a couple of minutes and all is good in the world. The crowd stands in unity and applauds hard work, dedication, generosity and teamwork.

For many of us in the industry the new year has always been an exciting time of media partnerships, sponsorships and launching new programming concepts. It is meant to be a time to renew, strengthen, unite and inspire.

I must admit, in recent years, it does seem that we spend more time on insurance matters, legal issues and relationships with our cities than on the creative work and partnerships ... it is hard some days to know if we still have that same drive, passion and energy of a volunteer that is the foundation the business of special events was built.

I recently returned from the Tournament of Roses and was fortunate to speak with several of the long-standing members that have been volunteers

for more than three decades. Their commitment to the parade, the game and the City of Pasadena is as impressive as portrayed. The ability to give so much of their time for others' enjoyment is more than motivating. To serve something greater than yourself, to the extent that it becomes part of your personal identity, is a great reminder to all of us of what is right and what is good.

It was also a great reminder for what we all have in our own cities. All of our communities and events have these same types of people though not as public as an internationally televised tradition. If you are one of these volunteers, keep up the amazing work you do! Thank you for giving your most valuable asset, your time!

For all of us who are fortunate enough to be paid staff members – keep the heart, the drive, the passion and the commitment as those volunteers we applaud each year at the Annual Convention! Life is always better when we are serving something greater than ourselves! Our industry has much to be proud of heading into the New Year - Hooray for 2020!

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