

IRWA Annual Awards

W. Howard Armstrong Instructor of the Year Kristen Bennett, SR/WA



Thank you for the tremendous honor of being named the W. Howard Armstrong Instructor of the Year. Receiving this award was a surprising bright spot in a year filled with unprecedented challenges and uncertainties for all of us. From the very first time I set foot in an IRWA class, I knew that I wanted to be an instructor for this organization. The class was 503, mobile home relocation, taught by John Reed in Austin, Texas. Over the years, John became my mentor and dear friend. Thank you, John, for always believing in me. Thank you to the brilliant instructors who have mentored me, challenged me and who continue to inspire me. It has been instrumental to my development as an instructor to observe and learn from some of the best. Thank you to Tami Benson, Lisa Harrison, James A. Olschewski, and the Queen, Mary Ann Marr. Each of you have left an indelible mark on my leadership style and teaching philosophy.

My teaching philosophy is simple. I respect my students and their time, and I believe that adult learning should be fun and engaging—never childish or condescending. I want students to leave class saying, “Hey! That was really fun!” while still fully absorbing and retaining the course material.

Thank you to all of the Chapters who have given me the opportunity to teach in their areas. I have met incredible people through the courses I have instructed, and I am constantly reminded that we all have so much to learn from one another. It is an honor to spend time with you talking about the things that we are passionate about. Thank you to Chapter 36 in North Texas. Our Chapter leaders and members have always made education a top priority and I appreciate all of the learning opportunities that they provide for this Association. Thank you to Pinnacle Consulting Management Group for establishing and sponsoring this award. I am humbled to see my name associated with W. Howard Armstrong.

As we continue to deal with the uncertainties of today, we can be sure of this: the IRWA improves people’s quality of life through infrastructure development. We will continue to adapt and persevere in order to carry out that purpose. I am so proud to be part of this Association. I may not have the opportunity to accept the award with all of you in Minneapolis, but I am deeply grateful for this honor. I look forward to being together in San Antonio where we will certainly do our best to make up for lost time!