

- **Joe Walsh, Jr. ARMA Past President, Retired** - As a member of field office management, one of the most rewarding aspects of my career with Social Security was my involvement in the Atlanta Region Management Association (ARMA). ARMA is first and foremost comprised of highly dedicated fellow members of field office and teleservice management. ARMA's primary mission is to work with regional and, in turn, agency leadership to improve the delivery of the valuable services SSA provides the American public, while continuing to promote community based service. In doing so, ARMA always has the best interest of the public and our employees in mind. Being a member of ARMA will not only keep you informed on all the cutting edge issues that affect your job on a daily basis, but will also broaden your total perspective on the agency, our programs, and your own career. Be a member of ARMA. Join today. You will be glad you did.
- **Ron Buffaloe, District Manager (Ret.) Salisbury, NC, NCSMA Past President** - As you are considering whether to join ARMA I would like to share some of the reasons I chose to belong to our management association and the opportunities it gave me to make a difference. After starting in the field, then spending seven years in the regional office, I came back to the field as an Assistant District Manager. My district manager immediately started sharing the ARMA newsletter and ARMA emails with me and we discussed the issues of the day highlighted in those documents. When he asked me to join ARMA I saw it was a great way to stay informed about what was happening outside of my office. While I was already getting agency information about decisions being made, I saw that ARMA shared information about what was happening behind the scenes. That was also the first time I saw an organization asking the questions and raising the issues that the agency wasn't addressing—questions and issues that were important to field management but that only ARMA was raising.

It wasn't too long before I felt comfortable asking my own questions and raising my own issues through the ARMA Area Vice President for my area. Some questions and some issues were addressed satisfactorily by regional leadership and others weren't, but at least I could get the questions asked and the issues raised that I didn't feel comfortable, as a junior member of management, asking myself. When I was asked to run for a vacant Area Vice President position I said yes because I felt it was important for any member of field management to do whatever was necessary to help his or her fellow members of management. My first run for office was unsuccessful but the next time I was asked I said yes again. That led to almost 25 years of increasingly important elected leadership roles in both ARMA and the national management association. I spent almost 25 years as a member of ARMA because I believed in what it stood for, how it professionally represented every member of field management in its dealing with higher agency leadership, what it did to protect and defend the rights of field management and for the opportunity of friendship and camaraderie provided by membership in an organization of peers. I believe if you join ARMA you will find all that and more.

Judy Bernstein, Center Director for Materiel Resources, former NCSMA Executive Officer and Secretary: I have been a member of the management association practically from the day I became a supervisor. My manager was a very active NCSMA member and he immediately approached me to sign up. He told me the purpose of the management association was to be the voice of the field office management. I liked the way that sounded but certainly did not fully understand the impact of that statement. It was not until I became the Executive Officer and got the opportunity to sit in on the meetings with SSA's executive staff and see the give and take between central office and NCSMA that I saw the strength of this organization in action. I feel so fortunate that I have had the opportunity to be an active member of both NCSMA and NCSMA. I have met so many wonderful people from across the region and the country, all of whom bring their perspective to the many issues that affect the field.

- **Robert Barth, Denver Region, Area Director, Area II, DRSSMA Past President/NCSMA Treasurer** – My experience as a Management Association member was one of the most beneficial experiences of my career, not only because of the friendships I developed and still enjoy, but because of the impact you can have on the SSA organization and your own career. I have been a Management Association member for almost 30 years, continuing today as an associate member. I really became part of organization in 1998 when I became the President of DRSSMA. I continued to serve in DRSSMA and NCSMA for 11 years. As a member or officer, you will have the ability to convey your unfiltered ideas, work experiences and anecdotes to management, executives and congressional leadership to improve the programs that make such a difference to the American public. Don't sit on the sidelines, make a choice to get involved, and make a difference. You'll be glad you did.

Jim Burkert, DARCMOS – Seattle, NWMA Past President - Being a member of NWMA and NCSMA gave me insights into the wider world of SSA and provided me with perspectives that I otherwise would not have had about how the agency operates and how decisions are made. As I became more active, membership in NWMA and NCSMA allowed me to collaborate with my peers across the country and to interact with agency executives. This experience provided me with valuable knowledge and skills that have helped me immeasurably throughout my career.

Carolyn L. Simmons, - Kansas City Regional Commissioner- I could not begin this next chapter of my life without first expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation for the work of the Kansas City Management Association and how it benefits all of us. When I returned to the Kansas City Region, I was so happy to find that, although the faces of the KCMA had changed, the strong commitment to the Agency, and to public service remains the same as when I first left.

I value the relationship I have with the KCMA, and knew that I could count on this organization to provide open and candid feedback, bringing forth the issues and ideas that are so critical to our network of field offices and managers across the region. There would certainly be a void without the management association's willingness to share the tone and tenor of our field offices.

The Management Association is one example of what makes SSA a premier agency. You make a difference in the most important areas where you passion is evident: customer service, professionalism, and employee development.

In the days ahead, I will cherish not only the relationships, but most of all, the friendships I formed in the KCMA. I know our regional leadership can continue to count on the KCMA, as I have, to be a valuable and integral part of what makes the Kansas City Region successful.

Don Singewald, Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner, Office of Quality Improvement, NESSMA Past President - Being a member of NESSMA and the NCSMA is one of the most positive steps you can take as a member of management to help SSA retain its focus on delivering quality service to the public. In addition, the peer support from the contacts you make as a member will be invaluable to you throughout your career. With your membership, NESSMA and NCSMA can help your voice get heard. You won't regret the choice to join.

- **Ramona Schuenemeyer, Dallas Regional Commissioner, Retired** - I clearly recall my early days of field office management in a small, rural office with limited opportunities for networking and mentoring. The management association was a lifeline for me. It provided ways for me to connect with other managers, learn how to better control workloads and manage people, and work through unusual issues. This networking and support system was an incredible source of comfort and education.

As my career began to grow, my partnership with the management association provided me wonderful opportunities to get to know managers and executives on a personal level. As it turned out, it was my peers in the management association who supported me during times of personal struggle with family health issues. Like real family, the management association was always there for me. The friendships that formed through the management association have proven to be more than career-long...they are life-long.

As an RC in the Dallas Region I deeply respected the DRMA, who provided me with honest, valuable input on many issues in support of community based service. It was a group of executives who shared a strong commitment to service and whose friendships I enjoyed and cherished.

The Social Security Administration is a better Agency because of organizations like the Management Associations.