

Yoko McIvor Lieberman

Distinguished Service Award

About Yoko

- ◆ Vice President of Global Brand Marketing, Ralph Lauren
- ◆ Focuses on developing influential brands that resonate with contemporary culture, oversees marketing efforts for the flagship brand, Polo, and orchestrates cross-brand strategies.



What does this award mean to you?

I am a planner. Yet when I graduated I didn't have a clear plan. I took a risk, declined the "safe" corporate marketing role at home in Minneapolis and went to New York to pound the pavement. This felt crazy at the time, but looking back now the seeds from the J-School were planted and ready to grow in any number of directions. To me this award is a testament to my professors, mentors, and parents who planted those seeds of curiosity and confidence. I've just been watering them along the way.

Favorite J-School subject?

Professor Culver's J202 hooked me! She quickly honed my writing and critical thinking skills. Professor Shah put those skills into practice building real-life advertising campaigns. He set me on my career path. And the enlightening ethics coursework on media and minorities stayed with me, inspiring my growing focus on social impact and sustainability.

Favorite memory from the SJMC?

I joined a presentation on travel journalism by alumnus Peter Greenberg. I was floored, inspired and asked a million questions. He later hired me as an intern and production assistant, which became defining roles of my career.

Most valuable lesson learned in the SJMC?

Good writing and storytelling are the key to create any kind of change.

Favorite Madison hangout?

Sunny days on the terrace, cramming at Memorial, mason jars at the Red Shed, dinners on Willy Street, and Paul's Pel'meni capping those late nights on State Street!