

## Hardwood Federation Update

*By Dana Lee Cole*

*Hardwood Federation Executive Director*

The past year has indeed been a trying one for the greater hardwood industry – a fact not lost at the recent Hardwood Federation (HF) Board of Directors and Hardwood Federation Political Action Committee (HFPAC) Board of Directors annual winter meetings in Washington D.C.

As a memory refresher:

- The HF Board of Directors provides strategic direction for advocacy priorities and outreach efforts, as well as oversight of the HF budget and other administrative functions.
- The HFPAC Board is instrumental in helping raise PAC dollars to support our hardwood industry congressional allies, and in identifying those we should consider for financial support.

The input of these two groups is vital to HF's efforts on behalf of the industry, and we rely heavily on their insight and guidance. And so, their meeting agendas included updates regarding HF 2019 activity, and planning for policy and advocacy action in 2020!

### During the Meetings

The Boards were briefed on the Federation's work done in 2019, especially the massive undertakings regarding Tariffs/Trade with the China. Trade is one of the most difficult policy issues to navigate in D.C. And while the Federation was able to clear one hurdle - being included in the Phase One deal with China, i.e. being mentioned in the agreement text, the White House fact sheet and by the U.S. Trade Representative in multiple media hits – much work remains to be done.

At press time, details were still emerging about how exactly the Chinese will honor the huge commitments to both Agricultural and Manufacturing purchasing. Additionally, the spread of the Coronavirus has added an unexpected hurdle to the process. Nonetheless, we have our foot in the door and will continue to work for hardwood industry relief, including the consideration of more ways to re-open China, as well as other markets.

Other issues discussed: **The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement**; Appropriations – especially regarding Biomass, Wood Energy, and the implementation of the Farm Bill; and Transportation. The Boards also noted the impressive rise of awareness of the hardwood industry and Hardwood Federation, both on Capitol Hill and in the Media. Our hardwood message was covered by dozens of regional, state and national publications, television and radio outlets, including Fox Business, *The Wall Street Journal*, CNN, CNBC and NPR.

### Going forward

Election years are always wild, but Presidential election years even more so. It's going to be quite a ride through November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Rest assured, however, that Congress will continue to see us and hear our hardwood message regarding the issues, reform measures and decisions that can either help or harm our industry.

Also this year, HMA will be represented by three outstanding hardwood industry leaders serving on both the Hardwood Federation and HFPAC Boards. Newly minted HFPAC President Bob Miller of Frank Miller Lumber in Union City, IN is joined by Troy Brown of Kretz Lumber Co. in Antigo, Wisc. and Richard Wilkerson of Anderson-Tully Lumber Co., based in Vicksburg, Miss. We very much look forward to working with them...and to our continued cooperative engagements with HMA Executive VP Linda Jovanovich, and her terrific team.

If you are interested in learning more about the Federation, or hearing more about our 2019 and 2020 activities, look for me at HMA's National Conference and Expo in Nashville. I'll be making a brief presentation, plus Bob Miller and I will be conducting a raffle in support of the HFPAC. It's going to be fun! And individuals contributing over \$100 could be winners!

**Spoiler Alert** – While there will be several drawings, the Grand Prize will have a definite "Tennessee" flavor! See you in Nashville!