

Jim Oates, MD AFMR President, 2007–2008

When Bob Means, who was serving as Vice President for Meetings and Programs at AFMR, suggested that I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Southern Regional AFMR, I did not feel ready for the job. My leadership experience was limited to student council in high school. What I did not know then was that AFMR was founded and continues to serve as an organization dedicated to giving junior investigators the experience they need to succeed as leaders in academic medicine. I was impressed by the talent of those with whom I served and was grateful that Bob had thought of me for the position. With the guidance of fellow officers and counselors as well as the professionals at PRRI (the management company for AFMR) I gained the necessary experience to serve the mission of AFMR as Regional Chair and President of AFMR. As President, I

learned from Lynn Morrison (of Washington Health Advocates) the process of lobbying in Congress for a medical society. With a longstanding passion for the mission of the AFMR, she worked to advocate for clinical research at an uncertain time when the NIH CTSA programs were replacing the longstanding GCRCs. We worked to give the Eastern Regional Meeting traction during this time by partnering with the Clinical Research Forum. My AFMR experiences gave me the necessary tools to serve as Secretary-Treasurer and President of the Southern Society for Clinical Investigation. Each step along the way, I have tried to emulate the generosity and guidance of colleagues and mentors like Bob Means. As AFMR celebrates its 75th year, I urge to you to “pay it forward” to the next generation of academic investigators who can benefit from what the organization has to offer.