

With training, networking and a lot of fun, alumni work to make 50th conference a success

The 50th annual SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference was held in Kansas City, Mo., June 23-27. More than 15,000 people, including students, teachers and business partners participated. However, without our alumni volunteers, the conference would be nearly impossible to conduct. Hundreds of SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends members attended the conference as judges, technical committee members, national education team members, and much more. Nearly 50 alumni members were designated specifically for alumni activities.

Alumni activities were plentiful. This year, the national committee hosted several training sessions to generate new ideas for growth and networking opportunities for our alumni. Additionally, an upscale and sophisticated alumni reception was held with the purpose

of providing our alumni the chance to network with business and industry executives.

Most importantly, alumni members had fun and were honored. Besides two alumni auctions that raised more than \$10,000, a casual night out with fellow alumni members was held at PowerPlay Entertainment Center. A large group attended the event to enjoy laser tag, bowling, go-karts — and food. The next day, alumni helped coordinate the conference's community service event, and all alumni were invited to a special luncheon in their honor to thank them for their effort and hard work during the week.

SkillsUSA alumni make it possible for countless students to showcase their skills and talents while at the national conference. Their selfless service doesn't go without notice or appreciation.



PHOTO: LLOYD WOLF

Congratulations to two outstanding alumni members. Each received an award during 2014's NLSC opening ceremony, marking the first time alumni have been honored during that session. **Josh Brunk** (above) of Pennsylvania earned not only his International Degree, but also the Outstanding Alumni Member award. **Alan Gomez**, from Wisconsin, was honored for his work with the Outstanding Alumni Achievement award. To nominate yourself or someone else, go to the SkillsUSA website for details and forms.

Welcome to 50 years of champions at work!

Hello, and welcome to the 2014-2015 school year. I am Dara Dubois, your newly elected executive chair.

I have been a member of SkillsUSA for 27 years, having competed in Automotive Service Technology, Job Skill Demonstration and Job Interview. I am an education programs consultant for the California Department of Education, where I oversee the transportation and energy, environment and utilities sectors. I've also been an adjunct auto



instructor and SkillsUSA advisor at American River College for the past 20 years.

I encourage each of you to be actively involved in SkillsUSA in your local chapters, regions, states, and even at the national conference. As I have told all the past state and national officers and others that I have worked with over many years, there is only one reason you don't stay involved: choice. This worked so well that I trained

myself out of those jobs and other members have taken over the reins. Choose to stay involved and active with SkillsUSA.

Constitutional change

This spring, SkillsUSA's Alumni and Friends Association members voted to amend the alumni constitution by renaming the Alumni Coordinating Committee. The new name voted upon is the **Alumni and Friends Executive Board**. This went into effect on Sept 1.

Regional Updates

Contact regional Executive Board representatives with alumni news or information from your state. Use the email addresses below or access them through the website: www.skillsusa.org/membership-resources/alumni/.



Louisville, Ky., will host SkillsUSA's national conference in 2015.

Region 3

Loree Moore, Illinois • SkillsUSAregion3rep@gmail.com
Moore had the great opportunity to meet with the state association directors from Region 3 at their conference in Louisville, Ky., in August. At this meeting, they brainstormed ideas for the future of the Alumni and Friends associations in Region 3.

Fall conferences are coming. Make sure to look for volunteer opportunities at your conferences. For the holidays, consider planning a food drive or another volunteer opportunity that can engage the alumni members in your area. Be sure to share the pictures with us.

Region 4

Terry Robinson, Oklahoma • SkillsUSAregion4rep@gmail.com
Promotional and recruiting opportunities are coming up. Missouri's statewide leadership conference is Oct. 9-11 at the Lodge of Four Seasons in Lake Ozark, Mo.

Oklahoma had district officer training Sept. 8-9 at the Embassy Suites in Norman. Its college/postsecondary leadership conference will be at the same location Oct. 9. Six district fall leadership conferences are scheduled throughout October at various locations; for details, please check the SkillsUSA Oklahoma website.

If you live in Minnesota, check its website as the state restructures its alumni association. See what you can do to help out.

Other Executive Board members:

Region 1

Maria Bender, New Jersey
• SkillsUSAregion1rep@gmail.com

Region 2

Joey Baker, Florida • SkillsUSAregion2rep@gmail.com

Region 5

Coleen Read, Nevada
• SkillsUSAregion5rep@gmail.com

Also on the board are Karen Ward, SkillsUSA Massachusetts director, and Greg Rintala, business and industry representative, from Snap-on Tools.

Join us on Facebook and Twitter: SkillsUSA Alumni and Friends Association Group

'It Was Like Going to Disneyland'

Top California CTE Director Reflects On His Journey Through SkillsUSA

Russell Weikle started his SkillsUSA journey as an architecture student at College of the Sequoias in Visalia, Calif., and later became a construction/carpentry instructor at Reedley High School. He started the first-ever chapter of SkillsUSA at Reedley High School and became the first college/postsecondary student in California to be a chapter advisor.

Weikle is a true advocate of career technical education (CTE) and SkillsUSA. He joined the California Department of Education (CDE) in 2001, serving as an education programs consultant and state director of SkillsUSA. He became the first former student member to become a state SkillsUSA director there. In 2005, Weikle was appointed administrator of the Carl D. Perkins grant office and was the catalyst in the development and implementation of the 2008 State Plan for Career Technical Education. He also led the effort to revise the Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards, which were approved by the California State Board of Education in January 2013.



Currently Weikle is the director for the Career and College Transition Division at the CDE. In addition, he oversees CTE leadership for all 15 industry sectors, adult education, California CTE Model Curriculum Standards, CTE Frameworks, California Partnership Academies, the California Career Pathways Trust program, Regional Occupational Centers and Programs, Linked Learning programs, and several other career and college initiatives.

Prior to his assignment at the CDE, Weikle served as a middle-school principal, a high-school counselor and vocational education instructor. In 2011, the Association of California School Administrators recognized him as the California CTE Administrator of the Year in recognition for his longtime dedication to the improvement of CTE in the state. In 2014, Weikle was honored with the first-ever State Director "Rising Star" award by National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education.

Weikle's heart remains with students. When asked for his most memorable experience in SkillsUSA, he replied, "As an advisor going to my first national conference, it was like going to Disneyland." He was also impressed by the business and industry involvement, which continues to grow. His parting comment to students: "Choose to stay involved and continue the journey."

Consider joining SkillsUSA as a professional member and receive regular SkillsUSA mailings plus four issues of *SkillsUSA Champions* magazine. Professional membership is good for one year from the date of registration. Visit: www.skillsusa-register.org. Download free PDF issues of the magazine at: www.skillsusa.org/champions/.

