

IN MEMORIAM

Ron de Burger

NEHA was saddened to learn that Ron de Burger passed away on August 5, 2016. Over his 52-year career, de Burger was a highly respected leader in environmental public health in Canada, as well as the U.S and abroad. He began his career as a public health inspector in 1965. He went on to work at Ryerson University (1969–1982), the Province of British Columbia's Preventive Health Services (1982–1988), Dalhousie University (1988–1991), Ottawa's AIDS Education and Awareness Program (1991–1998), and Health Canada (1998–2001). De Burger finished his career as the director of Toronto Public Health's Healthy Environments department, retiring in 2014.

De Burger had a longstanding history of involvement with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI), serving as its national president from 1976–1980. In recognition of his contributions and dedication as a member and strong supporter of CIPHI, he was awarded life membership in 1983. In addition, he was president of the Canadian Public Health Association, an honorary member of the Ontario Public Health Association, a member of the advisory board to the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH), and served on the advisory council for the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health.

His involvement in environmental public health did not know borders. De Burger had been an active member of NEHA since 2001. He served as a technical advisor for NEHA in workforce development and general environmental health. He was a valuable and thoughtful peer reviewer for the *Journal of Environmental Health*. He also shared his knowledge and expertise as a speaker at several NEHA annual conferences.

Sylvanus Thompson, a friend and former Toronto Public Health colleague, shared, "Ron was an accomplished public health professional who was totally dedicated to NEHA, CIPHI, and similar professional organizations. Ron was not just my mentor, but also a friend. I benefitted significantly from his willingness to share his vast knowledge and experience. I have numerous cherished moments with Ron, but the proudest one will always be both of us accepting the Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award on behalf of Toronto Public Health in 2011."

In a tribute to de Burger's legacy, NCCEH has named its Student Project Award in his honor. The Ron de Burger Student Award is an annual award offered to students involved in Canadian postsecondary institutions offering a public health inspection program or a degree in public health.

NEHA wishes to express its deepest sympathies to de Burger's family, colleagues, and friends. He was an outstanding figure in the field of environmental public health and will be greatly missed.

Lawrence Pong

NEHA was saddened to learn that Lawrence Pong passed away on August 7, 2016. He was a consummate environmental health professional who was nationally recognized as a food safety subject matter expert. He worked for the City and County of San Francisco's Department of Environment Health for over 35 years as a principle environmental health inspector and manager of training, as well as the department's lead foodborne outbreak investigator. He taught food safety classes at San Francisco City College's Department of Biology until his passing.

Pong was an energetic person who loved to share his knowledge with others. He had an unequaled knowledge of retail food safety, especially ethnic food safety. His presentations at numerous conferences were always entertaining, relevant, and extremely educational, and in most cases, they were standing-room only. He spoke at several NEHA annual conferences and was a trainer for NEHA's Epi-Ready project in the mid-2000s. Among other contributions, Pong was an item writer and reviewer for the food manager certification examination created by the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.

He also shared his passion and energy with several organizations, such as NEHA and the National Automatic Merchandising Association's (NAMA's) Automatic Merchandising Health Industry Council. Dr. David McSwane, executive director of the Conference for Food Protection, shared, "Lawrence was always thinking about new innovations regarding the vending of food and beverages—even before the industry had thought of it. Many of his ideas about training regulators on how to inspect vending machines were incorporated into NAMA training seminars."

"I will miss Larry as he was one of my best personal and professional acquaintances. His legacy will be that he has set a role model for present and future environmental health professionals to follow. Larry will be sorely missed by the entire environmental health profession," stated George Nakamura, longtime friend and fellow food safety expert.

NEHA wishes to express its deepest sympathies to Pong's family, colleagues, and friends. He was an outstanding figure in the field of food safety and environmental health. He will be greatly missed. 🕯️

Editor's Note: The *Journal* will publish the In Memoriam section twice a year in the June and December issues. If you would like to share information on the passing of a noteworthy environmental health professional, please contact Kristen Ruby-Cisneros at kruby@neha.org.