



# President's Message

*International System Safety Society President  
Dr. Rodney Simmons*

## Looking Back, Looking Ahead

As this is my last opportunity to talk to you in this forum, I would like to cover a few topics.

First, I would like to welcome the newly elected officers and thank all those who have volunteered. Our new officers and directors are:

- Executive Vice President: Russell Mitchell, C.S.P.
- Director of Media and Publications: Michael H. (Mike) McKelvey
- Director of Intersociety and Government Services: Paul Sorensen
- Director of Member Services: Linda M.S. Thomas

I would also like to thank the past directors and officers who have served, many of whom continue to serve us well and faithfully. I offer a special thanks to Saralyn Dwyer, Melissa Emery, Odell Farrell and our next President, Dr. Charles (Chuck) Muniak.

Thanks as well to Odell Ferrell and Gabriele Schedl for running in the election. We appreciate your willingness to participate and look forward to other ways to utilize your talents and abilities. I'd like to invite those leaving office and those who ran for office, but are not engaged in a position, to consider taking on roles in your respective chapters and/or assisting in the many other unelected positions within our Society. There are several Operating Vice President positions opened by this transition, by the way. We look forward to continuing to work with you all in new roles.

I'd also like to solicit your support for our awards process. Someone you know should be nominated for an award. Even if you believe there might be someone going farther, doing more or driving for better results, please submit the names of the best folks you know so that the process can sort out who is worthy. Without nominations, people are not considered, the process breaks down and we all miss opportunities to celebrate dedication and innovation within our field.

The International System Safety Conference (ISSC) is fast approaching, including submission deadlines. Please take the time to submit an abstract and get yourself into the program. I always look forward to the ISSC,

and we need your support to make it a success. Making the presentation tracks robust and varied depends on the participation of our members. Along with the upcoming Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we also need support for the 2018 Conference. If you are not the paper-presenting, tutorial-delivering type, consider the other important work that brings our Conferences to fruition. Conference chairs, hosting chapters, technical editors, activity staff and a wide variety of other roles need to be filled — one of them by you, perhaps.

My tenure has seen a number of interesting developments. We've made some improvements as we have sought to maintain our fiscal integrity and driven for greater accountability. Our focus on ensuring that our funding provides the best utility for the Society — and that it serves our membership — will continue as Chuck takes the reins. We have embraced virtual meetings with the addition of "Join.me" accounts to support Executive Committee meetings and the important work of its various subcommittees. Currently, we are using Join.me to support Conference projects and coordinate efforts to make sure the Albuquerque event goes smoothly. Join.me is a virtual meeting platform that provides high-bandwidth communication connectivity and meeting-support functionality, such as the ability to record meetings to help develop the minutes and verify that we have not missed any action items. This is the same tool used by the Virtual Chapter, and we are grateful for the chapter's continual innovation on the Society's behalf.

As we reflect on our path forward, let us consider the theme of our next conference: "Pushing the Boundaries of System Safety." We have just begun to reach for a new level of outward engagement that I hope and believe will continue. The work we are doing with Arizona State University's Global Center for Safety Initiative (GCSI) to influence the way engineering is taught so that it includes system safety is exciting. It also has the potential to deliver on our core values of making the world a safer place by being dedicated to the safety of systems, products and services. As we influence the process of educating engineers, we "stack the deck" in favor

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# In Memoriam

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## Dr. John Charles Knight

Dr. John Charles Knight, 69, of Charlottesville, Virginia, passed away on Thursday, February 23, 2017, after a courageous battle with hypersensitivity pneumonitis.

John was born in Bath, England in 1947. He graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons. Mathematics) from Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1969 and earned a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1973.

John had a long and highly influential career in safety-critical computer systems, especially in the automotive and aerospace fields. He spent seven years working at NASA before joining the University of Virginia in 1981. John was also a dedicated teacher, pioneering studio labs in the University of Virginia Computer Science department in the form of his popular software engineering class, in which the labs developed various fun capabilities for robots, such as soccer and dancing.



John won the prestigious IEEE Computer Society Harlan D. Mills award in 2006 “for encouraging software researchers to focus on practical results as well as theory, and for critically analyzing their assumptions and evaluating their research claims.” John also received the ACM Special Interest Group on Software Engineering (SIGSOFT) Distinguished Service award in 2008. In 2012, John’s book, *Fundamentals of Dependable Computing for Software Engineers*, was published.

John founded Dependable Computing in 2009, specializing in applied research, advanced development and technology transfer in safety- and security-critical application domains. John made extraordinary, widely recognized research contributions and was a recognized leader in the field of software engineering for safety-critical systems.

John is loved and missed by his wife, Virginia Knight; son, Richard of Richmond, Virginia.; daughters, Abigail (Abby) of Santa Barbara, California., and Katherine (Katie) of Gaithersburg, Maryland.; and loving cat, Edie. John has family around the world who mourn his loss. John is also survived by his countless students, colleagues, and friends. ●

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## John Leipper

We are all saddened by the loss of one of our International System Safety Society (ISSS) senior members, John Leipper.

John served as a U.S. Navy Civil Servant in system safety for almost 30 years with his home station in the San Diego, California area, but traveled all over supporting his calling in system safety.

He was a long-time member of the ISSS and led many technical sessions, roundtables and tutorials at annual conferences and was the International System Safety Conference (ISSC) Chair in 2005 in San Diego.



He retired a few years ago, but remained semi-active as a consultant and advisor. John retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve as a Master Chief Avionics Technician (E-9) and served on active duty in the late 1960s and early 1970s in F-8 Crusader squadrons aboard aircraft carriers as an aviation fire control specialist (AQ).

John was a character, with his “raspy voice,” and imitating a pirate was his trademark signal. He was present in any system safety meeting and always ready to debate. He was married to his wife, Liana, for 41 years and had a grown son who is an information systems engineer. John was also a leader in the Boy Scouts and served as an Eagle Project Coach for BSA Troup 777.

John will be missed by the members of the ISSS, the Washington D.C. Chapter and all who knew him well.

“Fair Winds and Following Seas, John...” ●

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of safer systems. Charles Hoes and Russell Mitchell continue to press our engagement with the GCSI and influence the direction of this work.

These represent some opportunities to realize an expanded paradigm for the Society, one that includes

more industries and influences more design processes. At our Conference this year in Albuquerque, we will have a panel to explore these and other innovations that can bring more value to our members, our communities and our employers.

With fond regards,  
Rod