

Annual Meeting Celebrates Sandler, Member Excellence and New Leaders

The VMA/VRC Annual Meeting is usually an upbeat affair as association leaders gather to ring in the new leadership, talk about current issues and note accomplishments of the recent past. The 81st meeting, however, was even more celebratory than normal.

The meeting, held Sept. 25-27 at the Breakers in Palm Beach, FL, was highlighted by several festivities designed to honor VMA President **William Sandler**, who after the longest running presidency and tenure in the association's history (42 years on staff, half of it as president) is stepping down to enjoy a much deserved retirement.

The celebration of Sandler and his career began the night before the meeting started, at a surprise dinner following the Chairman's Reception. Unbeknownst to Sandler, nearly 70 members, long-time friends and family were on hand to roast Sandler and reflect on what he meant to them and to the industry. The evening was hosted by the VMA Board of Directors.

But more surprises awaited the soon-to-retire president, who was further honored at the gala awards dinner that concludes the annual meeting.

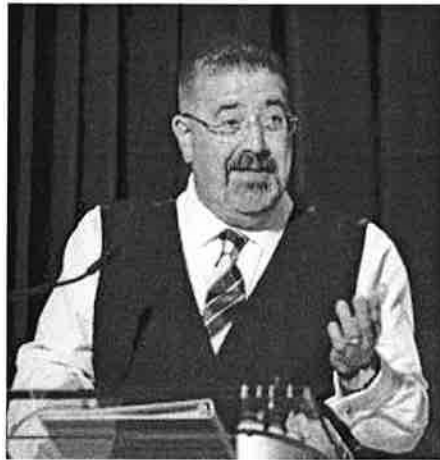
"The reason I think of a captain of a ship when I think of Bill is because he has always impressed me with how calm and



TOP: Ellen Sandler, Bill's wife, has been at his side through his long VMA career.
 CENTER: Sandler visits with family and friends at the surprise dinner.
 ABOVE: Sandler's children Marisa and Marc Sandler shared in their father's joy and pride.

steady he has been at the helm," said **David Hughes**, VMA chair (now immediate past chair). "Since I joined the board in 2013, we have at times experienced turbulence, but Bill provided confident and steady leadership throughout. As a result, he is passing onto our new president (see 'VMA Gets a New Captain') a strong and healthy organization."

Finally, as the awards program appeared to come to an end, **Jim White** of Curtiss-Wright, former VMA chair, stepped up to the podium to announce that a scholarship was created by the VMA board as an ongoing way to acknowledge Sandler's contribution to and passion for the valve industry. Thanks to a \$100,000 fund, an annual scholarship will be awarded to a dependent from a VMA member company. Details of the program will be revealed in early 2020.

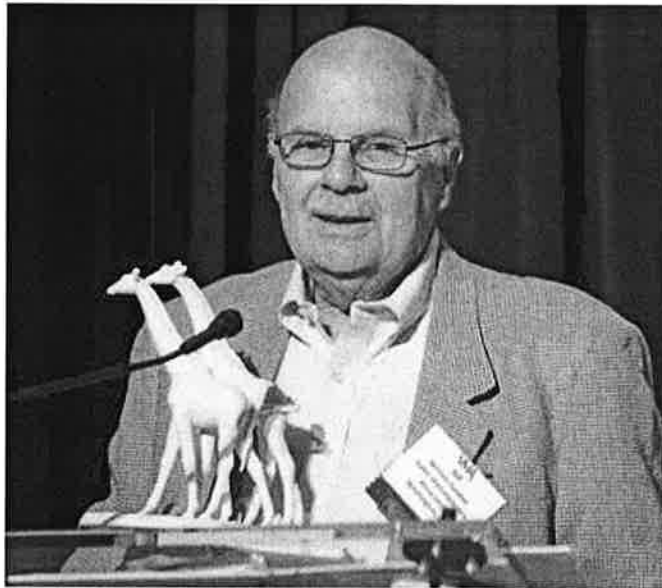


TOP LEFT: MC for the Sandler roast was his long-time friend Bob Arnold.

TOP RIGHT: Rob Bartlett, director and CEO of the British Valve and Actuator Association, traveled from the UK to share this special evening with Sandler and friends.

RIGHT Sandler was surprised by a beautiful pair of Lladro giraffes.

BELOW: Jim White, who headed up the scholarship efforts, presented Sandler with a plaque that will display the winners each year.



VMA Gets a New “Captain”

Another aspect of the 81st annual meeting that brought excitement to the floor was when VMA’s new leader **Heather Rhoderick**, CAE, CMP, was announced. Rhoderick takes over from William Sandler as the new VMA president effective Nov. 6. She comes to VMA after 11 years with the American Composites Manufacturing Asso-

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ciation (ACMA), a 475-member trade group based in the Washington, DC-area. At ACMA, she became the senior vice president of events and information, which gave her an extensive background in association revenue generation, member education, and communication and association operations. During her career, she has accumulated more than 20 years working for manufacturing trade associations.

Rhoderick was selected after an extensive search by the Executive Search Committee, led by incoming chairman Bryan Burns. “I am honored to join the VMA team and build on the strong foundation of success already in place,” Rhoderick said. “I believe that VMA is well positioned for growth, and am excited to help lead the organization so that it continues to bring value-added programs to its members and the industry.”