



SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

Candidates for SIA 2026-2027 President-elect



Peggy Gentile-VanMeter
SI/Cumberland County, NJ
(North Atlantic Region)



**Virginia "Gigie"
Penalosa**
SI/Mandaluyong
(Philippines Region)



Michelle G. Strawser
SI/Pasco, FL
(Southern Region)



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

Resume for SIA President-elect 2026-2027

Name: Peggy Gentile-VanMeter

Member, SI of Cumberland County, Inc. in SIA North Atlantic Region

SOROPTIMIST EXPERIENCE (Include **significant** Club,Region,Federation and International service **with dates**):

SIA Board Director	2024-2026
SIA Chair MCI Task Force (Member Code of Conduct)	2024-2026
SIA Laurel Society Ambassador Level	Dec. 2025
SIA Convention Marketing Chair	2023-2024
SIA Leadership Fellows Program	2023-2024
SIA Dream Big Campaign Ambassador	2020-2023
SIA North Atlantic Region Governor	2018-2020
SIA North Atlantic Region Governor-Elect	2016-2018
SIA North Atlantic Region District II Director	2012-2016
SIA North Atlantic Region District II Secretary	2011-2012
Club president of SI/Cumberland County Inc.	2009-2011

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

Masters Degree Holocaust & Genocide Education Stockton University 2001
Social Studies Degree k-12 Glassboro State (Rowan University) 1978
Associates Degree Cumberland County College in 1976

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

History and Human Rights Educator Cumberland Regional High School	1978-2012
Adjunct Professor Western Civilization Cumberland County College	2006-2016

OFFICES/BOARD SERVICE/MEMBERSHIPS IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Member of Bridgeton Lions International
Member of South Jersey Holocaust Coalition

Soroptimist International of the Americas Personal Statement

Peggy Gentile-VanMeter

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT 2026-2027

Areas that specifically qualify me to serve as SIA President Elect/President are based on my education, training, travel and life experiences that have enhanced my role as a Soroptimist. I have been a Soroptimist since 2006. My involvement has enriched my life both professionally and personally. As a teacher of human rights, Soroptimist has enlightened me in so many ways about the issues that women and girls face each day throughout the world. As a teacher and active community member I know the importance of protocol and the chain of responsibility. As a past officer for my local club, as a past governor of the North Atlantic Region Board, and my current term as a Board Director on the SIA Board I know the importance of decision-making for the “greater good” even when there are disagreeing opinions. Decisions are made based on thorough research and open communication. Sometimes difficult decisions have to be made in order to maintain the accountability and respectability of any organization. I have participated in leadership training programs and have been a presenter for leadership seminars and workshops. As my resume identifies, I have held several leadership positions and have been an active member on several committees locally, in my region, and for SIA. My assigned areas as a Federation Visitor has really been educational. My interaction with Governors, boards and members has helped me grow as a Board Director. I have attended SIA Conventions since I became a member and attended SI International conventions too. I believe in the power of social media and use it as a positive tool for SIA North Atlantic Region, SIA Cumberland County, Inc. and to support SIA with their communications. I am ready to fulfill the responsibility as President-elect as I prepare for the office as President of Soroptimist of the Americas as I learn and lead.

I am a strong advocate for our 2021-2031 Big Goal of Investing in Dreams. I have always supported the *Live your Dream Program* as well as the *Dream It Be It Program* through verbal advocacy and financial assistance. The *Laurel Society* is very

important to me as I have grown into Soroptimism. I am very proud of my financial contributions to local community programs that assist women and girls, my support of the *Laurel Society*, and to our Dream awards at all levels. All of these programs are a part of the Soroptimist mission and must be continued through our efforts to educate our members and our communities. Dreams are made possible through collective team work.

My experience as an educator is probably my number one qualification to bring to the office of President-elect/President along with my other experiences on boards and committees. There are always changes in education, and educators have to adjust through training and experience. Soroptimist has had many changes and works diligently to change with the times we are living in. Change isn't always easy, but it is a necessity if we are to continue helping women and girls by bringing new and innovative ideas to our table. There hasn't been a time when the opportunity presents itself that I have not expressed the importance of education, equal opportunity, and equality for all regardless of social, economic, or religious background. Dreams are made possible through collective team work. Soroptimist International has worked wonders in the 105 years of our existence and I am excited for our SIA future! I am a very determined person. I have compassion, empathy, a humorous approach when needed, and respect for others. I am aware of the importance of listening to others. I ask questions and research answers to things I do not know. I seek positive attributes in situations. I understand the importance of allowing others that have a task/role to be able to do their assignments and respect the ideas they bring to the table for discussion/approval. I will do my best to continue the mission of Soroptimist with determination, dedication, understanding, and with help from the SIA Board officers, Directors, our SIA staff, and our members as I learn and lead. I want to serve as President-elect and take on the role as President because this is an opportunity for me to continue to grow as a person as I continue to advocate for women and girls. I am ready to fulfill the responsibility as the next SIA President-elect as I prepare to fill the role of SIA President as a representative leader for Soroptimist of the Americas. Thank you for this opportunity.



Resume for SIA President-elect 2026-2027

Name: VIRGINIA "GIGIE" PENALOSA

Member, SI of Mandaluyong – Philippines Region

SOROPTIMIST EXPERIENCE (Include **significant** Club, Region, Federation and International service **with dates**):

SOROPTIMIST EXPERIENCE

SIA PHILIPPINES REGION

- Club President, SI Mandaluyong 2009-2011
Club awarded for two (2) consecutive years as an outstanding club in the Phil. Region, with special awards for Best in Public Awareness and Fundraising, both from the Region and SIA's Celebrating Success
- Region Pillar Chair, Program 2012-2014
- District Director-Elect 2012-2014
- Chairperson, Dream It, Be It Region Survey 2014
- Panel Speaker, Women's Opportunity Award 2014
SIA Convention, Vancouver, Canada
- Workshop Facilitator for the Introduction of Dream It, Be It 2014
SIA Convention, Vancouver, Canada
- District Director, Metro Manila Southeast District 2015
- Chairperson, Soroptimist Orientation and Leadership Training 2018-2020
- Region Governor-Elect 2020-2022
- Region Governor 2022-2024
- Immediate Past Governor 2024-2026
- Sampaguita Society Member (continuing contributor)

SIA FEDERATION

- Member, Board of Directors 2025-2027
- Member, Board of Directors 2015-2017
- Federation Secretary/Treasurer 2016-2017
- Member, Electoral Area Task Force 2020-2021
- Laurel Society continuing member - Inner Circle level 2010 to present
- Attended all SIA Biennial Conventions From 2010-2024

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

- Soroptimist International Director (appointed by SIA) 2018
- Member, SI committees on Finance and Leadership 2018
- Workshop Facilitator, SI Convention, Malaysia 2019
- Workshop Facilitator, SI 100 Years 2021
- SIA Delegate/Participant, UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), New York 2014 to 2018
- Panel Speaker, SI/SIA Parallel Event at UN CSW March 2015

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

- Graduate, BS Business Administration Siena College, 1968
- Business Management Program Asian Institute of Management, 1976
- Bachelor of Laws (2 years Law Proper) Far Eastern University, 1969-70
- Certification Programs in Sales & Marketing, Human Resources, Family Corporation Management & Governance Ateneo de Manila University

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

- President, VCP Trading International Corp. 1990 to present
- Exec. Vice Pres. & Treasurer, Westco Electrical & Equipment Corp. 1990 to present
- Vice-President & Treasurer PAMAV Training & Technology Center, Inc. 2005 to present

OFFICES/BOARD SERVICE MEMBERSHIPS IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

(during the past 10 years)

None

- I prefer to focus on Soroptimist service.

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT

Please answer the following questions in your statement.

What is there specifically in your background, training, education, experience and interests which qualify you to serve as SIA President?

My background, leadership experience, and lifelong commitment to service prepares me to serve effectively as President of Soroptimist International of the Americas.

My 18 years as a Soroptimist has enabled me to serve at all levels – from club, region, to international levels, giving me a broader understanding and perspective of the important works we do in Soroptimist.

Professionally, I have built business partnerships across different countries for the past 36 years, affording me valuable experiences to work with diverse cultures and perspectives. This global exposure has strengthened my ability to work and lead in international environments where diversity, inclusivity, engagement and collaboration are essential.

How will you leverage your skills and experiences to help lead SIA in achieving our 2021-2031 Big Goal of Investing in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education?

Soroptimist's 2021-2031 Big Goal of investing in the dreams of half a million women and girls through education aligns deeply with my personal mission and leadership experience.

As Governor of the Philippines Region, my 2022-2024 biennial thrust focused on "Access to Education", or the A.T.E. initiative. A.T.E. is a scholarship and mentoring program that supports disadvantaged women and girls in completing a college degree or technical-vocational certification. In Filipino, "ATE" means an older sister, symbolizing Soroptimist members guiding women and girls as mentors, advocates, and supporters. In 2023, A.T.E. was unanimously approved as an identifying and continuing project of our region, ensuring its long-term impact and sustainability.

As adviser to this initiative, I continue working to expand educational opportunities, including support for Live Your Dream applicants who remain determined to pursue their goals. Every woman and girl we serve brings Soroptimist closer to achieving this historic Big Goal.

Why do you want to serve as the SIA President, and what special qualities would you bring to the office?

The opportunity to run for this highest office in our federation is a profound honor - one that I accept with humility, commitment, and responsibility.

My desire to serve as SIA President comes from the belief that Soroptimist leadership is a commitment to continuous service, resolute governance, and meaningful impact.

If elected, I will bring proven leadership experience, strong governance skills, and a global perspective shaped by years of professional work and Soroptimist service. I am ready to dedicate my time, energy, and resources towards strengthening our federation and advancing our mission with unity and purpose.

I will lead with collaboration, decisiveness, compassion, and a strong adherence to diversity and governance, while keeping our focus on improving the lives of women and girls through education, empowerment and opportunity. I also believe our future depends on vibrant membership growth. By engaging younger women through mentorship, innovation, and meaningful service, we ensure Soroptimist remains sustainable and empowered by new generations of committed leaders.

Together we will ensure that Soroptimist remains a powerful force for good – investing in the dreams of women and girls across every region we serve. With deep gratitude for those who have shaped my Soroptimist journey, I am prepared to give my best in service to our federation. We will strengthen our Soroptimist bonds, grow our membership, and expand hope, education, and opportunity for women and girls.

- End -



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

Resume for SIA President-elect 2026-2027

Name: Michelle G. Strawser

Member, SI of Pasco in Southern Region

SOROPTIMIST EXPERIENCE (Include significant Club, Region, Federation and International service with dates):

2025 – Delegate CSW69

2024-2025 – SIA Federation Secretary-Treasurer

2024 – Delegate CSW68

2023 – Kenya Leadership Program with Past SI President Sharon Fisher

2023 – Delegate CSW68

2022-2024 – Southern Region Membership Chair – 1 new charter/1 pending

2020-2022 – Southern Region Governor

2018-2020 – Southern Region Governor-elect

2016-2018 – Southern Region District II Director

2014-2016 – DIBI Chair (teens attended SIA Convention 2016 Orlando from our program)

2014 – Southern Region Emerging Leader

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Executive Director Comprehensive Pain Management Partners / 2002 – Present

New Port Richey, FL • Scaled practice from two locations to eight locations - 2004 to 2013 •
Managed eight locations and 50+ employees • Human Resource, Federal, and State law compliance •
Increased revenue from \$2 mil to \$5.7 mil

Franchise Owner Orangetheory Fitness / 2014 - Present

Cumming, Peachtree City, & Columbus, GA • Project management on all three locations;
construction to open • Learned franchising protocols, systems, and operations • Annual revenue
projections, and management, of \$2.2mil+ • Client acquisitions

Partner RMD Development, LLC / 2022 - Present

Tampa, FL • Residential and Commercial Rental Properties

Michelle G. Strawser – Statement of Interest

President-elect 2026 * 2027

February 2026

I joined Soroptimist International of Tampa in 2005 as a 4th generation Soroptimist. My professional career began in 2002, at Comprehensive Pain Management Partners (CPMP), as a Healthcare Administrator. In 2014 I became partner in three Orangetheory Fitness franchises in Atlanta, GA which served to expand my knowledge, experience, and reach across industries.

My interest in serving as SIA President-elect comes from years of learning and constantly looking for ways to enhance or advance our clubs, regions, and organization. My Soroptimist leadership journey began in 2013 as club secretary. I received the emerging leader award from the southern region in 2014 and have served the southern region in a leadership capacity every year since 2014. Serving as club president, club DIBI chair, club director, region membership chair, region district director, region governor-elect, and region governor has provided a foundation for me to continue to serve at the federation level. It has been a great honor to have chartered a new club in the greater Tampa Bay community in July of 2024, Soroptimist International of Pasco. Sharing the love of mission and recruiting thirty-five women to join us in reaching our Big Goal. It was also rewarding to participate in the first Soroptimist Leadership Fellows Program in 23'-24'.

Professionally, I have scaled one business from \$2 million to \$5.7 million and currently oversee a collective operating budget of \$7 million. Owning and operating seven brick and mortar locations has provided a means to hire and promote women at the local level of our communities. It taught me that no person can do this alone, to achieve success, a collaborative team approach is required. During COVID I served as governor of the southern region and closed five of my businesses for ten weeks. In addition to learning to lead through unprecedented times, we had to navigate adjusting to new normals.

The desire to serve in this role stems from being able to hear from our members and learn about areas requiring focus which may be outside my scope of recognition. Having served as SIA Secretary-Treasurer in 24'-25' and in my current role as the laws and resolution chair 25'-26', I have acquired great insight into the processes followed by our organization. Working closely with the officers for a year and then alongside members on the laws and resolution committee has helped me to identify areas of opportunity. My professional career has created the flexibility and means to meet all the requirements of President-elect. I would be honored to serve in this capacity if elected.

Respectfully submitted: Michelle G. Strawser