Letter From the Outgoing NAME President

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NAME President 2016

This will be my final letter as your 2016 president. I looked back over the three letters I have written this year and the first was in the edition titled “The Future of Forensic Pathology.” That brought a smile to my face. How do we predict the future? How can we be more proactive than reactive? Previous years have shown us that the best forecasting at times can leave a lot to be desired. We do not have computer models we can plug data into and forecast where a storm will track. Even with those, we have to wait until the storm is upon us before we have some certainty.

One of the best forums I attended this year was the one on the Sunday evening at the NAME conference, organized by Dr. Tom Gilson, to discuss the drug pandemic. It was extremely well-attended, far better than anyone had imagined, and a significant proportion of the attendees were chief medical examiners or well-experienced

pathologists. There was a lot of passion in the room. The pain seen during the discussion on the increased workload, imminent threat of loss of accreditations, inability to access standards to confirm the new compounds, and the need to perform autopsies on these cases was palpable. The issue arose as to how many drug deaths we are missing as the age group is older and we may not suspect drugs and sign them out at the scene.

At that meeting I saw NAME members at their best — passionate, caring, professionals dealing with an uncontrollable issue that has impacts on public health, safety, and our community of professionals. That is what NAME is about. The Listserv has a similar function to that meeting. These processes allow us to share our thoughts, skills, and experience. That is the future of forensic pathology. That is why looking back, I am smiling.

I am also smiling because following me next year is Dr. Brian Peterson supported by Dr. Kim Collins. Looking further into the future is not possible, but I do see extraordinary people on the Board, the Executive Committee, and chairing and supporting NAME in our dozens of committees. That is the future. We cannot control many potential threats but we have the ability to mitigate some of these potential disasters, and next year's president and vice president are two individuals well-suited to protecting our association and its mission.

My final words are to our young colleagues: our fellows in training, and residents. I remember being there once, and it seems like just the other day. Involvement

changes your perception of the organization. You get to know pathologists and associate members from all over the U.S., and now ever increasingly, the world. This is a small organization and we need you. You will be well-rewarded at many levels.

I would like to end with a grateful thank you to you all. Thank you for trusting me as your president and allowing me to represent you, our profession, and NAME to the press and other organizations. It has been a very rewarding and educational experience and one I am glad I did not pass up.

Regards to you all, and the very the best for 2017.