



AIA
Michigan

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Greetings to you all, and on behalf of your Michigan Board, happy New Year! We're at the end of January, just about the time when our New Year's Resolutions don't feel so new or doable as they might have a month ago. We find that our day-to-day habits are a little harder to change than we thought, and it's cold so we don't want to get up to go to the gym. Yet, we still make resolutions.

Why? Because we believe in change. We can do better, individually and as a group, and we should always aspire to improve ourselves. It is this thinking that helped me develop my goals for AIA Michigan this year. Two goals are about our core functions: to increase and improve our financial awareness through improved accountability, fundraising, and partnerships; and to encourage our board in strategic thinking, focusing on long term goals and policies. Both of these goals work hand in hand with the task force headed by Vice President Norm Hamann Jr. to revise our Strategic Plan for the year 2020.

My final, over-arching goal this year is for us to take a more critical look at, and to improve, Equity and Diversity. Our profession, like so many others, has a lot of room for improvement, and our leadership is evident of that. There have been just three female presidents before me: Evie Warner-Asken, FAIA (1981), Celeste Novak, FAIA (2003), and Tamara Burns, FAIA (2013). For minorities the representation is even smaller – just one African-American president, Roger Margerum, FAIA (1983). We can, and should, do better with equity and diversity in our board, our membership, and our profession as a whole.

To quote Dr. Whitney M. Young, “[A]s a profession, you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights, and I am sure this has not come to you as any shock. You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance.”

Please join me in breaking the silence.

Onward and upward,

Kristen Nyht, AIA, AICP, LEED AP