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NAWT Announces 2015 Awards; Looks Forward To Treatment Symposium

By Dhru Bhatt

2015 NAWT Excellence in Service Award Recipient

Each year NAWT recognizes one of its members or sponsored individuals or companies with the NAWT Excellence in Service Award. The criteria for this award is that the recipient shows exceptional accomplishments in service to their community and to the wastewater profession.

This year's honoree has gone above and beyond our expectations. After painstakingly evaluating a number of applicants based on the award criteria, the committee decided to bestow the coveted 2015 NAWT Excellence in Service Award to Pam Van Delden of Van Delden Wastewater Systems in Boerne, Texas.

Van Delden Wastewater Systems is a family-owned company. Frank J. Van Delden began installing septic systems in 1937 and continued building the company until his death in 1955. His son, Gary Van Delden, took over the business and maintained successful growth for the company until he retired in 1989. Garrett Van Delden represents the third generation to run the family business with his wife, Pam.

In 1981, Pam began working for her father-in-law and husband, Garrett, as the office secretary. Little did she know that this was the beginning of her career as a prominent and reputable septic system inspector for real estate transactions in the onsite wastewater industry. At that time, installations and repairs were 100 percent of the business. As mortgage companies began requiring real estate septic inspections, Pam saw this as a growth opportunity for the business. From the beginning, she was determined to provide quality and fair inspections to the communities and residents she worked with.

When the NAWT committee was making its decision, some of the qualities that were evaluated were her contributions to the wastewater profession. She has provided educational content during her presentations in the community. Her inspiration, leadership and willingness and ability to go above and beyond the call of duty were some of her other qualities the committee took into consideration when choosing her to receive the award.

2015 NAWT Hapchuck Memorial Scholarship

A number of applications were submitted for the 2015 NAWT William Hapchuck Memorial Scholarship. The assignment for this year's



Pam Van Delden

Minnesota wastewater veteran Hank Schlomka wins 2015 lifetime achievement award

Hank Schlomka, whose family full-service wastewater hauling business has operated in Minnesota since 1939, was presented with the Ralph Macchio Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual meeting of the National Association of Wastewater Technicians (NAWT). The ceremony took place at the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show in Indianapolis.

The wastewater industry's highest honor was presented by Macchio and Bob Kendall, of COLE Publishing. Macchio and Kendall were the first two winners of the award.

Macchio lauded Schlomka for his long service in the industry and spinning off his business into three distinct wastewater companies now operated by family members.



Hank Schlomka won the Ralph Macchio Lifetime Achievement Award during a meeting of the National Association of Wastewater Technicians at the WWETT Show in February. Schlomka and his wife, Carol, are flanked by Ralph Macchio (left) and COLE Publishing co-founder Bob Kendall.

Schlomka is familiar to many in the wastewater industry, as he has attended more than 40 COLE Publishing trade shows, including 35 annual shows carrying the Pumper & Cleaner Expo and WWETT names.

"I feel close to him because he resembles my uncle who gave me my work ethic," Macchio said of Schlomka, 75, who brought his wife, Carol, and extended family to the ceremony. "Hank represents that family

tradition that seems to be so prevalent in our industry, passing the businesses from generation to generation."

"It's a real honor to give this award to Hank," added Kendall. "He has been a very generous person for many years. We see this as the pinnacle – the greatest honor the industry has to offer. Hank's is truly a family operation and he carries on the tradition of providing quality service."

Schlomka's father, Carl "Henry" Schlomka, started the family business in 1939. Hank took over in 1968 and ran the Twin Cities-area business for many years before the younger generation took over.



Henry Kneiszel

scholarship was to write a short story about a meeting between a homeowner and a septic professional. The conversation is related to why the homeowner's septic system is not working properly as indicated by a floating manhole riser.

This year's scholarship recipient is Henry Kneiszel. The title of his short story was "The Mystery of the Floating Manhole Riser." The name Kneiszel may be familiar to many of us. Henry is the son of Jim Kneiszel, who is the editor of *Pumper* magazine. Henry is an undergraduate currently attending the

University of Minnesota, Morris, with an undecided major.

NAWT was proud to present both Pam Van Delden with the coveted 2015 NAWT Excellence in Service Award and Henry Kneiszel with the 2015 NAWT Hapchuck Memorial Scholarship. The ceremony was held at the State Association Breakfast during the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show Feb. 25.

NAWT Seventh Waste Treatment Symposium

We are excited to announce that NAWT and the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) are collaborating to conduct NAWT's seventh Waste Treatment Symposium in conjunction with NOWRA's Annual Conference. The Symposium will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Nov. 5-6. Please save the date! Additional details will be coming in the near future.

For more information on everything NAWT, visit our website, www.nawt.org. ■