Dear FWA Members, Sponsors, and Friends,

It’s hard to believe that after two years, this is my final letter to you all as the 57th President of the FWA. On June 21st, I will have the pleasure of handing over the gavel to our President-Elect and my dear friend, Nina Batson. For over two years, we have been working together seamlessly. We like to say, like a smooth jazz set – a Nina Simone jazz set!

Every FWA President is faced with unique challenges and opportunities and approaches them with their own lens and expertise. This is the essence of leadership – serving others to realize a goal that is far greater than oneself.

I have had the honor to represent this incredible organization and helping to shape its future, but I know that I am only a small part of its story which has been written by the amazing women who have come before me. I have gotten to know many of you FWA members, sponsors, and supporters much better. I believe that through these letters, you, in the words of Nina Simone, “know how I feel” about the FWA, our potential as professionals, and our industry. There is so much more work to be done, but I know the FWA will continue to be the leading voice in our industry to advance women with Nina at the helm.

I am deeply grateful to you all, and especially the FWA Board, Leadership, and Staff for your support these past two years. It has been truly an honor to serve you and I look forward to supporting Nina in her presidency as a Board member.

1) The World

Looking back at what I wrote last June, I realized that the theme was “Reopening”. At the time, June seemed to herald a loosening of the harshest lockdown restrictions and a sense that normalcy was just around the corner. Many of us had left our offices...
in mid-March and felt that return was somewhat imminent or would occur at the very least in September. If you would have told me I would still be working from home a year later, I never would have believed it.

This month really does feel like a reopening of New York City and the economy. Companies are encouraging workers to return to offices, “hybrid” structures are being tested and the arts are coming back as well. It will feel good to sing again! What world will we return to? Hopefully one that is a little kinder, has a little more flexibility and recognition that success depends on, and is the result of each of us.

Yesterday, the country is marking a tragic anniversary: one hundred years since an entire community was massacred in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Black Wall Street, a vibrant economic force, was stopped by racism. For too long, this is history that has been glossed over, if not totally ignored, but which should resonate with all of us. Take some time today to learn more about this painful chapter.

M&A hasn’t taken a pause during the pandemic. Amazon’s $8.5 billion bid for MGM is making headlines. As its second largest acquisition after Whole Foods and is seen as the company’s bid into streaming as well as another way of pushing customers to Amazon Prime.

As the economy re-starts in the U.S. and abroad, inflation is a closely watched metric. So far, stock futures are positive because of solid economic data and in-line inflation numbers. The same is true in the EU.

What else will we be watching over the summer? Developments in cryptocurrency and the extent to which “digital nomads” – workers who can work anywhere (not just from their home) will be a permanent feature of our labor force.

2) The FWA

We have received terrific feedback regarding our first virtual Annual Awards Ceremony. If you missed it on May 12th, you can still watch the recording – proceeds go to support the FWA’s mission of advancing women in finance. I know you will be inspired by our mentees, Pacesetters and awardees!

June 21st is our Annual Meeting of Members. While it will once again be held virtually, it will be a terrific night as we welcome new members, recap the accomplishments for the past year, including a financial overview, and elect the new leadership of the organization. If you are thinking of becoming a member, I hope you do so early this month, so you can take a deep dive into the organization on the 21st.

In the meantime, the FWA has other terrific events this month:

June 3rd: Work/Life Recalibration: Adapting to the New World of Work (Part 1)

June 10th: Greening the Grid: Financing the Supply Chain of Tomorrow
June 15th or 17th: Celebrate the Summer with Alfresco Dining with the New Jersey Committee

June 21st: FWA Annual Meeting of Members and New Member Welcome

3.) You

June has always been a bittersweet month – one of endings and beginnings. Graduates bid their high schools and colleges farewell and begin looking forward to their new lives in academia or the workforce. The same is true of the FWA – we look back in order to go forward.

As you plan your own return to work schedule, look back on the past 15 months and take inventory of what you have accomplished as well as of how you have grown. See to what extent you can take these characteristics with you into your new routine. Know that you have shown tremendous resilience in these unforeseen times.

Finally, spend time to reconnect with your FWA network. It’s been a long season of Zoom meetings and while it’s an amazing tool, it cannot replace in-person interaction. Connect with or join an FWA committee, plan an outdoor meeting with your FWA friends, and above all, have fun!

I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming FWA events!

Simone G. Vinocour
FWA President 2019-2021

The FWA: Accelerating the Leadership and Success of Women across the financial community in all industries, by advancing careers, fostering alliances and preparing the current and next generation of professionals.

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