

A Win-Win Approach to Conflict Management

BY CAROL L. BROOKS, SR/WA

As a long-time IRWA instructor, I was pleased to receive a Request for Proposal to instruct Course 213, Conflict Management, for our newest Chapter in South Africa. The chance to travel to Johannesburg, South Africa and share my conflict resolution and other right of way experiences with our fellow members was an opportunity I didn't want to miss.

Our respective countries share so many of the same issues, especially in relation to laws and governmental policies. And although the laws in the United States are more strictly defined, South Africa faces a host of other hurdles. One in particular is the strain of working with mining companies, which are scattered over the entire region, occupying huge swatches of land. There are also a diverse number of cultural and religious issues for private owners, where ancestral loyalties are very challenging.

There is a common thread among all right of way professionals - our deepest desire to represent projects for the public good. We share the same quest for professionalism and work to collaborate with landowners so that we can achieve win-win outcomes. Our issues may be slightly different, but at the heart of our motivation is our focus on developing rapport and trust, and aspiring to the high standards established by IRWA.



Bobby Richardson, founding member of SARWA and its first President (1998-1999) with Carol Brooks, SR/WA at Glenhove Conference Centre in Johannesburg.

I believe one of the reasons this particular IRWA course fits into the mainstream of various cultures is because property owners all really want the same thing – a better way of life. This comes from having a safe and environmentally secure lifestyle, and this requires essential infrastructure.

Collectively, we are hardworking, ethical, and enormously tested at every level of professionalism as we strive to improve everyday enjoyment of expanded roadways and utilities for the greater good.



There were 57 attendees for the Conflict Management Course, held in conjunction with SARWA's 15th Annual Conference.