

## ► PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Priscilla Oliver, PhD

## A Call for Diversity in Environmental Health

In 2004, I received the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Atlanta Regional Diversity Award. It was and still is given annually to a deserving employee who has demonstrated a willingness to support, promote, and defend the selection and work of diverse students, employees, supervisors, clients, and customers in both work and the community. A prestigious list of recipients is hanging on a wall plaque in the U.S. EPA reception area near photos of the chain of command of top leaders, the president of the U.S., administrator of U.S. EPA, and the regional administrator. Matt Robbins, a former award recipient, quietly said to me, "Well now Priscilla, your name will be on the wall of U.S. EPA for others to see after you are gone." I have thought about that often and that has prompted me to write this column. Diversity has increasingly become an important part of organizational operations and health.

Working with the National Council of Diversity of Environmental (N-CODE) Health, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) project really broadened my perspective and commitment to diversity. On day one of our meeting, I sat next to Sheila Davidson Pressley, who recently passed away. She went on to become a champion, Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), and dean at EKU. Here I worked on a task force with many prominent national leaders in environmental health to promote diversity of faculty and students in colleges, universities, the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), and the workforce. These are some of the giants in environmental health and many were or

*Diversity has increasingly become an important part of organizational operations and health.*

became leaders in NEHA. Scholarly writers of diversity in environmental health and members of NEHA, Drs. Bailus Walker, Dan Harper, and Welford C. Roberts were part of the EKU/CDC task force. Please review the current list of NEHA technical advisors (see page 44 and 45) as they are a strong reflection of the promotion of diversity in NEHA. I encourage them to join in the fight for diversity and for you to call on them to assist with the important work in our communities. We thank all for serving.

Let me be clear, minorities are included in diversity but as defined it is now broader to include persons of various backgrounds, ethnicity, age, gender, and country of origin representation. All of us are needed in environmental health, medicine, dentistry, public health, law, education, etc. Why? We need to improve the health of all, which is stated in the NEHA mission to "advance the environmental health professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all." We need to better understand all peo-

ples, cultures, and living conditions to better serve human conditions. Role models are needed for others to emulate and to increase our self-worth. We need to serve all in environmental crises around the globe. We need to learn from others in far and near lands. There is a need to discover and share strategies throughout. The sky is the limit if we are inclusive. There have been some successes but we have more work to do.

In many areas, the demographics are changing. Our neighborhoods are becoming more diverse so our professions need to reflect this change in our fabric. Culture is important to reflect our needs and interests. People want to see and interact with diverse workers who understand and look like them. Environmental health is a service profession that performs inspections and conducts training. The aging workforce and early retirements are eminent and demand for us to be ready for more workers in replacement. Our environmental health workers should reflect the communities they support.

To achieve the goals of increasing diversity, it is important that we plan, recruit, train, and market the importance of the profession. We want and need good people that are inspired, well-trained, knowledgeable, technically competent, and reliable. The National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council needs our full support. Reach out to them and market to young students and professionals. Visit the campuses and offer tours to middle school, high school, and college students. A call for federal, state, and nonprofit funding to support training and college expansion of the environ-

mental health curriculum is requested. The other professions also need support to make sure that there is equity in all communities to improve overall health. Environmental health and medicine must work together. The underserved and socioeconomically deprived areas need help and should get help.

A call is issued here for all to join in this effort to develop and implement measures to improve diversity in environmental health. Create programs and projects to improve college preparation, work with recruiting faculty and students early and often. A call is made for multicultural and multigenerational efforts

to enhance diversity in environmental health from middle school and K-12 to college and graduate school. Partnerships at all levels should join in on this effort. "One NEHA" that is diverse is now and our future. 🐼

*Priscilla* [President@neha.org](mailto:President@neha.org)

## Did You Know?

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, NEHA will host an Earth Day Twitter Chat on Tuesday, April 21 from 2:00–3:00 p.m. EDT. The chat theme is "Climate Action." Environmental health professionals work closely with communities to ensure the safety of the resources used every day, from the air we breathe to the food we eat and the water we drink. These resources are being affected by climate impacts. Take this opportunity to initiate a conversation about how climate impacts health and what can we do to fight the effects of climate change and build resilience. Join us in leading the conversation by using #ClimateChangesHealth! and #EarthDayChat. Learn more at [www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org).

## SUPPORT THE NEHA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The NEHA Endowment Foundation was established to enable NEHA to do more for the environmental health profession than its annual budget might allow. Special projects and programs supported by the foundation will be carried out for the sole purpose of advancing the profession and its practitioners.

Individuals who have contributed to the foundation are listed below by club category. These listings are based on what people have actually donated to the foundation—not what they have pledged. Names will be published under the appropriate category for 1 year; additional contributions will move individuals to a different category in the following year(s). For each of the categories, there are a number of ways NEHA recognizes and thanks contributors to the foundation. If you are interested in contributing to the Endowment Foundation, please call NEHA at (303) 756-9090. You can also donate online at [www.neha.org/about-neha/donate](http://www.neha.org/about-neha/donate).

*Thank you.*

### DELEGATE CLUB

(\$1–\$99)

*Name in the Journal for 1 year.*

Ahzairin Ahmad  
Clora Aikens  
Thomas E. Arbizu  
David Banaszynski  
Dale M. Bates  
Mikayla Bell  
Nora K. Birch  
Freda W. Bredy  
Corwin D. Brown  
D. Gary Brown  
William B. Burrows  
Lisa Bushnell  
Ricardo Calderon  
Angelo Campione  
Kimberley Carlton  
William D. Compton  
Sean T. Davis  
Kimberly M. Dillion  
Catherine A. Dondanville  
George Dupuy  
Ana Ebbert  
Bruce M. Etchison  
Wendy Fanaselle  
Mark S. Fine

Darryl J. Flaspahler  
Shelby Foerg  
Christopher J. Foster  
Debra Freeman  
Roberta E. Frick  
Monica A. Fry  
Keenan Glover  
Jacqueline A. Gruza  
Eric S. Hall  
Trefa Hinds  
T. Stephen Jones  
Samuel J. Jorgensen  
Samuel O. Kembli  
James Kenny  
Soheila Khaila  
Samantha J. Kirst  
Ayaka Kubo Lau  
Jim Langevin  
Philip Leger  
Allan R. Levesque  
James C. Mack  
Meighan Maloney  
M. Elizabeth Marder  
Jason W. Marion  
Robert E. McDonald  
Aruworay Memene  
Chioma Mezue  
Wendell A. Moore

Japheth K. Ngojoy  
Joseph Noll  
Jennifer Nord  
Brion Ockenfels  
Joe Otterbein  
Munira Peermohamed  
R. Alden Pendleton  
Earl W. Phillips  
David Piergiacomini  
Kathryn Pink  
Joy L. Ramsey  
Deborah M. Rosati  
Joseph W. Russell  
Randell Ruszkowski  
Jesse Saavedra  
Labib Sariqin Samari  
Vicki Scheuning  
Nathaniel P. Sheehan  
Janu Shrestha  
Anton Shufutinsky  
Zia Siddiqi  
Jacqueline Sommers  
Robert A. Stauffer  
Martin J. Stephens  
Crystal Stevenson  
Jameson Thomas  
Terry M. Trembly  
Emilia A. Udofia  
Kirk Walbush

Kaitlin Wren  
Mohammad Zaman  
Linda L. Zaziski

### HONORARY MEMBERS CLUB

(\$100–\$499)

*Letter from the NEHA president and name in the Journal for 1 year.*

Michele R. DiMaggio  
Roy Kroeger  
Adam E. London  
Priscilla Oliver  
Matthew Reighter  
Linda Van Houten  
Sandra Whitehead

### 21st CENTURY CLUB

(\$500–\$999)

*Name submitted in drawing for a free 1-year NEHA membership and name in the Journal for 1 year.*

James M. Speckhart  
Ned Therien  
Leon F. Vinci

### SUSTAINING MEMBERS CLUB

(\$1,000–\$2,499)

*Name submitted in drawing for a free 2-year NEHA membership and name in the Journal for 1 year.*

James J. Balsamo, Jr.  
Brian K. Collins  
Bob Custard  
David T. Dyjack  
George A. Morris  
Peter M. Schmitt

### AFFILIATES CLUB

(\$2,500–\$4,999)

*Name submitted in drawing for a free AEC registration and name in the Journal for 1 year.*

### EXECUTIVE CLUB AND ABOVE

(\$5,000–\$100,000)

*Special invitation to the AEC President's Reception and name in the Journal for 1 year.*

Timothy N. Hatch  
Vince Radke