

# Passing the Torch

By Calvin Phelps

NSBE National Chair



**N**SBE family, my two years as your national chair have passed quickly, too quickly. During my two terms, I have strived to put our focus squarely on those things that most directly affect our Mission: our members' academic excellence and the further development of the engineering pipeline. We have made great progress in these areas, growing our Retention Program to more than 100 chapters, expanding our Summer Engineering Experience for Kids camps, increasing the visibility of and rewards for chapters doing tremendous things academically and in the community, through the NSBE Mission Competition. We have doubled the proportion of members who submit tran-

without the next generation of leaders who will do as much and more for the Society.

As NSBE leaders, we all have many important duties and responsibilities, but there is none more important than making sure we train those who come after us to be better than we have been. I want the chair who succeeds me to be more effective than I've been, a better organizer, a better leader. That should be the hope of each of us as leaders: that just as we have left our chapters and our regions better than we found them, that our successors will build on what we've done to achieve things we never thought possible. NSBE is on the cusp of greatness, and we *do* have the capacity to accomplish amazing things in the fulfillment of our Mission. But to achieve that potential, we must always strive to prepare for our future. That is the only way the Society can continue to grow and improve.

So whether you are a chapter president, a regional treasurer or a general member, remember that it is not what we achieve in our roles that defines our success, rather it is what our successors achieve that tells us what kind of leader we've truly been.

It has been my greatest honor to serve you as national chair, and I look forward to seeing what great things the next generation of NSBE leaders has in store for the Society. I have tried to give all I could to my role in the time that I've had, but now it is time for someone else to come in and accomplish the things I thought were impossible.

Across the Society, it is now time to pass the Torch. Who will carry it forward? ■

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scripts so that we might know the effectiveness of our programs, and we have sought to increase the professional opportunities available to our members.

During my tenure we have been to the White House, and we have made recommendations on education to the president of the United States. We have been to St. Lucia and back to bring engineering opportunities to the young people who live there. Former President Bill Clinton has singled us out for our work in bringing engineering opportunities to young black students. We have been to the United Nations to discuss women in STEM. Make no mistake that we have done tremendous things and accomplished much in the past two years. But I want to be just as clear in saying that all of this means nothing