

I am honored and humbled to receive this recognition. I'm still having a hard time believing I'm being recognized for doing what I am so passionate about.

What I do, NO, what WE do, is important. Homeownership is the cornerstone of the American dream. Homeownership is more than just a financial investment. Owning a home provides stability, security, and a sense of pride. Homeownership supports strong families and strong communities. Whatever role you play in the industry, you should be proud of the positive impact you are having on the lives of families in America.

My love affair for the industry began in Storrs, CT. in 1987. I recently graduated from business school, and I knew I wanted to work for a trade association. I interviewed with a group of community owners for the executive director position at the New England Manufactured Housing Association, a six-state association representing mobile and manufactured home communities in the New England states. I knew nothing about the industry. The interviewers told me they sold homes built in a factory and rented the land where the homes were sited. A light went off in my head. What an incredible business model! Affordable homes in a neighborhood setting.

From that point on, I was hooked on the industry. It gave me a sense of purpose, and I knew that factory-built housing should be an important component of our nation's housing supply.

My passion took me to Columbus, Ohio, where I had the opportunity to display two identical factory-built homes across from the state capitol. Everything was identical down to the pictures on the walls. We handed out fortune cookies to legislators saying, "*Today you will learn about America's best kept housing secret.*" When legislators visited the homes the secret was revealed. One home was a manufactured home, the other was a modular home, built to the state building code. The point of the exhibit was to begin the dialogue about the affordability of modern manufactured homes and land use discrimination. This home display set the stage to expand land use opportunities for manufactured housing in Ohio.

In 1995, I was hired by MHI to head up the newly created National Communities Council. Soon after, I was put in charge of the Federated States. Life comes full circle. Today, I am the chair of the Federate States Division. I know from experience that working with Congress and federal agencies is not

easy. I want to commend Dr. Lesli Gooch and her team for making so much progress in a such a challenging environment.

I really hit my stride when I went to work for the Florida Manufactured Housing Association. I ended my interview with the Search Committee by saying, ***“If you are looking for an association manager, I am may not your guy, but if you are looking for someone who will help lead the industry in Florida, I am up for the task.”***

We have made tremendous strides advancing the industry in Florida. A few years ago, I couldn’t get a return call from local government officials to discuss manufactured housing. Today, local officials call often to discuss how they incorporate factory-built housing into their housing strategies to address their need for workforce and senior housing.

As I wind down my career at FMHA, I have an observation I want to communicate. It’s not super insightful, but it is on point. The biggest impediment to expanding manufactured housing in Florida, and probably other areas around the country, is this: We build homes that local governments need, but local governments want something different. Local governments want more residential looking homes for residentially zoned

areas. This is a huge potential market for industry. We can build those homes.

The question is - will we seize upon this opportunity?

We are closer than ever to becoming part of mainstream housing in America.

We need to continue the fight - to educate and to innovate.

I am not standing here tonight due to my own efforts. I have had plenty of support from people like Kris Jensen, Jim Moore, Jim Fryer, Sr., Bill Poole, Jim Dale, Nelson Steiner, and many others in this room that have encouraged and supported me.

I would not be able to do the work that I do without the support of my family.

My wife Chris and my daughters Muneerah and Munezah are amazingly supportive. I am so blessed. They put up with my hectic travel schedule, taking calls at night and on weekends, and my distraction, especially during legislative session. They fuel my passion and zest for life.

The Florida Manufactured Housing Association Board of Directors has been incredible. The Board has always been receptive to my suggestions for legislation, regulatory changes, consumer education and marketing, and exhibiting homes around the state to educate state and local policy makers

about the strength, durability, style, and value of today's manufactured homes. I couldn't ask for a better, more supportive employer.

I have had an incredible career, and I want to thank MHI once again for this honor.