# Apr. '13

# Los Angeles Section

# Monthly: Est. 1913

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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Thornton, P.E. Los Angeles Section President



Life Members and Younger Members On March 2, 2013, ASCE Life Members held their annual brunch. A group of 24 members received the life member recognition. I was honored to serve as the Master of Ceremonies for the event. Randy Over, our society President-elect, served as the Keynote Speaker. The highlight of the event was the presentation of certificates and brief summary of their careers. In hearing those accomplishments, I continued to respond with the thought

Thinking further about our profession, it became clear "how

could it finish any other way?" We, Civil Engineers, enjoy the greatest profession. We are able each and every day to provide a legacy. Projects like ports, airports, subways, railroads, freeways, flood control, water systems, treatment plants, environmental restoration project (and the list goes on), which Engineers plan, design, and oversee construction will benefit generations to come, legacy. Yes, for many, this is why we selected this profession.

of "wow, what a distinguished career."

Although the ceremony was terrific, it just doesn't seem like enough. We, current members, need to do more. Remember, those members are passing the profession to us and we need to show our appreciation. Those distinguished members have had careers of 40 to 50 years of service to civil engineering. They certainly are passing a profession of greater quality than they inherited.

As the Los Angeles Section turns 100 years old this year, imagine what our profession was like 100 to 50 years ago. One hundred years ago, infrastructure wasn't much. We began building water systems (e.g. Los Angeles Aqueduct and transportation projects) followed by projects like the Hoover Dam and the Golden Gate Bridge. Fifty years ago, we were beginning to construct the interstate highway systems and water treatment plants to protect our environment among numerous other programs. Today, we have come a long way - led by life members and their predecessors. These individuals have not only given ASCE members a better profession but have also given society a much better quality of life over the past 50 years.

However, these significant accomplishments have generally been ignored. Why isn't the Engineer's long career celebrated much more extensively? How do we change the public's infrastructure perception? How do we increase the public's awareness of infrastructure?

ASCE needs to start with us. Greater recognition to these life members is step one; we need to find ways to recognize these individuals. Second, many of these members are retired and have time to volunteer. ASCE needs to find a role for them to participate. Third, their experiences are invaluable. ASCE needs to establish

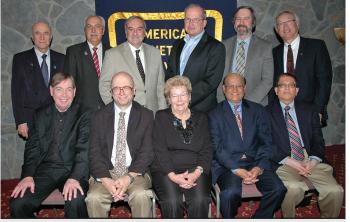
### VOL. XLXIII NO. 4

In This Issue	þage
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
NEW LIFE MEMBERS	2
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION DONORS	4-5
PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY	6-7



# **ASCE** – Los Angeles Section Honors New Life Members

By Garvin Pederson, P.E. – Member, ASCE-LA Section Life Member Forum



A few of the new ASCE Los Angeles Section Life Member honorees include (Back Row, Left to Right) Mehdi Sobhani, Soroosh Sorooshian, Byron Konstantinidis, Thomas Carmichael, Tom Swantko, Franklin Fong; (Front Row, Left to Right) Philip Reed Jr., Michael Stenstrom, Delores Bennett Taylor, Ashok Mittal, Salahuddin Sheikh.

On March 2, 2013, 57 new Life Members in the Los Angeles Section as listed below were honored for their professional accomplishments and their dedication throughout their careers to ASCE. The Los Angeles Section believes it is very important to publicly recognize the accomplishments of their members who have reached "Life Member" status. The Life Member Forum's "New Member Recognition Committee" chaired by Joe Buley, held the annual recognition brunch at the Monterey Hill Steakhouse in Monterey Park.

Michael Thornton, P.E. President of the Los Angeles Section and assisted by Larry Lewis, P.E., President of the Life Member Forum moderated this event during this, "Centennial" celebration year for the Los Angeles Section. Don Sepulveda, P.E., Chair of the Centennial Committee presented an overview of the accomplishments of civil engineers in the development of Southern California during the past 100 years.

Randall S. Over, P.E., ASCE President Elect traveled from Ohio to address the new life members, their guests and other Los Angeles Section members including the Young Member Forum and civil engineering students. He pointed out the need to "Raise the Bar" in academic requirements for a civil engineering degree. Even with the ever changing technological advancements, young engineers he said, need to have a complete academic background, keeping up its status with other professions.

In addition to honoring new life members, Robert W. Bein, P.E., former ASCE National President presented the "Robert W. Bein Annual Lifetime Achievement Award" to David H. Wright, P.E.. David is retired from the Metropolitan Water District and is currently an active member of the Life Member Forum, serving as its Secretary-Treasurer.

Walt Preston, P.E. a member of ASCE for some 75 years and one the Los Angeles Sections original Life Member Forum members was honored with a "Resolution of Appreciation" signed by Assemblywoman Diane L. Harkey of the California State Legislature. Walt's civil engineering career started in 1935, working for the Metropolitan Water District on the Colorado River Adequate, and continued with his directing "Seabees" constructing causeways on the D-Day beaches in France in World War II. In addition, he designed structures for Disneyland and Disneyworld, and engineered many structures in the redevelopment of the City of Los Angeles. After retirement Walt worked with the Life Member Forum volunteering his expertise on Habitat for Humanity projects and other efforts such as having a U.S. Postal stamp issued showing a civil engineering project (An ongoing effort). Andy Machen showed a recent brief video where Walt discusses his life long involvement with ASCE, as Walt was unable to attend this event. Walt will be celebrating his 99th birthday this year.

It is also noted that Andy Machen a long time Life Member Forum member, History and Heritage Committee Co-Chair and member of the Los Angeles Section's Centennial Committee was honored at the "California Infrastructure Symposium Awards Dinner" with the L.A. Section Outstanding ASCE Life Member Award for all his efforts for ASCE for many years.

The following is the list of new Life Members, it is noted not all of which were in attendance at this event: Wayne Bamossy, Thomas Barker, Clement Calvillo, Thomas Carmichael, Edwin Chock, Yeuan-Wan Chou, Robert Easley, Riad Elhaj, Franklin Fong, Laurence Gillis, William Handley, Roger Tim Haug, Wesley Hoffmaster, Leon lancu, James Johnston, Barry Jones, Neil Jordon, George Jurica, Charles Knarr, Byron Konstantinidis, Albert Lowe, Stephen Maguin, Gary Martin, James Miller, Ashok Mittal, Allan Nelson, M. Russell Nester, Stephen Ng, Quang Nguyen, Stephen Pare, Michael Patonai, Paul Perkins, Kenneth Peterson, Thomas Pizza, Philip Reed, Douglas Reinhart, Russell Scharlin, Salahuddin Sheikh, Roger Shervington, Ronald Shmerling, S. Mehdi Sobhani, Soroosh Sorooshian. Carl Sramek, Michael Stenstrom, Randal Streeter, Robert Strong, Thomas Swantko, Delores Taylor, John Tolmasov, Allen Tom, Michael Truong, James Unland, V. Rajarao Vadaparty, David Wang, Calvin Woolsey and Christopher Yu. The new Life Members in attendance at this event were presented with their Diploma by ASCE President-Elect Randall S. Over and assisted by L. A. Section President Michael Thornton.



Randy Over, ASCE President-Elect addresses the ASCE Los Angeles Life Member Brunch audience.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

avenues between these members and younger members. Lastly, these individuals are leaders. Leadership has been and will continue to be a primary ASCE goal. Connecting leaders with soon to be leaders just makes sense.

Many of us in this profession have learned our craft by way of mentors. I ask you to make a list of those who helped you and reach out to them. ASCE can assist you in finding them. They would love to hear from you. Advise them of his/her contributions and your appreciation of them. They have made us better engineers and we appreciate them.

Furthermore, engineers must continue the tradition of educating the next generation and we must mentor the engineers entering our profession today. ASCE is certainly all over developing our leaders of tomorrow. ASCE's organizational structure reaches out to engineering students here in the Los Angeles Section. After graduation, ASCE reaches out to these younger members to get involved in all of these programs including the Younger Member Forum and technical training programs and leadership workshops. ASCE provides workshops to assist younger member in preparation of our professional license testing. These YMF members will be the public works directors and firm leaders of the future. Building a professional network at the onset of these young professionals' careers will deliver dividends throughout their entire career. ASCE provides these younger members endless professional development opportunities.

As members continue to mature, here come the branches. Los Angeles Section is covered by branches in every corner. Each branch is represented by outstanding leadership this year. ASCE continues to encourage these YMF members to stay active with their branch. Monthly programs continue to educate and many branches continue to offer various technical programs to keep engineers at the "cutting edge" of technology. ASCE is always looking for leaders; please encourage these members to stay involved.

Other educational opportunities that ASCE offers include leadership positions right here at the section. This month, we introduce three new leaders that are volunteering to better our profession. Section leadership has its privileges. Networking with other professional leaders will continue to pay dividends. Section leadership participation provides opportunities to establish important polices. Last month, my President's Message discussed the important decision of c(3) v. c(6). Leadership at the Section maps the future of our profession. Your contribution helps the Section to move forward in the right direction.

Beyond the Section is Region 9. The Region covers the entire State of California. Activities are highlighted by government relations (as I have said again and again, our most important activity) with annual visits to our state capital, disaster preparedness, annual symposium, and awards. The region, like every other level of ASCE, is looking for volunteers. Finally, we have the Society based out of Reston, Virginia. There are a number of Society committee opportunities available annually. If that interests you, be prepared to travel across the country. After all of that service (as if that wasn't enough) comes Life Membership. The benefits include waiving of dues ... finally you have arrived. Life Members continue to stay active in mentoring our youth. Wow, what a trip! I hope that you had a chance to raise a family along the way.

If ASCE leadership does not fit for you, mentoring still must be part of your contribution back to our profession. I recently attended the ACE Mentor program annual meeting. ACE, for those who may not be aware, is Architecture, Construction and Engineering. Their program is reaching out to high school students, mentoring and educating them on what we do. They are looking for volunteers to adopt high schools, work with faculty, and educate the next generation of engineers.

I often hear from members that "I would love to help but I just don't have the time." Think about those who have come before us ... if they had that approach, would we be the engineers we are today? What makes our profession different and best is our membership getting involved and giving back. Mentoring our youth to be better engineers than we are has always been standard practice. Working with other professionals in a volunteer role has created friendships and colleagues that are the envy of others.

Finally, our profession builds quality of life; everyone owes us. Yet they don't know us. I challenge you, ASCE's Los Angeles Section membership, to increase the awareness of what you do, that we are the stewards of infrastructure, and that those who have championed infrastructure in the past be recognized. Go to the City you reside in and ask them to adopt a proclamation recognizing these American heroes and make sure you bring a few with you. If you do this and reach out to a mentor that helped you, you will certainty make a retired engineer's day and maybe even a number of days. The least we can do.



# www.ascelasection.org



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page 5

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