In my first President’s Message, I introduced my theme for the year: ELEVATE. I challenged all of us to elevate some aspect of our lives, our careers, our profession, our colleagues, and our community. As we read this message and reflect on the past year, have we met that challenge? A quote from Jim Rohn, “Commit yourself to something bigger than yourself,” helps me to stay focused to elevate. We all experienced the major challenges of 2021, many unexpected, just as in 2020 at the start of the pandemic. The pandemic is certainly still in full swing as I write this message in early September. As we continue to navigate these uncertain times and are hopefully moving to a postpandemic state, we continue to experience both professional and personal disappointments and losses. However difficult it may be to see at times, I believe we have been made stronger. Our strength is demonstrated in being comfortable with being uncomfortable, expecting the unexpected, and being in a constant state of readiness to pivot and adjust plans on a moment’s notice. This is exhausting mentally and physically—it is hard. We need to take the time to recognize the exhaustion, loss, and disappointments and know that circumstances will improve. For me, it is like seeing the light at the end of the tunnel as we move along, and as we get closer to it, the tunnel seems to take a turn, rendering the light dimmer and more distant. So maddening. However, we must recognize that the light is still there.

We all need to continue to support one another in this global pandemic and for years to come. Our specialty of emergency nursing is unique and has trained us to be prepared for the unexpected. We will persevere, we will elevate one another, and we must reach out for help when we need it and provide help to others when they need it. We must make that promise to ourselves and each other. We all must be a transformational leader, keeping ourselves and our communities moving forward during this global crisis. A positive attitude is essential to be successful. Another quote I find inspirational is from General Colin Powell: “Perpetual optimism is a force multiplier.” So stay positive; it will encourage others to be optimistic.

This has not been the presidential year that I had envisioned years ago, but it has been a year that has challenged me in ways I could not have foreseen. I have accepted the challenge and must remain agile. We may not know why things happen to us at the moment they occur, but I believe that there is a reason and that we must have faith, hope, and trust in the journey of life. We cannot live freely and thrive by living in the past. We must move forward—pull up the anchor and turn our sails to catch the wind.

It has been an honor and true pleasure to serve as the president of an association full of amazing professionals whom I truly respect, admire, and call friends. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and let’s keep challenging one another to ELEVATE!

Stay safe, stay focused, and be the good!