

IN MEMORIAM

Boyd T. Marsh

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) was saddened to learn that Boyd T. Marsh passed away September 1, 2021. Marsh served as president of NEHA from 1981–1982. This time period was tumultuous for NEHA due to financial difficulties and a decline in membership. From his “The President’s Message” in the September/October 1981 *Journal of Environmental Health*, he stated, “We must strike out to establish a role and place for our association—an association where all of us can contribute our talents and where our association and profession can benefit from our collective contributions.” Marsh certainly contributed his talents to moving NEHA into the future. His leadership and that of others during this time period helped to ensure that NEHA exists today.

In addition to his national impact, Marsh was a strong environmental health leader in his home state of Ohio. He began his career in 1966 as a staff sanitarian for the Summit County Health Department. He went on to serve as the director of environmental health for both the Summit County General Health District and the Cleveland Department of Public Health. He retired as health commissioner of the Summit County General Health District in 2000. Marsh also served as president of the Ohio Environmental Health Association (OEHA) in 1972. He was the first chairman of the Ohio Board of Sanitarian Registration and taught environmental health classes as an adjunct faculty member for Cleveland State University, Bowling Green State University, and the University of Akron.

Marsh was honored with the Walter F. Snyder Award in 1989 from NSF International and NEHA. He was described in the Snyder Award announcement as a person of “wisdom and accomplishment” whose contributions to environmental health “can be seen in the programs and publications which have grown from his wisdom.” A copy of the award announcement can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/31vLbyL>. He was honored as Outstanding Sanitarian in 1979 and Outstanding Environmentalist in 1980 by OEHA. He was also named a diplomate of the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) in 1974.

Marsh shared his professional knowledge and personal experience with many Summit County organizations that helped individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Marsh and his wife Paula created the Personal Advocacy Program for Summit and Portage County residents dealing with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 1992, they were instrumental in legally challenging unfair local ordinances that created obstacles for individuals with developmental disabilities to live in residential neighborhoods.

The following quotes from colleagues and NEHA past presidents highlight his lasting contributions to NEHA and the environmental health profession, as well as the lives he touched.

“I had the good fortune to have served on the NEHA Board of Directors with Boyd and followed him as president. We served

during a time when the future of the organization was in doubt. Boyd provided solid leadership and was always positive that we would succeed in paving a future for the organization. He would be proud of what the organization has become,” Dr. Trenton Davis, NEHA past president.

“It was my good fortune to serve alongside Boyd on the NEHA board when I was president and when Boyd was getting ready to assume his term as president. I enjoyed his collegiality and friendship. Boyd was a professional of the first degree who was committed to serving the environmental health profession,” Dr. Amer El-Ahraf, NEHA past president.

“I was fortunate to be the California Environmental Health Association (CEHA) president at the time of Boyd’s NEHA presidential term. I remember Boyd as being a very professional and competent leader, role model, and advocate for the profession,” Mel Knight, NEHA past president.

“I never had the pleasure of meeting Boyd personally but he did call to congratulate me when I became NEHA president. He had an extraordinary reputation here in Ohio as a great leader and an exemplary environmental health professional and community leader,” Keith Krinn, NEHA past president.

“Boyd was one of my environmental health heroes and did a lot to help stabilize the finances of NEHA and move it forward. I have many fond memories of Boyd and his lovely wife Paula over the many years of our professional lives together,” George A. Morris, NEHA past president.

“Boyd made a difference in environmental and public health here in Ohio. He was a legend to me as a young sanitarian and a real inspiration and good person to work with,” Laura Studevant, NEHA past president.

“I had the huge privilege of being on the NEHA board with Boyd Marsh during his presidency. With his strong moral compass, Boyd led our association admirably. His careful and calculated leadership style kept our association on an even keel as we handled the environmental health challenges of the time. Further, as a seasoned practitioner in environmental health, Boyd possessed an excellent understanding of our profession and the issues we were confronted with,” Dr. Leon Vinci, Health Promotion Consultants.

Obituary Source: Redmon Funeral Home, <https://redmonfuneralhome.com/tribute/details/8318/Boyd-Marsh/obituary.html>.

George Nakamura

NEHA was saddened to learn that George Nakamura passed away in September 2021. His career in environmental health and food safety spanned over four decades and he was highly respected and recognized as an expert in our field. He contributed his passion, leadership, and knowledge to numerous individuals, organizations, companies, and governmental agencies in California and across the country throughout his career. For those who knew him, his smile and laugh could brighten a room and were infectious.

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Nakamura grew up in Watsonville, California. He earned his bachelor of science degree in public health from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Public Health. He went on to earn his master's in public administration from California State University, East Bay. Nakamura started his career in 1975 within San Mateo County Environmental Health as a consumer protection specialist. He started working at Contra Costa County in 1992 as a supervising environmental health specialist and retired as a program manager in 2006. His supervising experience encompassed nearly every environmental health program in Contra Costa and San Mateo Counties.

The passion Nakamura had for the profession was evidenced through his involvement in NEHA, CEHA, AAS, and numerous committees and advisory councils for organizations such as Underwriters Laboratories, NSF International, and the National Automatic Merchandising Association. He volunteered his time to NEHA as section cochair for food safety and protection (1997–2008) and technical advisor for workforce development, management, and leadership (2013–2016), as well as represented NEHA on the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR) and other committees over the years. Nakamura served as president of CEHA from 2007–2008. He was also active in his home community serving on the Sunnydale Planning Commission and the Mayor's Community Development Task Force.

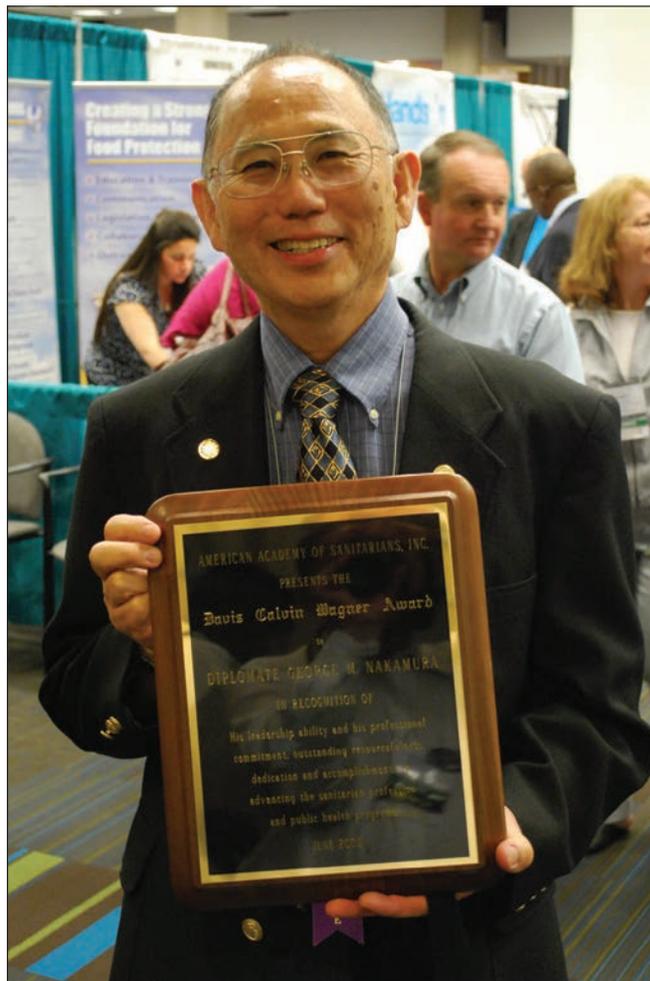
Nakamura loved to share his knowledge and made countless presentations to diverse audiences. His presentations ranged from teaching food safety classes at a community college, presiding at a planning commission hearing, and addressing an audience of nearly 1,000 environmental health specialists to testifying in court on behalf of environmental health and private industry.

Nakamura was honored throughout his career with various awards and recognition—from being named Outstanding Sanitarian of the Year in 1975 by CEHA to being honored with the Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award in 2009 from AAS. He was also the recipient of the NEHA Past Presidents Award in 2006.

The following quotes from colleagues and friends showcase his contributions and dedication to environmental health and food safety, as well as the lasting impact he had on many individuals.

"I have many fond memories working with George. He was jolly, kind, knowledgeable, and well respected in our environmental health community. He will be missed," Harpreet Bains, Contra Costa County Environmental Health.

"I have worked closely with George for the past dozen years and count him as a tremendous mentor. George was a GIANT in this industry and was so energetic. The thing that I will always remember about George was his penchant for storytelling. My favorite story of George is when he was testifying at a trial as an expert legal witness. George was representing the defendant and was getting grilled by the prosecuting attorney. At one point the prosecutor asked George if he was a doctor. George responded, "No, but people certainly tell me that I'm a smooth operator."



George Nakamura proudly displays the Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award that he was honored with in 2009 from the American Academy of Sanitarians.

According to George, the courtroom erupted in laughter and he even had the judge chuckling. At the end of it, the defendant won the case and the 'Legend of the Smooth Operator' was born! The passing of George is shocking and tragic. He was energetic and passionate about food safety and the regulatory world, doted on his grandkids, and looked forward to getting free things at conferences and trade shows. I benefited from knowing George and am a better person because of it. And I know that there are hundreds more out there that have had similar experiences," Bryan Chapman, StateFoodSafety.

"George was extremely knowledgeable and found joy in sharing his expertise with others. He loved and thrived on being a part of our environmental health family. Throughout the years, he was an ambassador for both NEHA and CEHA. He invited me and several other incoming professionals to get involved. For decades, he continued to encourage and mentor aspiring profes-

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sionals. When we worked together, his morning greeting might include an individually wrapped candy or a tchochke collected from a recent conference. He loved good food, especially our office potlucks with international flair. Long ago, I was able to share my mom's homemade tamales with George. For years he would ask if I had been to visit her lately and most importantly, did I bring any of her homemade tamales! Our conversations in recent years were about his grandsons. It was a treat to watch his face light up when he spoke about his family. He had the best sense of humor and was a true and treasured friend. George has a special place in my heart and I will miss him dearly," Alicia Collins, NEHA past president.

"I started working with George at Contra Costa County Environmental Health in 2001. He was always respectful, kind, and very funny. He joked often with the staff but he was a steadfast supporter of his team. He later became a NEHA mentor for me, providing me with introductions to his environmental health colleagues and friends and to the NEHA board and past presidents. I worked with him on a few NEHA projects over the years and always enjoyed our conversations and continuous banter. I will miss George!" Michele R. DiMaggio, NEHA Region 2 vice-president.

"George was a dear friend, a great colleague, and a star in our profession. I first met George as my student in environmental health at UCLA. His term paper on *Salmonella* in eggs was the best written paper submitted to me during my tenure and I gave him a well-deserved "A." I never tired of telling George about that over the years and equally, he was never tired of hearing it. He always rewarded me with his wonderful laugh. George was a person of good character and honorable service," Dr. Amer El-Ahraf, NEHA past president.

"George had a long history of service to CEHA and NEHA. He was one of my first contacts with the CEHA Northern Chapter in the early 1970s. Most recently he represented NEHA for several years on the CIFOR project and he was an active advocate for expanded industry outreach and participation," Mel Knight, NEHA past president.

"I met George at the very first AEC I attended in Alaska in 2004. Because of him I have made connections with other professionals

at these conferences. And of course, he always liked the macadamia nut candies that I had," John Nakashima, Food Safety Services Hawaii, LLC.

"George and I were tightly connected through NEHA over the past 20 years. He welcomed me to my first NEHA conference in Atlanta in 2001. Since that time we worked side-by-side on developing the food safety sections for the NEHA conference, advising on the Food Safe Schools project, Epi-Ready, CIFOR, NSF, Conference for Food Protection, National Registry for Food Safety Professionals, and AAS. We shared a love of Disney and it was my joy to gift him Mickey ties (and on one occasion, socks). It was even more of a joy to see him wear them at subsequent meetings. George and NEHA were synonymous to me. I just joined the NEHA staff and was looking forward to letting George know where his mentoring and support landed me. Sadly, I won't have the joy of his reaction. He made an impact in many lives and was greatly loved," Michèle Samarya-Timm, NEHA staff.

"George provided me with mentoring and encouragement as I 'moved up the ranks,' both in the work environment and in CEHA and NEHA. I remember the times we competed against each other at the CEHA Northern Chapter softball tournaments in the early 1990s. I got to see firsthand just how competitive George was. Balance that competitive spirit with his passion for the environmental health profession and to me, that was George Nakamura," Ronald J. Torres.

NEHA extends its deepest sympathies to the families, friends, and colleagues of Boyd T. Marsh and George Nakamura. Each had a profound impact on our profession and the people around them. Both will be greatly missed. 🕊️

Editor's Note: If you would like to share information about the passing of an environmental health professional to be mentioned in a future In Memoriam, please contact Kristen Ruby-Cisneros at kruby@neha.org. The *Journal* will publish the In Memoriam section twice a year in the June and December issues, or in other issues as determined appropriate.

Did You Know?

NEHA's A Day in the Life of an EH Professional Blog contains a wide variety of posts from NEHA members, committees, and staff. The posts cover a broad spectrum of environmental health topics—food safety, preparedness, vector control, climate change, water quality, and air quality, to name a few. You can also find posts on NEHA activities, latest news, and member spotlights. Check them out at www.neha.org/membership-communities/get-involved/day-in-life.