

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Back to Education

Gail V. Flores, PhD / 2020–2021 AMWA President



Fall has always been my favorite season. Nationwide, it's "back to school" time. To me, the beginning of the school year represents a chance to make a fresh start, which many of us need this year more than ever. In AMWA, each national leadership year begins in the fall, when the gavel is passed to the incoming president, officers are elected, and the Board of Directors (BOD) is announced. We have so much to look forward to as an organization, and I'm excited to let President-Elect Katrina Burton share AMWA's plans for the 2021-2022 year with you in future communications.

Late in the 2020-2021 AMWA year, in June, the AMWA community experienced a devastating loss with the death of Lori L. Alexander. Lori was most recently AMWA's Education Director, as well as a previous AMWA President and *AMWA Journal* editor, and had recently been nominated to receive the 2021 Harold Swanberg Award. We truly lost a giant of our profession and a dear friend and mentor to so many. I first met Lori when she emailed me to suggest I submit an interest form to join the AMWA Executive Committee (EC) as she was starting her AMWA presidency. The email ended with the following postscript: "I noticed on your LinkedIn profile that you're looking for an opportunity to join a nonprofit board—I hope AMWA fits that!"—which I now know is *so* Lori. Because she was President when I joined the EC, I will always think of her as the model AMWA President; never did I imagine that we'd lose her during my presidency.

Two of Lori's many passions were AMWA Education and the AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference. Registration for this year's virtual conference (Oct 27-29) is open (<https://www.amwa.org/event/2021annualconf>)—I hope to see you there! The conference committee, led by Sarah Dobney, has put together a fantastic program, building off the success of last year's virtual conference. AMWA is happy to announce that this year's event will include 2 days of preconference workshops, and we are so grateful to all of the workshop leaders who were able to adapt their workshops to a virtual format. Workshops have always been a huge part of AMWA Education, and Lori would be so pleased to see how quickly the spots have been filling up. Let's get back to education!

At the conference, I have the honor of presenting the AMWA President's Award to Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP. Be sure to read my article about Dikran in this issue of the *AMWA Journal*. Dikran has been a devoted AMWA volunteer for several years. Volunteering is critical to the success of AMWA, and we are so thankful for all of our volunteers at the local, chapter, and national levels. If you haven't volunteered for AMWA, I hope you will consider it. I'm so glad I replied to Lori's email 5 years ago with an enthusiastic "Yes!" Volunteering to serve on the national EC and BOD has been so fulfilling for me, and even though this year has been particularly challenging, I would do it again and again if I could.

Yours in AMWA,  
Gail