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*A former International Professional Development Committee member and International Nominations Committee member, Kenney was instrumental in establishing the SR/WA designation.*

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In 1934, a group of dedicated Right of Way practitioners looked at their standing in the world of business and found it wanting. There was no R/W Profession. The image of R/W people dated back to the "Road Agent" and left a bad taste in the mouth of those who had contact with the right of way agents.

So began the Right of Way Association and the development of a code of ethics, followed by those individuals involved in the business of acquiring properties for highways, utilities, railroads, pipelines, etc. Our association became the central source of information about R/W matters and the focal point for all to meet and exchange ideas.

## **Professional Development: Why SR/WA?**

**by William Kenney, SR/WA**

In the early 1960s a segment of the association (various chapters scattered throughout the country) began to study ways in which true professional status could be obtained for its members. Many ideas leading to R/W professional development were considered, such as licensing, certification, higher entrance requirements for all members, etc.

In 1965, a national committee was appointed to study the feasibility of a National Registration Program which could be incorporated into the Association Bylaws and inspire professional R/W people to greater efforts in education and training that would lead to recognition as a true R/W Professional. This committee, the first Professional Development Committee, was chaired by J.W. Greathead, Chapter 1. In the year that followed, many proposals and ideas were reviewed and studied. Other organizations were asked about their programs and problems of implementing their certification programs. Discussions were held, problems, solutions, and responsibilities defined. Finally, in May 1967, the Association's Board of Directors adopted a resolution creating the Professional Development Program (PDP).

PDP, also known as the Registration Program, was established in order that "educational standards be increased over the years through the combined efforts of the National Professional Development Committee and the National Education

Committee until the objective of a training program for full Professionalism is reached."

More than 16 years have passed since this program was inaugurated. The initial requirements were based primarily on experience. Today the PDP requires not only five years journeyman level experience in R/W work, but also education in the form of college level courses in the four R/W fields of Negotiations, Appraisals, Law and Engineering together with the successful passing of examinations in each of the four R/W disciplines.

Why a professional designation? I am sure this is asked by many people in all walks of life. The short-sighted individual sees no need in his present assignment; he is happy as he carries out his day to day activities. Usually he is not aware of the changing environment going on around him. The farsighted individual, on the other hand, is looking ahead. He is aware that nothing is static, but rather dynamic, changing, evolving. Those of us who have worked in the R/W field for many years can look back to our beginning and compare. Our appraisals were short, with little supporting data. Negotiations were nothing more than haggling or "horsetrading", if you want to use the term. We did the best we could with the existing process. There was no Relocation Assistance Program, large Property Management activities, environmental considerations, airspace programs, etc.

The farsighted individual is aware of change and sees the need to improve himself in order to be "in the front of changing times". The Association's SR/WA program is one way for the dedicated R/W agent to maintain the higher levels of proficiency in these changing times. As the R/W agent participates in his professional development, true professionalism is acknowledged through improved work results and earned designation.

Today our program has made great strides in the educational area. Courses have been developed to cover all segments of our association's endeavors, both basic and advanced. Additional courses are now being developed to meet the ever increasing demands, of the membership and employers.

In the 1978/79 year, the International Professional Development Committee (IPDC) began to study the need for a recertification program within the general guidelines of the Association's Designation Program. Many members felt a way must be found to assure that the senior members continue to increase their knowledge. New directions and changing emphasis require new and differing techniques, knowledge, and ideas. After 2 years of discussion, I.P.D.C. submitted the "Recertification Addendum to the Senior Program" to the Association's Board of Directors. It has been approved.

Today all members receiving their senior designation after July 1, 1980 will be required to be recertified every five years by successfully completing additional educational training.

So again, why SR/WA designation today? As each one of us proceed through our careers, we want to believe that we have the respect and admiration of our peers. One way to reach this goal is a job well done and a sincerity to improve one's knowledge. This is achieved by earning designation as a professional, a Senior member of the International R/W Association.



Ron Williams, SR/WA promoting the program at an International Seminar.



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