I vividly recall joining SHAPE America when it was AAHPERD as an undergraduate student. I also remember how awe-struck I was attending my first National Convention in Washington, DC. Networking and partaking in the array of workshops, research presentations, discussions, and visiting the vendors' exhibit, helped solidify the belief that I was in the right place, and becoming a member of this organization would surely serve to help make me a better teacher. One of the most exciting feelings was sharing the time with classmates who I had to convince to attend this convention because they were ill-informed of what joining a professional affiliation would entail. In fact, I used my leverage as the president of the newly revamped York College Physical Education majors club. A club that was dormant for a long time until I insisted that we should have an active majors club, motivate each other to join professional associations, and hopefully present a workshop one day as I witnessed students in other institutions presenting. I returned highly motivated and more focused on graduating with a bachelor’s degree in physical education, start teaching and continue on my academic path. This academic preparation did not end until I earned a doctorate. A feat I never dreamed of since coming to this country. During the various academic transitions, I remained loyal to SHAPE America and always shared information when I returned home with my students and colleagues. I used any resources that were offered, tried out the activities and shared them with many health and physical education teachers.

Looking back 32 years ago when I became a physical education teacher, then dean of students, assistant principal, regional director for fitness and physical education, and now an educational administrator, who trains and supports health and physical educators, my eagerness to grow professionally and enthusiasm has not slowed down. Fast forward to today, I can assertively share that in spite of SHAPE America's attempt to be more inclusive and understanding of the need to have a robust diverse environment and leadership opportunities for all members, I advocate for membership to this organization with future practitioners and doubtful colleagues. When I reflect and contribute my expertise, my question is "what can SHAPE America do or rather as a member of SHAPE America what can or should I do? I graciously agreed to serve on the EDI Committee, I welcomed the opportunity because I know as an African American man, who has suffered the brunt of racism and discrimination in this field; I could lend my knowledge, experiences, and voice to make this a better place for current and future professionals. I equally welcomed the opportunity to serve on the Retention and Recruitment Task Force because as a PETE faculty member, I am working diligently to support my students, and having this platform could help extend the resources and support for my fellow HETE and PETE faculty members to reach their students and many others.