

SIMA Foundation launches

Endeavor will boost learning, awareness opportunities



By DEBORA
BABIN KATZ

The coronavirus pandemic is teaching us many lessons, like the importance of resiliency, striving for equality, and the need for innovative, out-of-the-box thinking. How often lately have we heard the words, “We’re in this together”? It recalls a saying I love by Winston Churchill: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” Philanthropy is at the core of the most successful individuals I know in our industry, whether it is giving of their time or making a donation to a worthy cause.

Rooted in service

In 2010, the SIMA board of directors had the foresight to establish a scholarship fund to provide the opportunity to experience the SIMA Symposium — and obtain all the education and training this event offers — to someone who might not be able to afford the travel and registration expense. The board named the scholarship in memory of Alan Steiman, who was a past board member and chairperson. As one SIMA member recently described to me, “Alan represented hope for all entrepreneurs to be able to rise up to success in this industry, having grown up with very little, and establish an organization which focused on snow management as its core competency.”

Sadly, Alan passed away that same year after a long fight with cancer. I was one of the fortunate individuals to know and work with Alan. He was always giving his time to others, especially those starting out in our industry. Alan knew, as John F. Kennedy said, that “one person can make a difference, and everyone should try.” Alan’s generous heart

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HOW TO DONATE

To learn more about the SIMA Foundation or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit www.sima.org/foundation or mail a check to:

SIMA FOUNDATION

Attn: Martin Tirado
10140 N. Port Washington Road
Mequon, WI 53092

lives on in the generosity of those who contribute each year to the Alan Steiman Scholarship Fund and in the entrepreneurial success stories of its recipients.

Since the scholarship’s inception, approximately 98% of recipients have become SIMA members after attending their first Symposium. They continue to participate and hone their business acumen and knowledge of snow and ice management while networking within the industry.

“The Symposium allowed me to realize I have a deep passion for the snow and ice industry — something I wasn’t aware of,” said 2019 recipient Kevin Shackelford of Shackelford Landscape Group. This is precisely the vision Alan and the SIMA board had in mind when they created this scholarship fund in 2010.

Expanding efforts

Fast forward 10 years, and today’s SIMA board has directed the creation of a new organization, the SIMA Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is three-fold:

- (1) to provide scholarships and training for activities that attract, develop and retain professionals in the snow and ice management industry;
- (2) to conduct research and benchmarking studies on issues impacting industry stakeholders; and
- (3) to work on increasing public and stakeholder awareness and education on the value of snow and ice management services and its role in risk management and public safety.

The Foundation’s first steps will focus on growing the Alan Steiman Scholarship Fund and creating new educational scholarships in remembrance of other industry heroes.

It will look for new ways to expand affordable educational offerings and to educate the public and the property management industry on the importance of hiring a well-trained and certified snow professional.

Join the cause

This new 501(c)3 organization will be completely reliant on corporate and individual donations and grants to support its endeavors. I welcome you to reach out to the newly appointed Foundation board of directors to learn more about the Foundation and how you can help with its mission to support our industry through education and public awareness.

I hope that my fellow snow service professionals will join me in this mission to give back to an industry that continues to provide for all of us. We are truly in this together. **SB***

Debora Babin Katz is chair of the SIMA Foundation, a member of the SIMA Board of Directors and vice president of TrucBrush Corp. Email her at dkatz@trucbrush.com.