



Dear Screen Actors Guild member,

As I enter my first full day today as your new Interim National Executive Director, I have reflected on a *Los Angeles Examiner* story from 1937 that once hung on the wall of my Screen Actors Guild office when I served as General Counsel.

The article chronicled the moment when the studios had finally recognized the Guild as the labor representative for actors in the motion picture industry. A grainy photograph captured members celebrating the news together, the joy in their faces richly evident. That moment, and the incredible work that it took Guild members to reach that moment, have served as the foundation for 75 years of history that has followed.

In my previous tenure at the Guild, I worked alongside several elected National Boards, two presidents (current President Rosenberg and former President Melissa Gilbert) and three National Executive Directors. My intention now, as Interim National Executive Director, will be to work with your current National Board to navigate through a period that is brimming with both challenges and opportunities – from completing our TV/Theatrical negotiations; to preparing for and securing a new Commercials contract as well as several other smaller but critically important labor agreements; to repairing relations with our sister unions; and addressing a polarized political system that is perceived by too many of our members as being close to broken. As we confront these efforts together, my overarching goal is this: to help restore your confidence that this is a union where strong and wise decisions are made *despite* political differences.

The greatest challenge facing this union is to find a way for democratic leadership to flourish – for disagreement and debate to build into unity and power. The Guild's diversity of opinion should, and must, serve as a source of strength and solidarity. I believe in the Guild's capacity for this. And that is why today I offer two messages to each and every member: First, I will be at the office each day to work with your talented staff and your National Board to achieve objectives that advance your interests as actors; and, second, it is time to turn the page on the most destructive aspects of the Guild's internal politics.

In this swiftly changing environment, we will not be successful if we do not work together. This effort will take an entire union – *all* members, from background actors, to stunt performers, to voice over actors; those working in film television, commercials, industrials and video games; dancers and singers; middle-class actors, to high-profile ones, to

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struggling artists working each day to break through for their first chance. We must work together. Because if not, the well-known words that a previous leader offered to a once-divided collection of citizens will matter to us now: united we stand; divided we fall.

During this extraordinary period for both our union and country, I am again reminded of the achievement of the Guild's founders as recounted in that 1937 *Los Angeles Examiner* story. Their achievement came as a result of a supreme effort by a group of committed performers willing to set aside their differences in pursuit of that shared purpose. The result: they built an organization whose membership card today remains the ultimate benchmark for professional performers. The triumph of the Guild's founders cannot be overstated – nor can the sacrifice, wisdom and political maturity that was required to achieve it.

I enter this interim role with the grand history of the Screen Actors Guild rooted firmly in my mind. I did not seek this position, but I am honored to act as its temporary custodian. You have my pledge that I will direct all my energies to steadying this historic organization and ensuring its success. I thank the Guild's National Board for the confidence and trust they have placed in me on your behalf. And I look forward to working together, in solidarity.

**David White**  
**Interim National Executive Director**  
**Screen Actors Guild**