

IRWA's 66th Annual International Education Conference

Our First Virtual Conference

Originally scheduled to take place in Minneapolis, Minnesota, IRWA's 66th Annual International Education Conference faced unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. The Association remained diligent in prioritizing the safety and security of attendees and ultimately chose not to put the health and wellness of members at risk with an in-person conference.

Despite this difficult decision, all was not lost. In a true show of resilience, IRWA used these turn of events to hold the very first Virtual Conference in IRWA history. In June of 2020, members across the globe gathered in front of their computer screens to attend virtual education sessions, participate in the Meeting of the Members, and witness the very first virtual Board of Directors Meeting.





Sponsored by



A Message from the 2020 Conference Co-Chairs



Mindy Leadholm, SR/WA, and Dan Lesher, SR/WA

Thank you to all of our wonderful members who attended the 66th Annual IRWA Education Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota in June! On behalf of Minnesota North Star Chapter 20, we truly hope you enjoyed your time in Minnesota – networking, educating, enjoying and making memories!

Wait...that is how we *wished* the first sentences of this message could have been written. Instead, as we all know, the difficult decision was made to cancel the 2020 Education Conference. This decision was not taken lightly and was so disappointing to all those involved. Despite the disappointment, it was ultimately the right decision as we all continue navigating through life amid a worldwide pandemic.

Chapter 20 was so excited to welcome you to Minnesota so we want to tell you a bit about what we had planned for everyone.

Opening Ceremony

To kick off the Conference, Ann Bancroft was planning to speak at our Opening Ceremony. Ms. Bancroft is a local Minnesotan who is an internationally recognized explorer and leader. A few of her accomplishments are as follows:

- In 1986, Bancroft was the only female member of the Steger International Polar Expedition, dogsledding 1,000 miles across the Northwest Territories in Canada and becoming the first woman in history to cross the ice to the North Pole.
- In 1993, she led the American Women's Expedition to the South Pole, earning her the distinction of being the first woman in history to cross the ice to both the North and South Poles.
- In 2001, Bancroft, along with Norwegian polar explorer Liv Arnesen, became the first women in history to sail and ski across Antarctica's landmass – completing a 94-day, 1,717 mile trek.

Ann Bancroft's experience, leadership and perseverance have inspired people from all over the world to pursue a love of outdoor adventure and individual dreams. We know this would have been a great inspirational kick-off to our 2020 Education Conference.

Plenary Session

Our Plenary Speaker, Alan Page, became known as one of the greatest defensive linemen ever to play football in the NFL, playing most of his career with the Minnesota Vikings. In 1971, he was the first ever defensive player to be selected as Most Valuable Player in the NFL and has played in all four Super Bowls that the Vikings have been in. While still playing football in the NFL, Page was attending law school in Minneapolis. In 1992, he was elected as an Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court. He served as a Justice for the Minnesota Supreme Court until 2015, during which time he heard many cases relevant to our right of way industry. Page once said, "To me the law is about solving problems and helping people." This Plenary Session would have been well-worth attending given the fascinating and inspirational history of "Justice Page."

Awards

To all of the award finalists and award winners – congratulations! And to all SR/WA recipients who were planning to walk across the stage in Minneapolis – congratulations to you as well! We know that these acknowledgements may not feel as rewarding without walking on stage, but please know that each and every one of you is congratulated and appreciated by your fellow IRWA members.

Monday Night Event

The Right of Way Education Foundation (RWIEF) had an amazing Monday Night Event planned for everyone as one of their big annual fundraisers. The evening was a perfect summer night in Minnesota. The venue was just across the street from the Hilton and offered an indoor and outdoor area. We had a wonderful meal planned, a talented local band playing music for us and a corn-hole tournament organized for all those who like a little competition. Thank you to those who donated and bid on all of the items in the virtual silent auction; the RWIEF trustees were very thankful and appreciative that they were still able to raise some funds for the Foundation.

Golf Tournament

Minnesota is known for how many golf courses it has across the state; despite the short golf season. The RWIEF had picked one of the best for another of their annual fundraisers. We know this would have been a fun and successful afternoon, and we hope any of you golfers will come play a round with us the next time you are in Minnesota.

Board of Directors Meeting

For the first time ever, the Board of Director's Meeting was held virtually. Despite various technical difficulties that come with over 300 people attending virtually from all over the world, the meeting was a success with our leaders stepping up and taking care of our professional business needs that are critical to the Association.

Education Sessions

All of the education sessions planned for you throughout the conference were full of incredible experts who were ready to discuss various interesting and informative topics. Thank you to all of our speakers who had committed to providing this benefit to our members.

In addition to all of the educational opportunities the conference provides, we were hoping you would be able to take some time to network with old and new IRWA friends while enjoying what Minneapolis and St. Paul have to offer. The Twin Cities—comprised of Minneapolis (the state's largest city) and St. Paul (the state capital)—offers a "two for one" opportunity for all! Both cities are rich in culture, history, recreation and entertainment; they truly offering something for everyone. It would have been a great place to network and explore with fellow IRWA members.

Looking Forward

Life is all about facing new challenges and 2020 has proven no different. We have 100% confidence that all of our fellow IRWA members will persevere through these difficult times and come out the other side stronger than ever. It is times like these that we should be even more grateful for our amazing professional network that the IRWA has built and continues to grow. We hope you all stay healthy, happy and safe. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in San Antonio, Texas in 2021!



SR/WA Designation Recipients



SR/WA DESIGNATION RECIPIENTS

May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020

Congratulations to these right of way professionals who have, through experience, education and examination, earned the prestigious SR/WA designation. The SR/WA is the highest right of way designation and reflects each recipient's commitment to ongoing professional growth and development.

Jenny Adkins, SR/WA	Greg Fife, SR/WA-GN	Lanny Mathies, SR/WA
Khaled M. Al-Bahnasi, SR/WA	Frank Fucile, SR/WA-GN	Sarah A. Naqi, SR/WA
Abdulkareem H. AlMakrami, SR/WA	Eric Fung, SR/WA	Denealo Negual, SR/WA-OG
Sheila O. Armstrong, SR/WA	Wendy Gauthier, SR/WA	Alexandra Nguyen-Rivera, SR/WA
Heather R. Bagley, SR/WA-GN	Scott L. Haga, SR/WA	Gretchen Poindexter, SR/WA
Norman A. Bailey, Jr., SR/WA	Calvin Hagel, SR/WA	Anthony J. Reese, SR/WA
Tyson Barby, SR/WA-TN	Steve Hertstein, SR/WA	Brent Rolf, SR/WA
Joseph M. Basuino, SR/WA	Amanda L. Hill, SR/WA	Jeannette Rotz, SR/WA
David L. Baylor, SR/WA-GN	David Scott Hughes, SR/WA-GN	Tamar Salpeter, SR/WA-GN
Erin Begier, SR/WA-GN	Thomas Jackson, SR/WA-OG	Jessica A. Sandry, SR/WA
Carol Biggs, SR/WA	Joseph Khammash, SR/WA-TN	Maggie Schedler, SR/WA
Emeline Myla Burgos, SR/WA	Chris Korsmeyer, SR/WA	Heidi Shewmaker, SR/WA
Mario Caro, SR/WA	Steven Kovach, SR/WA	Steven M. Shockley, SR/WA-GN
Kathy Charlton, SR/WA	Neil Lacey, SR/WA	Joseph Simonetta, SR/WA
Julianne Dalla Gassa, SR/WA	Cory Lime, SR/WA	Frank Ulloa, SR/WA
Dedra L. Davis, SR/WA	Jewel Carissa Lopez, SR/WA-GN	Dalton D. Vann, II, SR/WA
Jacqueline Degabriele, SR/WA	Jeffrey Lynch, SR/WA	Sean Visser, SR/WA
Deanna L. Drum, SR/WA	Michelle MacMillan, SR/WA	Eric E. Wegner, SR/WA
Matthew Dunn, SR/WA-GN	Kristine Maristela, SR/WA	Yvonne Whitmire, SR/WA
Tiffani Dygert, SR/WA	Emmanuel O. Mark, SR/WA-GN	Edlyn Wong, SR/WA
Angela Ferreira, SR/WA-GN	Wade Martens, SR/WA	Anthony Zois, SR/WA

A Message from the Right of Way International Education Foundation

Our biggest education fundraiser of the year is the Monday Night Event at IRWA's Annual International Education Conference. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic kept us from gathering in person, but it did not squash our spirits altogether. Through the online auction site Handbid, IRWA members gathered virtually to bid against one another for unique items from across the country. We are proud to announce that even in the face of a pandemic, the RWIEF auction raised \$17,825 for right of way education. Thank you to all our bidders this year. We can't wait to see your exuberance in person next year.

None of our fundraising efforts would be possible without the support of our sponsors, who stood strong with us in this unprecedented time. These industry leaders donated generously to the cause. The RWIEF wishes to thank each sponsor for making a difference to right of way professionals worldwide by continuing to support education funding initiatives.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



RON BARKER, SR/WA
&
CYNDE BARKER, SR/WA





The much-anticipated Annual Awards serves to honor some of the most deserving individuals in the Association. Although we were not able to hold our Annual Awards Ceremony, we are proud to highlight all the award recipients as they share their thoughts on their success.

Employer of the Year - More than 20 Employees Puget Sound Energy

It is a special honor to represent my Puget Sound Energy (PSE) coworkers, acknowledged collectively as Employer of the Year (20 or more employees). PSE's membership in the IRWA involves the majority of our company's Real Estate Department. We're grateful to those who nominated and selected us for this meaningful award.



Our assembly of wonderful Real Estate professionals at PSE very often feels unique. This IRWA recognition validates those sentiments. It especially recognizes the support we get from our company. PSE has supported our Department's participation in the IRWA for decades, and so we first acknowledge our committed employer for that steady support. PSE recognizes the value that the IRWA brings to us individually and as a professional network. This support has allowed us to be engaged with the IRWA in many different ways.

I'd like to provide a glimpse of our active engagement in the IRWA. Our Department has been involved with IRWA during the course of five decades—perhaps longer. Much of our training and professional right of way credentials are accomplished through this respected organization. Several individuals have served as local Chapter presidents and other Chapter officers. The vast majority of our Department staff are literally card-carrying members. We tend to have at least one person in attendance at the Annual IRWA Education Conference, representing our Department. Our internal promotions lean heavily on IRWA coursework and we encourage obtaining the SR/WA designation, including recertification. In a similar vein, most of the contractors we use, particularly those involved in negotiations on behalf of PSE, hold the SR/WA designation. PSE is typically represented at the monthly local Chapter meetings (pre- Covid). Our staff often volunteer as course coordinators, including several during the last year or so. Additionally, PSE has hosted IRWA seminars and courses at our campus headquarters in Bellevue, Washington. PSE has also coordinated and participated in Chapter golf events. The IRWA is one of our strongest, if not the strongest, of our peer-related professional networks. We are very proud of this award. We've spent time as a Department and company recognizing and celebrating this wonderful recognition. In it we see acknowledged our active involvement, participation, education, training, professionalism, credentials, networking, friendship and a whole host of other attributes. We're glad for the association with our IRWA friends! Many thanks for this honor!

-Brett Bolton, Manager Real Estate

Employer of the Year – Government

LA Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, or LA Metro, is pleased and honored to accept the 2019 Employer of the Year award from IRWA. LA Metro was an integral partner of IRWA in 2019 with most of its Real Estate staff in good standing as members, several holding local Chapter 1 Board positions including two who served as past Chapter Presidents. Additionally, with the historic launch of the largest public infrastructure program in the country, Metro is giving ROW professionals a tremendous amount of opportunity to advance the profession and provide exceptional opportunity to its members.



We are grateful to the leadership and members of IRWA for supporting LA Metro during this large undertaking by providing courses, seminars and conferences during the past year. We have had some challenges to overcome recently during these unprecedented times, and we are happy that IRWA continues to provide services in support of the right of way profession and regional projects in Los Angeles County.

LA Metro has launched 28 major infrastructure projects over the last several years and has relied heavily on the membership of the IRWA. Moving into the future, LA Metro projects that it will need over \$80 million in appraisal services, ROW acquisition specialists for over 1,500 acquisitions and relocation specialists for over 1,000 relocations. This will create a source of revenue for the entire professional ROW community and support the advancement of IRWA. LA Metro is a strong member of Chapter 1, the founding Chapter of IRWA, and we are honored to accept this prestigious award.

Employer of the Year – Less than 20 Employees

United Power, Inc.



United Power is very excited to win this award but even more so with the acknowledgement of our industry and peers. While this award recognizes United Power's support and commitment to its IRWA employees, it's also a testament to the employees themselves. As one of the fastest growing electrical co-ops in the country, United Power recognized the importance of providing its right of way agents with all the tools necessary to perform the job at the highest level. With United Power's support and the guidance of IRWA, the staff of six has become proficient in obtaining electrical rights of way for a variety of industries, including but not limited to, oil and gas, residential /commercial / industrial development, transportation and renewable energy.

United Power accepts this award with gratitude and appreciation for its agent members, the Chapter and IRWA as a whole. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to provide the support recognized by this award. - Steve Barwick

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!



Young Professional of the Year Robert W. "Will" Snider



First and foremost, I thank God for His rich and gracious blessings in my life; and without whom nothing is possible. I thank my loving and patient wife for putting up with me and what I do for a living. She is a tremendous blessing and supports and encourages me every day. To my parents and grandparents who inspire in me to live a life in service of others, thank you for all of the life lessons and guidance that you provide.

Thank you very much to the IRWA and those responsible for choosing me for this award. I want to firmly emphasize that it truly is an honor to just be recognized as a finalist. Through various IRWA events, I've had the fortunate opportunity to meet many of the past finalists and winners of this award. Just to be mentioned in conjunction with those names is very humbling.

To Greg Cook, Ted Brooks and Donnie Sherwood, I thank each of you for taking a chance on me to come and intern as well as ultimately work for your company. Not only was the intern experience impactful and rewarding enough to solidify my ambition to become an appraiser, but also to allow me to meet my work family that I will forever be grateful for. To Matt Browne, thank you for the training, wisdom and contacts that you taught me. I can't thank you enough for all of the lessons that I learned in my time spent as your trainee. To Randy Williams and Dalton Vann, thank you for your help (as well as those previously mentioned) in ushering me into the IRWA and providing helpful guidance in becoming a committee member and ultimately leading the Education Committee over this past year.

Thank you to Dalton Vann, Jim Thomas, and Tommy Matthews who served as Education Committee Chairs during my time in the IRWA, and for establishing the big shoes that I would need to try and fill based on your successful years leading the Chapter 36 Education Committee.

Thank you to Marcus Boyd, Kim Hiebert, Kristen Bennett and Lora Gunter who served as the Presidents of Chapter 36 during my time on the board. Each of you served, and continue to serve, the IRWA in such selfless ways that I aspire to one day imitate. Thank you for your guidance and leadership. To my local IRWA Chapter 36 family, to all of the appraisers that I have the privilege to know and work with, to the clients and, more importantly, friends that I have made through the IRWA, this award is for each of you. Without you, this would not be possible. Without you, I wouldn't be able to wake up each day looking forward to the work to be done as an appraiser and the work to be done within the IRWA. Thank you all so much and I hope that each of you and your families stays safe and healthy during this time.

IRWA Annual Awards

Chapter of the Year

Fort Worth/Dallas, Chapter 36, Region 2



I am so excited that IRWA has recognized Chapter 36 with the honor of 2020 International Chapter of the Year! Although it is said that we “won” the award, I feel that we earned it. The credit goes to our dedicated Board and energetic members that make us a thriving and successful Chapter.

Our members are active and visible in the IRWA organization. Many Chapter members attend the Region 2 Spring Forum as well as the annual Region 2 College Station Summer Refresher event. We consistently have one of the most well-represented Chapters at these events. Many of our Chapter members are speakers at the Summer Refresher or assist with engaging outside speakers. We also have a noticeable presence at the IRWA International Conferences, both in attendance and as session speakers. If we had the privilege of accepting this honorable distinction at the International Awards Luncheon, I am confident you would see and hear the presence firsthand!

In addition to our seven elected Chapter Officers, we have many others on our Board that enable us to have large participation in the Chapter successes. We have 26 Board members, with an average of 20 in attendance at the monthly meetings. Our large Board is the (not-so-secret) secret to our success, as we are able to accomplish more by having many people carry the workload.

Many Chapter 36 members volunteer for International duties, serving on various committees such as the International Professional Education Committee, the International Transportation Committee, the Credentialing Committee and the International Task Force Committees. Numerous members also serve as IRWA Course Instructors. My belief is that no Chapter can truly earn this Award without an outstanding education program, which is the backbone of our organization. Chapter 36 consistently provides a robust annual lineup of approximately 15 classes, with many of the excellent instructors being within our own Chapter. This year we were on pace to offer 20 classes, prior to the coronavirus impact. Even so, our Chapter had instructors that taught in the first COVID-era transitional IRWA virtual class opportunities.

Our Chapter builds on reoccurring successes year after year and continues to improve with ideas and offerings that prevent us from becoming stale. One of our annual highlights is our Spring Seminar and golf tournament. This year we had amazing plans for a combination event held with the Region 2 Forum. Unfortunately, this event was another COVID casualty, but the innovation in planning will continue to grow into future years.

Receiving this Award this year is especially treasured because this is the 60th Anniversary of Chapter 36. One of the innovative ways we are celebrating the occasion is by using a commemorative logo this year. Winning the Chapter of the Year Award is the pinnacle of our year!

-Lora Gunter, SR/WA



Website of the Year Chapter 27 – Sacramento, CA



Conner McDonald, SR/WA, is a Project Manager and Senior Right-of-Way Consultant with CMD West, working on projects throughout California, Nevada and the Western States. In his free time, he can be found dreaming up new ways to work Chapter 27's awesome website into casual conversation – really, try him... He can be reached at Conner@CMDWest.com.

This is a fantastic honor to be selected as Website of the Year. On behalf of Chapter 27, we want to express our thanks to the INEC for all of the time and effort they invest in the nomination and selection process; with the members and Chapters of our Association being the best there is, and everyone amongst us doing award-winning work, INEC does not have an easy job.

And Chapter 27 has not made INEC's job any easier over the years. We've submitted our website every year for a while now. I was concerned they were going to say, "Look, Chapter 27, we've seen your site—been there, done that—take a little break for a while... focus on your Membership Numbers and go after a Gene Land Award or something... enough with the website, McDonald!"

But the INEC's Jenni Kriner and Kris Koehler were kind and they continued to indulge us. We got lucky this year. We're not really sure how, as we were pretty blown away by our fellow finalists. With that luck being the intersection of preparation and opportunity, we owe much to those who prepared us for today. Going back many years, Chapter 27 had the vision to establish a standout website that would serve as a functional tool for our members and guests, as well as our outward face to the world. At Chapter 27, we firmly believe that infrastructure is the unsung hero of the modern world. The architecture of beautiful buildings are celebrated, but the roadways, pipelines, powerlines and telecommunications that are the modern building's lifeblood are hidden in plain sight and too often taken for granted. The infrastructure professionals who do critical work are hidden in plain view as well. We sought to change the "hidden" part of that story via our site; we sought to celebrate infrastructure and its people—and it worked. Over the years, we've had other industries contact us for presentations. We've had students reach out to us to learn about right of way as a career choice. We've even had public decision-makers request our unique expertise on matters critical to the community.

A few years ago, we decided that we would take our site to the next level. There was all kinds of strategic planning, logistics and metrics involved, but that's the boring stuff. The fun part was that after a dedicated six months, our Website Committee rolled out an entirely new site that carried forth its historic spirit of celebrating infrastructure, its people and its role in the community. The site hit on all cylinders, so recognition must be given to our intrepid Website Committee who took something that wasn't broken and made it drop-dead awesome!

We are indebted to the support we've received from Region 1, our fellow Chapters and this great Association. IRWA really is the best, and we're going to keep sharing that through our website and in everything we do! Thank You!

IRWA Annual Awards

Newsletter of the Year

Write Away, CA, Chapter 47, Region 1



What an honor to have been awarded the IRWA 2019 International Newsletter of the Year. I am thrilled and excited for the recognition of the quality of the newsletter. I started as Editor in Chief & Publisher of the *Write Away* in September 2016. I look at the newsletter as the lifeline of our Chapter – keeping connected our northern Chapter Members in San Luis Obispo County to our southern Chapter members in Ventura County and those in between in Santa Barbara County (a linear distance of approximately 125+ miles between us). I have worked continuously to improve it to give it a more professional look with more relevant content. I try to keep up-to-date on relevant IRWA matters and education and disseminate that information to Chapter members through the newsletter. I get a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction in being the Editor in Chief & Publisher; I find it fun to research, “create,” assemble and organize the material that goes into the *Write Away* each month.

I want to thank those of you who have submitted articles, either self-authored or the sharing of someone else’s article, over the years. It is with your efforts I can find articles of interest for you to read. I also want to thank our many advertisers who have stood by our Chapter for so many years by publishing their business ads in the *Write Away* and whose contributions help our Chapter financially. Lastly, I want to thank Hamner Jewell for providing technical assistance while I learned how to use Publisher. Now, I have another tool under my belt! I appreciate the assistance Gayle Hess gave me over the past few years. Thank you so much to the IRWA for the recognition and award.

Marianne Wetzel, SR/WA
Editor in Chief & Publisher



Canadian Scholarship Award

Abigail Bowering

The Canadian Right of Way Educational Foundation (CRWEF) has shown me what it will mean to be a part of the right of way profession. By contributing significantly to continual professional development, the CRWEF helps to keep practices modern and cutting edge. I recognize and appreciate the importance of this work, and that is why I am interested in right of way; I want to keep pushing the boundaries of working in harmony with ecosystems, instead of attempting to control the land, to create techniques that work both for society and the planet. Every right of way is an opportunity to reflect critically on how we can improve our land management strategies, and I am grateful that CRWEF provides a platform to do this.



As a high school student in Victoria BC, I explored many academic and extracurricular interests, and found I had a strong interest in geography. I will be pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Geoscience at the University of Ottawa. While there, I hope to join organizations which work for climate justice. I have learned about the way geophysical factors influence human interactions and choices by studying how chemistry and physics intersect with physical geography. This has created the legal necessity for right of way in society. I am curious about how we can create eco-friendly cities and communities with proper land management – and I know that rights of way are an essential part of this. I will continue to learn about the many facets of this industry and all the factors that are at play when they are developed.

I hope to contribute to the field by addressing environmental concerns associated with public infrastructure. I aim to make the development of right of way more sustainable without hindering it so that collectively we can build a future of green communities. Eventually, I aspire to be an environmental scientist or lawyer and work with other right of way professionals to protect ecosystems during development.

I am incredibly honored to be able to represent the Canadian Right of Way Educational Foundation by being a scholarship recipient. Receiving this award has proven to me that I have the capabilities to be successful in the right of way profession. It has also eased the financial burden of university. This allows me focus my energy on growing my knowledge, therefore become a better contributor to the profession, and by extension society, in my future. I would like to offer my sincerest gratitude to the selection panel of this year's CRWEF Scholarship, and a promise that I will strive to do my best and advance right of way in an ethical, sustainable way.

SARPA & Canadian Scholarship Award

Gavin Hamilton



Receiving this generous gift from the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation will help tremendously in my effort to graduate from college with as little student debt as possible. Thank you for the vote of confidence by awarding me with this honor. My commitment to education goes beyond classes as I hope to become a well-rounded global citizen contributing to infrastructure development that keeps the world safe and functioning efficiently. One day, I hope to pay this money forward by helping other students achieve their goals just as you are helping me to achieve mine. I am truly grateful.

IRWA Annual Awards

Gene L. Land for Highest Numerical Gain North Texas, Chapter 36, Region 2



Winning the Gene L. Land Greatest Numerical Gain Award was a pleasant surprise! After having won Chapter of the Year and having two of our members win the Young Professional of the Year and Instructor of the Year Awards, this Award is a little lagniappe to a stellar Chapter 36 showing in 2020. In previous years, Chapter 36 has come close to winning the award, but we have fallen short. With other thriving Chapters that have been successful in increasing membership, we are privileged that our growth has outpaced the other Chapters this year.

The key to our membership growth is the value of membership that we are able to offer to our members. One of the significant things we offer is monthly luncheons with excellent speakers; we meet every month except July and August. In recent years, our membership total has been in the 400's. We typically have around 100 attendees at our monthly luncheon, with a few of those being member guests. Each guest is a potential member that has the opportunity to see what IRWA has to offer as THE industry association for our craft. Having a Membership Chair that is responsive to members and member applicants—as well as maintaining constant contact with IRWA Headquarters— is imperative. For the past two years, Leighton Gambill has been that key leader for Chapter 36.

One way we keep our meetings exciting is by having the events at various venues throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan area. This rotation allows people to attend when a meeting is geographically convenient, if location is a factor in deciding to attend a luncheon. We also do things like have door prize drawings at each of the luncheons, which include gift cards, free classes and door prize donations. Our Young Professionals have quite a few social events throughout the year. Some sample events include Top Golf, karaoke night and Whirlyball (some people might have to look that up).

Our education offerings are a key draw for membership. Obviously, discounted class tuition for members is an incentive for someone wanting to have the benefit of IRWA education to join the IRWA. In addition to a better class tuition rate, Chapter 36 offers numerous special incentives, such as a discount for Chapter 36 members on classes that the Chapter hosts. We also offer a Young Professional discount for all YPs in Region 2. Benefits like this provide value to our members, as well as act as an inducement to join.

One of the most effective ways we have had a successful membership renewal rate is our annual holiday party incentive campaign. Members who renew their IRWA membership prior to our holiday luncheon in early December are eligible in the drawing for stunning prizes. Some prizes are small items like gift baskets; there are also big-ticket items, such as iPads and Ring doorbells. We are excited that our Chapter momentum is being reflected in our increased membership numbers. Chapter success and membership growth have a symbiotic relationship. We look forward to continued success and growth of an engaged member base.

-Lora Gunter, SR/WA



Gene L. Land for Highest Percentage Gain Saudi Arabia, Chapter 87



We are honored to have been chosen for the Gene L. Land Highest Percentage Gain award. On behalf of the Saudi Arabian Chapter of the IRWA, I gladly accept this award. We are very grateful for this recognition, as it shows that the years of hard work that were put in place to promote the activities of this great Association in Saudi Arabia have turned out to be a success.

When our Chapter learned about this nomination, it came with a great feeling of accomplishment due to the amount of competition that goes on in the quest for which Chapter will be recognized for recording the highest percentage gain. I firmly believe each and every one of the various Chapters nominated also deserve this prestigious award. I know the amount of work, time and resources it takes for one to be able to operate very well. I salute you all for the excellent work you have been doing to bring about the development and the continued improvement of the Association in your various states and Chapters.

It has been indeed a dream come true for all of us here because it shows that many other people have looked at us, seen our qualities and achievements, and believed that we deserve to win this prestigious Award. For that, we are very much grateful.

Through the course of the journey—which has brought our Chapter to where it is today—we had our fair share of challenges and difficulties, but like all obstacles, they only served to make us stronger. It also inspired us professionally to continue moving forward with diligence and conviction to overcome those difficult situations.

This award, while a great honor, will be treated as a springboard to greater endeavors. It will not serve as a deterrent to reduce our efficiency and development but rather be the motivation that we need to continue more efficiently in carrying out our various tasks and bringing about further success. I can't fail to thank and salute all of you that graced this wonderful occasion. Also, a special thanks, dedication and salute goes to our members in Saudi Arabia whose teamwork, excellent communication, commitment and cooperation ensured that our Chapter became a success.

All of us in Chapter 87 are glad to have received this Award, and we say thank you to all our IRWA associates and members. We promise to continue working to reflect the values and principles which we all share. Thank you!

Umar Saleh Al-Abdullatif
Land Affairs Department, Manager
Saudi Aramco



Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Fred Easton, SR/WA

I have the great honor of winning the Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year award for 2019! I would like to thank the IRWA and the International Nomination and Elections Committee for this award. To my wife, Heather, thank you so much for putting up with all the long hours I have spent doing IRWA activities. Thanks to Chapter 6, the Mile-High Chapter, and Region 9 for always supporting me in my efforts. And thanks to all my mentors and peers that help me time and time again; there are too many to name, but you know who you are and thank you for all the encouragement, help and support you've provided!

Being nominated for this award made me think of who Frank C. Balfour actually was. I knew he founded the Association, but that's about it. A little asking around and I found very few knew much about him. This led me to do a bit of research and I hope you will indulge me in providing you a little information about why this award bears his name.

Many know that Frank Balfour founded this Association, but what you might not know is how much his vision still guides us today and how it has affected the right of way profession. Born in 1894, Frank graduated from the University of Santa Clara with a degree in electrical engineering and pursued a career in that field until work dried up at the start of the Great Depression. Frank made ends meet by becoming an independent real estate broker in the Los Angeles area. The real estate market there did much better than elsewhere—likely due to road projects, the expansion of the Coliseum and the construction of the Olympic village in preparation for the 1932 Olympiad.

In the early 1930s, Frank was an agent for the California Department of Public Works, Division of Highways—what we know of now as CALTRANS. In 1933—after a short apprenticeship and what we can imagine was a crash course in public agency work—Frank and George Mitchell of the Los Angeles County Road Department saw the need to unite right of way professionals from all agencies and private industries to elevate right of way work to a professional level. Frank wrote of the need for right of way agents to meet, share experiences and develop best practices, as well as the need for education in the fields of negotiation, appraisal, real estate

law, surveying and engineering. Most importantly, Frank saw the need to acknowledge the right of way agent as a critical profession to infrastructure development. As you'll see, Frank didn't sit around to see if this would happen.

In 1934, Frank and 14 right of way agents from Los Angeles formed the Southern California Right of Way Agent's Association with Frank as chairman. They held regular meetings and published educational materials—the early beginnings of our education program today. The first publication was titled "Right of Way" and had four pages. We've kept the title, but our magazine is a bit larger today and much nicer!

In 1935, Chapter 2 in San Francisco was added and there was talk of renaming the Association. Frank spoke of the potential to grow well beyond the boundaries of California and saw a future where agents from across the U.S. might meet to share ideas. As I must believe often happened in those days, Frank convinced the group and the Association was renamed to the American Right of Way Association (ARWA).

In the 1930s Frank and others would occasionally organize a three-day gathering of California right of way agents. Topics discussed at this conference included:

- The agent's part in the preparation and trial of condemnation cases
- Rights of way over state and federal lands
- Project specific topics such as the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge
- Legislative changes
- Proper property descriptions
- Appraisal problems

Over 80 years later, we are still talking about the same things. It's no wonder our friends and family flee when we start "talking shop" at social gatherings! Eventually this became an annual conference in the late spring. This was likely the template for our annual meetings, which began in late May of 1958 in San Francisco and is the precursor to our Annual Education Conference.



Your Right-of-Way Department can no longer be looked upon as an orphan child that you countenance as a sort of necessary evil.

-Frank C. Balfour



In 1943, Frank was promoted to Head the California Division of Highway's right of way department and total budget for the state's right of way acquisitions was about \$5,000,000. Around this time, Frank's salary had risen to the equivalent of about \$90,000 a year in today's dollar. The efforts to have agents paid equivalent to other careers with similar education and experience were beginning to pay off—at least in California. Beyond California, Frank performed a study on the effects of right of way projects on the impacted and surrounding lands. This led to a policy change for his staff and the promotion of policy changes across the U.S. through the ARWA, followed by changes in State and Federal laws and policies. For example, Frank commissioned a study to determine the well-being of residents in an L.A. project by highway construction. The study concluded that those that were displaced were struggling and many had become homeless due to a lack of affordable housing in the area. Those that were not displaced were doing well and property values had risen due to the easy access to the highway. This led to one of the earliest relocation assistance programs in the United States. Without Frank's desire to know how landowners fair after the completion of a project, who knows what our relocation and partial acquisition valuation understanding would be today?

Frank began steps to expand the Association and from 1950 to 1959, the Association added Chapters in Portland, Seattle, Kansas City, Denver, Detroit, Houston and many more. They finished the decade with the addition of the first International Chapter in Toronto, Canada.

In 1954 Frank wrote an article for the Appraisal Journal where he described the experience and educational needs of a successful right of way agent. These needs match our courses in ethics, communication, negotiation, management, appraisal, real-estate law and engineering. The very qualifications he describes match closely to the requirements we have today for our Right of Way Professional (RWP) certification. Frank understood the value of ethics, pointing out that a fair agent represents both the Department and the property owner. He discussed the need to "separate appraisal functions from negotiation" and he foresaw the need for Relocation laws. He had a vision of the needs of the profession, and through his efforts and the united vision of his successors, those needs are met today through the efforts of the IRWA with our conference, courses and credentialing.

Frank's last year in charge of our Association came in 1957. He continued to serve on the Executive Committee in other offices. In 1958, Frank was given our Association's first award for "leading the cause of professionalism of right-of-way practices and procedures throughout the United States" and for his "major contributions to the outstanding success of the American Right of Way Association." Frank retired in 1961, and then took charge of our brand new national office in Los Angeles. Frank finally retired

from the executive leadership in 1964 at the age of 70 and took on the role of national coordinator. Imagine 30 years on the Executive Board! I was just elected as International Secretary this year and I can't imagine doing this volunteer service until 2050!



In 1965, the Frank C. Balfour Professional of the Year Award was established. For years he continued to support the IRWA, publishing articles as late as 1974 when he was 80 years old. For his personal life, Frank was married as a young man and had a baby in 1917 that tragically passed away from pneumonia in 1922. He was divorced shortly thereafter. He remarried in the early 1930s and enjoyed a long commitment to his wife Clare. I couldn't find any evidence of Frank having children, nor a personal obituary, but I believe he passed away in 1978 according to the Right of Way Magazine's obituary. He may not have had children that survived him, but he was survived by the IRWA and all that he did to elevate our profession.

I am so honored to receive this award and hope that I can live up to the example set by Frank and all the Balfour recipients of the past. It means so much to me to be honored for the work I've done in Chapter and Region Leadership and for the work in attempting to improve our education on the IDEAs Task Force. As newly elected International Secretary, I still have a lot of work to do. Frank's vision will continue to guide me as I endeavor to improve our Association and the profession. Thank you!



IRWA's First Virtual Board of Directors Meeting

On June 24, 2020, IRWA members from around the world sat in front of their computer screens to witness the Association's very first virtual Board of Directors Meeting. International President Sharon Slauenwhite, SR/WA, welcomed members to this historic event and called the meeting to order before noting that the virtual question box and chat box were available to all participants. She then called on the Chair of the International Nominations & Elections Committee Jenni Kriner, SR/WA, to answer any questions concerning the virtual voting system. Jenni conducted multiple test votes to ensure all participants were comfortable and confident in the process.

Education Foundations

Carol Croft, SR/WA, President of the Right of Way International Education Foundation (RWEIF), was called on to give a report on the RWIEF. Carol provided information on the Foundation's assets, education commitments, as well as an updated list of Foundation trustees and Foundation officers. Finally, she urged participants to visit the new and improved RWIEF website, which includes the Foundation's new donation form.

Shannon Favaro, SR/WA, President of the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation (CRWEF), took the screen to give updates on the CRWEF. She began by introducing the other CRWEF officers and Board members before discussing the Foundation's financials and assets. Shannon congratulated the two CRWEF scholarship recipients and discussed how the Foundation plans to expand its scholarship program opportunities. She also directed participants to the updated CRWEF website.

Association Business

The first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting held in Portland, Oregon. These minutes, as well as the financial statements, were distributed electronically in advance. The motion passed to approve the minutes as distributed.

Sharon invited International Treasurer James A. Olschewski, SR/WA, to the screen to present the proposed 2020-2021 budget. James made note that the Finance Committee met multiple times during the year and provided monthly oversight over the budget of the Association. James pointed out that the budget proposal aligns with our strategies to increase the visibility of the IRWA and provide for the development of new education programming. Additionally, James noted that the Committee took into account the COVID-19 economic impacts to the Association with the revised budget and addendum. The 2020-2021 budget was approved as presented.

Three board resolutions were presented for consideration. The first resolution was brought to the IGC by the Partnership for

Infrastructure Professional Education (PIPE) Committee and Credentialing Committee Chairs as a way to help provide better communication between the two. The second was a request from the PIPE Committee to change its name to the International Professional Education Committee (IPEC). The third centered on IRWA Committees and moved to change the structure of all International Communities of Practice to become International Industry Committees. The three proposed resolutions were approved.

Nominations

Next on the agenda was the nomination of the International Executive Committee (IEC) Officers. Sharon Slauenwhite, SR/WA, was confirmed as IRWA's International President. Jake Farrell, SR/WA, James A. Olschewski, SR/WA, and Judy Jones, SR/WA, were up for reelection and confirmed. Fred Easton, SR/WA, joined the IEC as IRWA's incoming International Treasurer. Sharon announced that Brad Kuhn completed his service as General Counsel for the Association and introduced David Arnold, SR/WA, as the new General Counsel.

Judy Jones, SR/WA, presented the International Region Officers, while Jake Farrell, SR/WA, announced the appointments of the 2020-2021 International Service and Industry Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. Past International President Sandy Grigg, SR/WA, took the screen to swear in the slate of 2020 – 2021 elected officers.

Sharing Insight

Sharon was asked to share some insight into her plans as the 2020 – 2021 International President. She began by pointing out that it's difficult to know the exact vision for the future since the past year has been so unexpected. "The Covid-19 pandemic will change some of the ways the Association will operate, communicate and support our members—but it will not change our resolve to ensure that we provide the right of way community with the best possible education."

Sharon assured members that IRWA will continue to face the challenges to come and proactively seek solutions during these unique times. IRWA has already pushed forward with the immediate need of education and virtual courses. "We know that the future world of work and life-long learning is changing rapidly and the scale of this pandemic has reshaped that world in lasting ways," Sharon continued. "Your Association will adapt to those changes to ensure that our members are best prepared to continue this important work of improving people's quality of life through critical roles in the establishment and maintenance of energy and transportation infrastructure."