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Aug. 22, 2019

## **Water Environment Federation Honors Water Professionals, Organizations and Associations for Service and Contributions**

ALEXANDRIA, Va.— The Water Environment Federation (WEF) proudly announces the 2019 WEF Awards recipients for individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to the sustainability of water resources and made a profound impact on the future of the water profession. “The Water Environment Federation is extremely proud to honor the incredible contributions of these individuals and organizations in protecting one of the world's most valuable resources and contributing to their communities,” said Eileen O’Neill, WEF Executive Director. The 2019 recipients for Individual Service and Contribution Awards and Organization and Association Recognition Awards are:

### **Camp Applied Research Award: H. David Stensel**

The Camp Applied Research Award recognizes a WEF Member who demonstrates a unique application of basic research or fundamental principles through the design or development of a wastewater collection or treatment system. University of Washington professor H. David Stensel is known for his extensive outreach, particularly his collaboration in developing key portions of the Metcalf & Eddy wastewater engineering textbook. Stensel’s research and development work in nutrient removal processes is particularly important because of its impact in making such systems less costly and easier to operate with improved reliability.

### **Emerson Distinguished Service Medal: Jeanette Brown**

The Emerson Medal is presented to an individual whose significant career contributions to the WEF and the water environment profession merit recognition. Jeanette Brown has taught wastewater treatment courses at Manhattan College since 2002, and has contributed to WEF Manuals of Practice, technical publications that are industry standards. Brown also has several applied research accomplishments and she has served as principal investigator for several research projects.

### **Ralph Fuhrman Medal for Outstanding Water Quality Academic-Practice Collaboration: April Gu, Charles Bott, James Barnard, Peter Schauer, Andrew Shaw, Imre Takacs and Paul Dombrowski**

This medal promotes and rewards extraordinary collaborative work by two or more people that has made a positive impact on advancing the water quality profession by increasing the knowledge base, demonstrating the application of innovative scientific concepts or project implementation methods, and enhancing the relationship between academia and clean water practitioners.

The recipients of the 2019 medal conducted extensive data collection and developed new mechanistic modeling techniques to characterize previously poorly defined enhanced biological phosphorus removal performance. The group coordinated 14 utilities for field testing, along with insight into design parameters, evaluation of data and input into the model development. The project is an example of the collaboration between academia, the private sector and utilities that WEF strives to achieve to advance the knowledge base of the industry.

### **W. Wesley Eckenfelder Industrial Water Quality Lifetime Achievement Award: Andrew W. Edwards**

The Industrial Water Quality Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes and honors an individual who has made substantial and measurable engineering, scientific and/or operations contributions to industrial waste management or treatment related to water quality improvement. Andrew W. Edwards has devoted his nearly 50-year career to industrial water and wastewater engineering design and operations support. A former student of the award's namesake, Edwards has extensive experience in developing effective treatment technologies for various types of industrial wastewater, from petrochemical processing to food manufacturing.

**Public Officials Award: Mayor William J. Barlow (Oswego, N.Y.) and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D.-Maryland)**

The Public Officials Award is presented to an elected or appointed public official that has made a documented, significant contribution in clean water legislation, public policy, government service, or another area of public prominence that resulted in improvements to the water environment. The award can be presented for local, state or federal public service.

1. Mayor William J. Barlow, Oswego, N.Y. -- Mayor William J. Barlow, Jr. has provided the leadership to motivate the city to invest in its water and wastewater treatment facilities. Because of significant resource and financial commitments, key technical achievements have been made which have increased effluent quality and provided good return on investment and several intermunicipal agreements. As a result of Barlow's efforts, his administration has invested \$3.2 million in three years to the city's two wastewater plants and is making progress on an \$85 million sewer separation project. The investments led to reduced operational costs and Barlow recently announced a \$200 annual reduction in the city sewer bill for Oswego homeowners.

2. Sen. Ben Cardin has been a leading advocate for protecting the water environment, a strong proponent for investing in aging infrastructure, and encourages preparation for the impact of climate change on infrastructure. As a senior member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, he led the passage of America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, which included provisions for the Water Infrastructure and Financing Innovation Act, stormwater financing, combined sewer overflow and sanitary sewer overflow grant program, and workforce job training. Cardin also secured passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015 with provisions to improve stormwater management for transportation projects, and passage of the Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Program Act of 2018, which provides grants to establish assistance programs for low-income ratepayers. Cardin supports green infrastructure as well as highway water quality runoff legislation with provisions to eliminate or reduce coal-tar in highway construction and maintenance.

**Outstanding Young Water Environment Professional Award: Phill H. Yi**

This award recognizes the contributions of young water environment professionals for significant contributions to WEF and to the wastewater collection and treatment industry. The 2019 recipient, Phill H. Yi, is vice president of the Virginia Water Environment Association. He has contributed to the improvement of knowledge in the water profession through technical presentations and publications and is frequently published and consulted. Yi actively mentors and engages students and young professionals and Yi is a 2016 graduate of WEF's Water Leadership Institute and served as an advisor the following year. Yi was inducted into the Virginia Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers in 2016, an honor rarely given to a young professional early in their career.

**Outstanding Member Association Award: Water Environment Association of Texas**

The Member Association (MA) Awards were established to recognize outstanding Member Associations and MAs that excel in areas of membership retention, financial strength, new memberships, scholarship programs, student achievement and support, technology transfers, and/or award programs. The passionate dedication the Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT) has shown to its members and to Texas is impressive. With a three-person staff, bolstered by more than 2,600 volunteers, WEAT has established itself as a force for good in Texas, organizing several community service projects and river clean-ups. WEAT hosts

several educational conferences and operator training sessions, and in 2018 raised \$27,000 in scholarship funds. In 2018, membership jumped 23 percent, with the addition of 489 new members, and WEAT set a record by hosting 11 college teams for the Student Design Competition.

**Member Association Achievement Award: Clean Water Professionals of Kentucky and Tennessee**

This award recognizes a WEF Member Association that demonstrates superior achievement in financial strength, membership retention, new membership, scholarship, student achievement and support, technology transfer or awards program and participation. The Kentucky-Tennessee Water Environment Association has invested time and effort in growing their membership and has seen an 18 percent member increase over the past four years, while realizing a 63 percent net gain in membership retention.

**Member Association Safety Award: Team Jacobs, Fort Campbell, Ky.**

This award is presented annually to an industry, municipality, organization, utility, or other entity engaged in the protection of the water environment to recognize the success of their efforts to promote safety and educate the water industry. Team Jacobs in Fort Campbell, Ky., demonstrates an exceptional dedication to safe working environments. With nearly 800,000 hours worked safely, the team has not had any work-related illnesses, injuries or fatalities since Feb. 27, 2008. The team has worked hard to establish, maintain, and prioritize a culture of safety.

**Water Heroes Award: Greg Hall Jr., City of Conroe, Texas**

The Water Heroes Award recognizes individuals or municipalities who performed duties above and beyond the usual call of duty during an emergency to continue to protect the public and the environment. Greg Hall, Jr., a supervisor at the wastewater treatment facility serving Conroe, Texas, had prepared to ride out Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. He and the crew stocked up on supplies and settled in. What wasn't apparent was the magnitude of the storm and pending damage.

When the hurricane struck southeastern Texas, floodwater swamped the wastewater facility, which lies 100 yards from the San Jacinto River. A 10-foot levee surrounds the plant, which has the capacity to treat 12 million gallons of wastewater daily and is the sole plant serving Conroe, an 82,000-person community north of Houston.

By 2:30 a.m. on August 29, Hall decided to evacuate everyone but the essential crew who had prepared to stay for the duration of the storm. The access road to the plant was flooded and surrounding subdivisions already faced mandatory or recommended evacuations. Six hours later, the water in the river overtopped the plant level. Around 3:30 a.m., the Conroe Fire Department rescued seven members by boat. Yet, Hall and the essential crew decided to remain. A few hours later, the plant was under so much water that Hall and the remaining crew were evacuated by helicopter. "We stayed until the last minute," he said. "It's the only wastewater plant for Conroe. We had to keep it running."

Most of the 11 buildings had at least six feet of water, the operations building was completely underwater and there was significant damage to the electrical and mechanical processing equipment. As soon as the flood waters receded enough, the crew, along with other city staff, moved in.

Hall, the crew and other city employees worked 24 hours a day the following week to restore the plant, even working out of pickup trucks and trailers. Five days after the entire system had shut down, the plant was operational.

The awards will be presented during WEFTEC® 2019, the Federation's 92nd Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference, September 21-25 in Chicago. For more information about the WEF Awards, visit <https://www.wef.org/awards>.