

NEHA NEWS

Note of Thanks to Departing Board Members

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the dedication, hard work, and efforts of four members of NEHA's board of directors on the occasion of their departure from the board: Region 2 Vice-President Keith Allen, Region 7 Vice-President Timothy Mitchell, Immediate Past-President David Riggs, and Region 4 Vice-President Sharon Smith.



Region 2 Vice-President Keith Allen leaves the board after 3 years of dedicated service and leadership, serving in this position from 2015–2018. Keith has worked in the field of environmental health for nearly 18 years and is currently employed as a senior environmental health specialist with the City of Long Beach Department of Health & Human

Services. In addition, he is a part-time faculty member at his alma mater, Long Beach State University, where he teaches graduate level courses in environmental health.

Keith was the 2005 president of the California Environmental Health Association's (CEHA) Southern Chapter and was the 2006 CEHA Charles Senn Award recipient. He also proudly holds the prestigious status as a diplomate of the American Academy of Sanitarians. Keith coauthored an article in the September 2014 issue of the *Journal of Environmental Health* titled "A Community Outbreak of *Salmonella enterica* Serotype Typhimurium Associated With an Asymptomatic Food Handler in Two Local Restaurants."

"Serving on the NEHA board over the past 3 years has truly been an unforgettable experience," states Keith. "It was rewarding to serve my colleagues in the environmental health community and in helping make our profession better. I am very blessed to have made some lifelong friends with fellow NEHA board members."

Region 7 Vice-President Timothy Mitchell leaves the board after 1 year of dedicated service and leadership. Timothy has worked in the public and private environmental health sectors for two decades. He is credentialed through NEHA as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Registered Sanitarian and Certified Professional–Food Safety. Timothy is a strong advocate of NEHA's credentialing programs, training opportunities, and support of the environmental health profession.



Immediate Past-President David Riggs leaves the board after 15 years of dedicated service and leadership. Dave has retired after a 48-year career in management and training in environmental health and has been a member of NEHA for 43 years. He has been a strong advocate for the state affiliates, as well as individual environmental health profes-

sionals. Over the years he has served in leadership roles in three state affiliates and was responsible, along with other environmen-

tal health professionals, in promoting a revitalized and active Alaska affiliate.

During Dave's term as NEHA president, the association strengthened relationships with other environmental and public health associations and gained increased recognition as a leader on the national stage by federal and state agencies. It was during his tenure as president that the now annual visit to members of Congress by NEHA's national officers was initiated. Dave was also deeply involved in NEHA's leadership transition in 2014. Prior to being a national officer, he served as NEHA's Region 1 vice-president.

Going forward, Dave will remain active in environmental health through his activities as a consultant for local environmental health agencies in operations, management, and training. He will also remain active in his community through his various charitable organizations. Dave and his wife, June, will continue to conduct and organize the annual Youth in Government day involving high school students and elected government officials.

Looking back on his last 15 years on the NEHA board, Dave describes it as "the most enlightening, rewarding, and enjoyable experience of my career. The things I have learned, the friends I have made, and the affiliates I have visited would not have been possible. I encourage our young professionals to take full advantage of their membership in NEHA."



Region 4 Vice-President Sharon Smith leaves the board after 2 years of dedicated service and leadership. While as a regional vice-president, she served on NEHA's membership, affiliate engagement, Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition, and global engagement committees. Prior to joining the board, Sharon served as a NEHA Technical Advisor

from 2011–2016 and represented the association on a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Small Systems Workgroup.

Sharon recently retired from a 33-year career as an environmental health specialist. She was a regional supervisor for the non-community unit of the Drinking Water Protection Section at the Minnesota Department of Health. She began her career developing an environmental health program for a rural county public health agency. Sharon has been active in the Minnesota Environmental Health Association (MEHA) for many years, serving as its president from 2001–2002. She received merit awards numerous years and was named the MEHA Environmental Health Professional of the Year in 1998. Over the years she has served as co-chairperson of MEHA's publications, marketing, scholarship, and conference committees.

Sharon states that serving as a regional vice-president has been "a rewarding experience and I encourage all to volunteer to raise our profession at the national and state levels. I'm excited to continue to serve NEHA as a member of its credentialing committee."

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NEHA Staff Profile

As part of tradition, NEHA features new staff members in the *Journal* around the time of their 1-year anniversary. These profiles give you an opportunity to get to know the NEHA staff better and to learn more about the great programs and activities going on in your association. This month we are pleased to introduce you to one NEHA staff member. Contact information for all NEHA staff can be found on page 57.



Christine Ortiz Gumina

I joined NEHA in September 2017 as its new project coordinator for the Washington, DC, office. As one third of the Washington, DC, staff, my role is to oversee, assist, and coordinate project work in the areas of vector control, climate change, child and maternal health as it pertains to lead exposure, and

environmental health emergency preparedness. I also am responsible for NEHA's work on the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program and Epi-Ready Team Trainer: Foodborne Illness Response Strategy Program. In addition to my project work, I assist and participate in meetings, conferences, and workshops in the Washington, DC, area that pertain to environmental public health issues.

I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiological science from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master of Public Health from Eastern Virginia Medical School with a concentration in global environmental health. I was born in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, to Puerto Rican parents and spent my life in and out of the island as the daughter of a U.S. Navy service member. I have lived in various places—Puerto Rico, Florida, California, Virginia, Connecticut, Maryland, and the beautiful island of Guam. As a graduate student I worked on the Hampton Roads Intergovernmental Pilot Project, which brought a whole government and whole community approach to sea level rise and emergency preparedness issues in the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. This area of Virginia is incredibly vital to the U.S. as it holds one of the largest and deepest commercial sea ports on the east coast and is home to the U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet.

Prior to joining NEHA I was an environmental health specialist for the City of Norfolk in Virginia. My experience with the health department was enlightening and informative, but my passion remained with environmental health preparedness. My goal at NEHA is to recognize environmental health's role in emergency preparedness in order for local, state, territorial, and tribal health agencies to better prepare for the next major disaster. 🐼

Did You Know?

NEHA has posted two new policy statements on ear piercing guns and microblading that were recently approved by its board of directors. You can find these and other policy statements at www.neha.org/publications/position-papers.



Employers increasingly require a professional credential to verify that you are qualified and trained to perform your job duties. Credentials improve the visibility and credibility of our profession, and they can result in raises or promotions for the holder. For 80 years, NEHA has fostered dedication, competency, and capability through professional credentialing. We provide a path to those who want to challenge themselves, and keep learning every day. Earning a credential is a personal commitment to excellence and achievement.

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