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Cheers to You

MY FIRST DAY ON THE JOB as the assistant editor of *Minnesota Meetings + Events* back in August 2014 was a crash course in the meetings and events industry.

Instead of heading straight into the office, I attended an early workshop at MPI's World Education Congress (WEC) at the Minneapolis Convention Center. I felt overwhelmed and out of place, but thrilled at the same time—this was a whole new side to the city that I had never seen. After sitting in on Derek Gorney's talk on staying fit in the workplace, I wandered around, in wonder, collecting swag and petting puppies. Later in the week, my co-workers and I tagged along on the FAM tour hosted by Meet Minneapolis, eating brunch at Hell's Kitchen and going to a Twins game in the afternoon. It didn't take me long to realize that meetings and events, to my delight, were fun.

While there are, undoubtedly, glamorous aspects to the industry—invites to exclusive events, fancy cocktails and VIP tours—I also quickly discovered that it's not *all* about that. I'm sure the perks attract many people to the career, but being a planner, as you know, is much more than, say, Hallmark's depiction of what you do.

I've had a front row seat to some incredible experiences the past four years, while also getting to meet the people who make them happen. I am constantly in awe of the hard-working and determined individuals that comprise Minnesota's meetings and events industry. It's one of the reasons why I love our Hall of Fame feature every Spring issue—we get to pull back the curtain on seven men and women each year. Senior Editor Megan Gosch and I took the pleasure in interviewing our 2018 Hall of Famers; flip to page 58 to meet this year's amazing group.

Of course, we reveal our Best of 2018 winners in this issue. Turn to page 49 to see who you, our readers, chose as the best of the best this time around.

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