

Gio Lester

LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS CONSULTANT

For the past 40 years, translation and interpreting have been my career. I have been active in various aspects of our professions, frequently, as an advocate.

Besides the usual professional assignments, I was involved in the American Translators Association's (ATA) old Public Relations Committee, participating in many of its initiatives. Still for the ATA, I participated in various nominations committees and was elected president of its original Florida Chapter, FLATA (2001-2003). During my term, the board increased the membership, and consequently, its treasury. Among other things, we modernized our website, newsletter, and increased the frequency of events for the membership.

I also had the honor and pleasure of being elected Administrator of ATA's Interpreters Division (ID) and later its, Administrator. During those years (2003-2007), I revived the ID's newsletter, managed to have a disclaimer included in the ATA's professional directory differentiating translators from interpreters, promoted the registration of interpreters as voting members, worked together with other ATA Divisions to create camaraderie and share knowledge. It was still as Assistant Administrator that I created the ATA-American Red Cross (ARC) Partnership to provide to the ARC access to interpreters to assist them during crises. The importance of that initiative was felt during Hurricane Katrina when our volunteers manned the Falls Church Virginia Call Center. At one time, over 1,200 ATA member-volunteers participated in the program. I was also an ATA Grader and assisted in the transition of our training into Moodle, a teaching platform. Another important project I was involved in while Administrator of the ID was the booklet *Interpreting Getting It Right*.

In 2007, I led a group of colleagues in founding a new professional association in Florida to replace the previous one, which was terminated in 2005. A Founding Board was organized in 2008, tasked with developing the documentation to govern and guide the new entity, that included Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Procedures Manual and a Master Plan with short- and long-term goals. The Association of Translators and Interpreters of Florida (ATIF) was incorporated in 2009. In 2010, I was elected its first president. My board organized the Association's treasury, increased our revenue by holding an average of 10 events a year with presenters from the US and abroad. In 2015, I was called back to redirect the Association to its original purpose, hold elections, and assist the ATA during the 56th Annual Conference held in Miami. That included creating special web pages, bringing the membership together and doing research to provide content, working with Miami-Dade College to provide students from their Translation and Interpretation Program to assist in manning ATIF's Hospitality Desk, meeting with restaurant owners and managers to develop specially priced menus for conference attendees.

I also served on the National Coalition for Certification of Medical Interpreters (2007-2008), which later was split into the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) and the National Board for Certification of Medical Interpreters (NBCMI). I had the honor of serving the latter as a director and, later, as its vice-chair (2009-2015). While serving at the NBCMI's Communication Committee, I was commissioned to create its first newsletter, *CMI Tides*, which was published monthly during the time I was on that board. I also reorganized and led or monitored webinars to prepare candidates to take the CMI Exam. Another of my roles at the NBCMI was that of liaison with the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA), assisting them in two events held in Miami, providing personnel to man their information desk, among other things.

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In 2011, the late Maria Cristina de la Vega invited me to join NAJIT's latest initiative, a weekly blog. In 2016, I was asked to lead the project and one of my first acts was to give it a name. The NAJIT Observer was the name selected by the writers. In 2017, I was appointed co-chair of the then named PR Committee and one of my proposed initiatives (January, 2018) was the creation of a NAJIT School, later named The NAJIT Academy, aimed at providing educational and training opportunities for our members as well as increase NAJIT's treasury through sales.

In 2015, I was invited to join the Miami-Dade College Translation and Interpretation Advisory Committee. In 2017, I was elected its chair, a 2-year mandate, during which I shared with the Dean and faculty developments in the field, discussed syllabi and marketing activities, and presented at International Translators Day events. In 2018, I was elected to the Executive Committee of *Associação Brasileira de Tradutores e Intérpretes* (Abrates), ATA's Brazilian counterpart, as its general secretary (2018-2020). I was directly involved with the Association's 10th International Conference (2019), organizing the event app, procuring translations for the program, and working closely with the company directly responsible for all practical aspects of the event. My actions within the EC led to greater communication between the board and the membership through social media initiatives, increase in revenue as a result of a program offering distance learning to members (free) and non-members (paid).

As an entrepreneur, I co-organized, together with Agustin de la Mora, the first Finding the Parallels conference on medical and court interpreting held in Orlando, FL (2013). In 2016, I started working with colleagues in Brazil to organize the first ever 100% online international conference on translation and interpreting, which was successfully held in August 2017.

These activities did not prevent me from presenting, speaking, organizing workshops, in the US and abroad, and helping to create the first interpreting class at the University of the Bahamas with Prof. Myrurgia Hernandez, in Nassau, Bahamas. And I also kept up my studies through workshops and webinars, including an intensive course on Portuguese language simultaneous interpreting at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (in-person), a course in translation at *Brasillis Idiomas* (Brazil), and I am currently studying Comparative Law at *Descomplicando o Inglês Jurídico* (Brazil), the latter two, online.

Parallel to the above activities, I was an Adjunct Professor at Florida International University, where I taught both English and Portuguese; worked in international banking as an executive secretary and international accounts manager; and as Latin America Division Manager for two international marketing companies. These activities in the private sector informed my attitude and my work with non-profit companies.

My love and commitment for my professions give me purpose and personal pleasure.