

2020 CREW Cleveland Closing President's Letter, Liz Dunlap

In 2019, Jennie Church wrote her end of the year letter as CREW Cleveland President. Her closing statement said, "In the New Year, we welcome Liz Dunlap as our Chapter president and I cannot wait to see what 2020 has in store for CREW Cleveland!" Jennie, was it all you had imagined?

What a year!!! Being the 2020 CREW Cleveland President was an honor and a privilege. A huge thank you to our Directors, Champions, Chairs and committee members. You are all an essential part of the success of our organization. This year Mary Gerding transitioned the role of Sponsorship Champion to the capable hands of Callie Cripps. Because of their efforts our annual sponsors provided support that allowed us to provide valuable events and education to our members. Speaking of members, Laura Hengle did a great job stepping in and taking over as Membership Director and we were able to add new members when other organizations struggled.

Diane Strojin wore 2 hats this year. In addition to her President Elect duties, she continued the GREAT work she started last year and once again CREW Cleveland met the CREW Foundation "Trifecta". Your donation today will count as a 2021 donation. Can we say three-peat?

Thank you to everyone that shared their time, talent and treasure. Molly Woeste made sure we had a social media presence and kept our members informed. Judy Mondry made sure our chapter stayed in the black with her financial guidance. Lori Crow realized that we needed to hit the pause button on our U-CREW and CREW Careers. We will be ready to engage and educate our future CREW members in 2021.

If you had told me that the year Liz Dunlap was president of CREW Cleveland would be one of the most unforgettable years in CREW history, I would have laughed. Well, 2020 has been memorable for many reasons. We kicked off the year with bowling and beers. Then in March our entire world changed...I mean this literally. We had no idea what was going to happen next. Can we meet, should we meet? If we do, how many of us can be there? I hope I NEVER have to hear the words, "shelter in place" again!

We knew we had to continue, keep our members engaged, and figure out ways to stay connected. The virtual world became our new networking platform. Amy Whitacre, Jennie Church, the Past Presidents and the Program Committee helped us find our inner calm. Through meditation and reflection, we found our inner bliss! I don't know about you, but I cried.

We talked taxes, pandemics and protests. We found time to do a little cooking with Chef Rocco Whalen. Pasta, wine and good friends. What a great way to spend an evening. Next time chop your onions ahead of time! Then we saw the "light". Our in-person tour of The Lumen Building had a great turn out and even had a waiting list. To have some "normalcy" back in our lives was wonderful. Even with our masks on, I could see the smiles! Next, we wanted to "make some noise" at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse, but instead we "zoomed in" to hear about the newly renovated home of the CAVS. Mini-Dines were enjoyed and a few of us enjoyed a quick 9 holes on the golf course.

The beauty of CREW Network, and the new virtual world, allowed us to connect with our sisters all over the world. We connected with CREW members to discuss the local and national CRE markets. We collaborated with CREW Pittsburg and broke down the Network Whitepaper and showed why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are so important not only in CRE but everywhere.

We showed off our culinary skills once again and baked our way thru our Holiday Party while celebrating members for all their achievements and commitment to CREW. This year when so many other organizations fell short, CREW had 596 registration for 12 local CREW programs both virtually and in person. GREAT job Program Committee!!

In addition to our local programs, CREW Network held the Spring Leadership Summit virtually and offered it at no charge to all CREW members. CREW Cleveland was well represented at Convention this year. Many of our sponsors took advantage of an added perk we offered as a thank you for their continual support and sent an associate/CREW Cleveland member to convention on us. The 2021 CREW Convention will be September 28-30th in Las Vegas...place your bets, but the odds are in favor of an in-person event.

Next year, Diane Strojin will be our CREW Cleveland President. No one knows what 2021 will be like. I know with Diane's leadership, CREW Cleveland will continue to further the success of our members by providing opportunities that foster productive and supportive relationships and enhance personal and professional growth.