

**Lesley Hammer IAI Incoming President, Address to the Membership
Providence, Rhode Island, August 9 2013**

Tonight I am deeply honored and I thank each and every one of you that have supported, guided and placed their faith in me, I am truly grateful for this opportunity, to represent our incredible organization, the IAI, as your next President.

I am humbled, because of the title that I am being honored with, but more so because of the caliber of the people I am about to represent. To have the privilege to serve this organization, that is comprised of professionals that do such important work, such ethical work, that are dedicated to the truth and that have such an essential role in the pursuit of justice; this is truly what makes this honor so meaningful to me.

I attended my first IAI conference in 1997 - not far from here, in Danvers, Mass. I was, at the time, 3 years into a career as a latent print and crime scene examiner for the state lab in Alaska. I went because it was my *turn* to go, I had no idea what to expect.

At that first meeting, I was overwhelmed with the wealth of knowledge and mentorship that was available – knowledge and mentorship that over the years since has had a profound effect on me as a forensic professional.

For example – I have been able to conduct research and publish papers with knowledgeable colleagues, I have had the opportunity to attend and provide training throughout the US and Canada. I found the spark that fired up my interest in adding Footwear and Tire Track Examination to my areas of expertise; and the encouragement to take a year sabbatical and attend graduate school in Scotland as a ‘mature’ student. I have been challenged to take on leadership roles in the IAI and in a SWG, and finally I have been able to transition successfully into private practice.

I am very fortunate to have had these experiences – and I know that none of them would have come to fruition without the *opportunities* and the *connections* I have found through my involvement with this amazing Organization. **Most** importantly, these opportunities have allowed me to do my work in the field of forensics to the best of my abilities.

We are fortunate to do work that really matters:

Thomas Jefferson, said ‘Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing’. It is a gift of life to do work that makes a difference. But because our work is important, and can have a major impact on people’s lives, it comes with a great responsibility to make sure we get it right. This is a responsibility we all feel every time we render an opinion, verify a conclusion or testify in court.

It is the mission of the IAI to provide us what we need to ensure we get it right, and to encourage us to keep developing our disciplines and ourselves. Our association accomplishes this by assembling us to present, debate, critique, publish, and certify the

**Lesley Hammer IAI Incoming President, Address to the Membership
Providence, Rhode Island, August 9 2013**

elements of our profession. The IAI also keeps us up to date, informed and allows us to have one of the most powerful collective voices in the forensic community.

We achieve all this through the work of our small army of volunteers, and with help from a handful of dedicated employees. The IAI has over 200 members that have stepped up to fill a vast array of committee and representative positions. We have recognized the volunteer leaders of our organization, at this time I would like to recognize those that have served this past year on a Science and Practice, Standing or Special committee, a certification or editorial board or as a representative to another association or region. Please stand if you have served this past year on a committee, a board or as a representative of the IAI.

Thank you. You serve as our discipline experts, advisors and communication links. Without you we would not be able to accomplish our mission –Thank you all for your service to our organization.

I'd also like to take a moment to recognize those that educated us this week. If you provided a lecture, a workshop or a poster presentation – please stand and be recognized.

Thank you for your contributions; your efforts to share your knowledge are greatly appreciated.

Because I am grateful for all that I have received from the IAI, and because I believe intensely in the importance of the work that we do, I want to serve our organization, to do what I can to ensure these same opportunities are available now and for generations to come. My goals this year are motivated by my desire to do all I can for the continued effective operation and viability of the IAI.

First, I will support our boards and committees to ensure they are productive and effective. I will implement the new leadership position, voted in today, that will organize and manage our Science and Practice Committees. I have set goals for this position that include efficient discipline vetting of our conference program and increased communication with each other and the membership. It is extremely important that we utilize our discipline expert committees to their full potential, and I will be working hard this year to set up this new framework to increase the profile and impact of these committees.

We have a new Provisional science and practice committee for Facial Identification, I will appoint the new members, along with the members of all committees and boards that are my responsibility, with the best interest of the association in mind. I look forward to seeing what this new committee, and all our committees contribute to our organization this year, and it will be my privilege to communicate those activities to you.

**Lesley Hammer IAI Incoming President, Address to the Membership
Providence, Rhode Island, August 9 2013**

I will strive to involve the IAI this year in important discussions that effect our profession and our work. I will communicate with our Representatives to other organizations and work with our Consortium of Forensic Science Organization representative to pursue these opportunities. I will continue the work of President Leben to improve our communications with our division associations, and I will continue the outreach she has started to educate other forensic science stakeholders about the diverse, extensive and knowledgeable professional membership that we represent.

I will promote and support our upcoming conferences. We will be 'making an impression' in Minneapolis next year, and then celebrating 100 years of the IAI at our Centennial Conference in 2015 in Sacramento. This is a landmark moment in the history of the IAI that we can use to reflect on the lessons of the past, to assess where we are now and to map out where the IAI needs to go in the future. In this spirit I encourage you to figure out how you can ramp up your participation over the next few years and I will do what I can to encourage a spirit of reflection, involvement and celebration.

There are other specifics that I will communicate to you throughout the year, and new goals that will develop. Please check the website often and read our publications to stay informed about your organization and to see how you can remain or become more involved. It is up to all of us to keep our association healthy – I encourage each of you to think about something that has inspired you at this conference and to determine what you can do next, for your association, for your discipline and for your profession. It is my job this year to ensure there are opportunities; it is your job to actively pursue them.

In closing, I am the next link in a long chain of dedicated professionals that have served as President of the IAI, a chain that reaches back to 1915. While I hold this torch I pledge to continue the important and valued work of those that came before me. I will represent the IAI membership professionally, I will foster and encourage growth of our extraordinary organization of experts, and I will personally be of service to as many members as I am able.

Thank you again for the faith you have placed in me, and for the privilege to serve as your President in the 99th year of the IAI. I welcome your thoughts, your suggestions and your opinions. I will do my best for you, for our profession, and for the legacy and future of the IAI. Thank you.