

# The Monitor



## The Louisiana Section Newsletter

January 2022

### LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

*Jason Midgett*

Louisiana Section Members, Sponsors, and Colleagues:

2021 ended on a high note for the Section with a very successful Fall Conference. The Conference Planning Committee volunteers made it happen and I cannot thank them or their employers enough. The 2021 committee volunteers consisted of Jennifer Tullier, Veronica Crow, Ashley Viator, John King, Allyson Morales, Maureen Ducote, Ben Dabadie, and Beth Hitt. They had to navigate a constant changing pandemic landscape throughout their planning efforts this year but fortunately we were able to move forward with a close to “normal” event! The attendance, exhibitors, and sponsorship response far exceeded our expectations and renewed the Section’s energy. Our full exhibitor floor and gracious sponsorships are a major component of the consistent success of this event. Thank you to everyone that participated! The 2022 Conference planning will kick off in March/April, for the October 26-27, 2022 event, let us know if you would like to help out!

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*Jason Midgett, Chair*

Valuing the importance of dedicated volunteer leaders is critical to the success of any professional organization. This has been passed on to me by numerous Section leaders over the years, but it was instilled in the framework of the Section business by Bill

Palermo. I personally have “What would Bill do” moments when dealing with the occasional touchy issues. It was an honor for me to kickoff recognizing Bill’s 30 years of contributions to A&WMA at the Fall Conference.

In 2022 the LA Section board welcomes our newly elected Director, Mary Claire Petit (Director 2022- 2025) and we say thank you to outgoing Director John King for his three years of service on the board. Fortunately, we did not have to twist John’s arm to stay involved for a bit longer! Lauren Rucinski will remain as our Secretary for the next two years.

To all of 2021 corporate sponsors this was the highest turnout in over a decade. Your contributions continue to allow the Section to

offer substantial scholarship opportunity and funding to education activities in Louisiana. The Section awarded a total of \$12,500 to three students this year. Expect Doug Melancon to reach out early next year to solicit your continued support.

We’ve reserved January 20th for lunch at Mike Anderson’s in Gonzales for our first 2022 meeting, registration info coming soon and our 2022 YP Golf tournament date is planned to be May 5th.

Till then I wish all of you a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderful start to 2022!

Jason

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We would love to add some folks onto a few of our committees - Communications, YP, and Educational committees to be specific.

Let us know if you’re interested in volunteering a little here and there!

## JULY LUNCH MEETING RECAP

*Emily Shinn*

The AWMA’s July Lunch Meeting was held on July 22nd at the Clarion Hotel in Gonzales, Louisiana. This was a particularly joyous occasion filled with long-awaited conversations and reunions amongst members as it was the group’s first in-person conference since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once everyone had arrived, the group assembled for a presentation on the Louisiana Climate Change Task Force of the Louisiana Governor’s Office. Mr. Harry Vorhoff, the Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities and Chair of the Governor’s Climate Initiatives Task Force, began the presentation by providing some background on the Task Force as well as the Task Force’s progress to date. Ms. Lindsay Cooper, Policy Advisor of the Governor’s Office of Coastal Activities, then presented on the specific timeline, deliverables, and goals of the Task Force.

The Task Force is still in the early planning stages of how to reach its net-zero carbon goal and seeking input from various stakeholders, including industry. Overall, the meeting was very well attended and enjoyed by all!

# Honoring 30 Years of Volunteer Leadership -

## William “Bill” Palermo, P. E.

Jennifer Tullier

With over thirty years of volunteer leadership, the Louisiana Section had the privilege of honoring one of A&WMA’s most dedicated volunteers, William J. “Bill” Palermo. During this year’s Annual Conference attendees celebrated Bill’s commitment to both the Section and Association with a heartfelt thanks and a \$1,000 donation to the Tulane University School of Science and Engineering Scholarship Fund in his name.

Bill Palermo is a Principal with RTP Environmental Associates, Inc. practices multi-media environmental engineering and consulting. Bill graduated from Tulane University of Louisiana in 1968 with a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering, after which he served as a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force until 1973. In 1999, Bill opened the Louisiana office of RTP and was the Managing Principal until 2018, where he remains associated.

Like many members of the Association, Bill’s A&WMA membership began when he registered for a Clean Air Act conference in 1991. He quickly became involved in the leadership of the Louisiana Section and has served in numerous roles including the Section Chair and as Special Director on the Board for over a decade. Bill stewarded creation of this newsletter you’re reading now, The Monitor, local volunteer leadership trainings and strategic planning events. In 1997, Bill began his long involvement at the international leadership level of the Association when he was elected as Vice-Chair of the Sections & Chapters Council (S&CC). In addition to the six-year term in the Vice Chair/Chair role with S&CC, he was later elected as a Director to the A&WMA

Board of Directors (BOD) and continued to serve the S&CC as Finance and Governance Committee Chair until 2018.

Bill was instrumental in the selection of New Orleans by the Association’s BOD as the site of the 99th Annual Conference & Exhibition (ACE) in 2006 and the 109th ACE in 2016, serving as General Conference Chair for both. He has been a continuing contributor to the Section’s Annual Conference, arranging for the involvement and participation of such national clean air act experts as Bill Wehrum, Ken Weiss, and Gary McCutchen for the development of a Clean Air Act Update session.



The Louisiana Section has been fortunate to be Bill’s “home” as a member and volunteer, but we’re incredibly proud of his contributions to the Association which extend far beyond our state borders. His most important work is much more difficult to measure with a board or committee position. Bill has provided leadership, mentorship, and friendship to so many over the course of thirty years with the Association. He has led by example, with an open mind and a listening ear; he has driven improvement, stability, and professionalism



in everything he has touched. He has advanced the mission of the Association on all levels and has supported and encouraged new volunteer leaders critical to the success of the Association. “Thank you” will never be enough to recognize everything he has done; instead, we must all continue his efforts and value the importance of dedicated volunteer leaders. We could all do well to follow Bill’s example and to “pay it forward” to attract and mentor new candidates into the Association and the environmental profession.

We greatly appreciate Bill’s commitment and dedication over all of these many years. He made a positive and lasting impact on the Association, the profession, and (most importantly) many individuals and their careers. We hope that the Louisiana Section’s donation to Tulane in Bill’s name helps to continue that work in some small way.



## 2021 ELECTION RESULTS

### *Association Board of Directors Election Update*

Congratulations to **Dr. Maud Walsh** who was elected to the Associations Board of Directors (BOD) for the next three years 2022-2025! Dr. Walsh is a professor and the graduate and undergraduate advisor in the LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and an affiliated faculty member in LSU Women’s and Gender Studies. She has been an A&WMA member and the faulty liaison for the A&WMA Student Chapter at LSU since 2001. Via her role on the BOD Dr. Walsh also becomes a Special Director on the Louisiana Section Board for the duration of her term.  
<https://www.awma.org/bodelection>

### *LA Section 2021 Board Election Results*

**Lauren Rucinski** will continue to serve the Section as Secretary for the term of 2022-2023.

**Mary Claire Lambert** will serve as a Director for 2022-2025, replacing John King.

The Section Board and all of the volunteers thank John for his service and leadership. With John’s term completing, like many of our past board members, we do not have to say goodbye! John has also served the Section as the Fall Conference Speaker Chair the last two years as well completing our Membership committee tasks both of which he will continue to help with going forward into 2022.

# LOUISIANA SECTION ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

## ANNOUNCEMENT

*Michael O. Waguespack, P.E.*

The Louisiana Section of A&WMA will award the Joseph Didier Martinez Environmental Achievement Awards in 2022. These awards will be presented for outstanding achievements in two categories:

1. Waste reduction, reuse of materials, recycling or energy recovery
2. Contaminated site investigation, remediation, redevelopment or post-closure monitoring

The two award winners will be recognized at the A&WMA Fall Conference and will present their projects to the conference attendees. These awards are named in memory of Dr. Joseph Didier Martinez, who created the Institute of Environmental Studies at LSU in 1968. Additional information about the application process will be provided later to the Section membership.

This program will be coordinated by Michael O. Waguespack, P.E.  
([michael.waguespack@wsnelson.com](mailto:michael.waguespack@wsnelson.com)).

## 2021 LOUISIANA SECTION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

*Boyd Boswell*

The Louisiana Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA) completed its 2021 Scholarship program for the Fall 2021 / Spring 2022 school year. Three scholarships were awarded in 2021 to two recipients from Louisiana State University (LSU) and one from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL).

Several universities were contacted this year and provided the scholarship application information with eleven applicants from LSU, ULL, Delgado Community College, and the University of Texas submitting applications for consideration. The review team of Jenai Pappilion, Corey Gautreaux, and Boyd Boswell reviewed, selected the best applicants, and conducted interviews with each of them. After interviews and consideration, the three applicants listed

below were selected as recipients of scholarships.

**Anna Katherine Parker** – LSU majoring in Environmental Engineering. She is conducting an internship at BASF in Geismar and over the last two years has performed several studies on the topics of drinking water treatment techniques, and medical waste disposal and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Kenneth A. Despain, Jr.** – ULL majoring in Environmental Science with a minor in Geology. Kenneth is a veteran of the U.S. Army Airborne Infantry serving in Afghanistan. He also formerly worked offshore in the oil and gas industry, as a pipe restoration technician for the oil and gas industry, and as a dog groomer and boarder.

**Seija Meaux** – LSU has a double major of Geology and Climatology, a minor in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and is interested in coastal work as related to carbon capture and sequestration. She is planning to pursue a master's degree after graduation from LSU.

We want to thank all the applicants who submitted applications, all the universities who assisted in distribution of the scholarship materials and thank and congratulate the three recipients of the scholarships. Splendid work to you all and we look forward to your future endeavors and contributions.

## LSU Student Chapter Update

*Victoria "Tori" Nguyen*

In the Fall 2021 semester, the Air & Waste Management Association LSU Student Chapter had 25 members who are pursuing majors that range from Environmental Management Systems, Coastal Environmental Sciences, Engineering, to Legal studies.

During the start of the semester, there was a pause in campus functions to be mindful of those who were impacted by and had to recover from Hurricane Ida and other natural disasters Louisiana endured. Despite the setbacks, our students were able to successfully transition from the virtual platform towards in-person activities.

The A&WMA LSU Student Chapter was able to hold one general meeting and one event during the Fall. Our informational guest speaker for the general meeting was Jonathan Leo, a retired environmental attorney who shared his expertise as it relates to legal advising and experience specializing in hazardous waste and materials regulatory compliance, federal and state Superfund site remediation, and air quality administrative agency permitting.



*2021 Student Officers (Left to Right): Mahajebin Haque (Treasurer), Alexa Bates (Vice-Chair), Victoria Nguyen (Chair), Camille Andrus (Secretary)*





Regarding events, A&WMA LSU Student Chapter collaborated with LSU College of the Coast and Environment to hold Campus Cleanup Events. The Cleanup Events invites members, students, faculty, and any interested parties to volunteer and manage the litter and waste found particularly among (but not limited to) the natural systems on the campus. In November, we hosted our first Campus Cleanup Event where our members were able to participate in restoring some of the natural and manmade features that LSU holds.

Additionally, student members were given the opportunity to learn, advance their professional development and expand their networks by attending the Louisiana Section of the Air & Waste Management Association Annual Conference in October.

*Some of the student members at the LA Section Annual AWMA Conference (Left to Right): Andrew Street, Alexa Bates (Vice-Chair), Camille Andrus (Secretary), Sophia Nelson, Mahajebin Haque (Treasurer), Deanna Nussberger, Victoria Nguyen (Chair)*

## *Save the Date!*

- January 20, 2022: LA Section Lunch Meeting  
Mike Anderson's Clarion Inn Conference Center  
Gonzales, LA
- May 5, 2022: Annual YP Golf Tournament  
Pelican Point  
Gonzales, LA
- October 26-27, 2022: Annual Fall Conference  
L'Auberge Conference Center  
Baton Rouge, LA

## MEET YOUR REGULATOR – Rachel Dickens

*Ashley Viator*

Read below to “Meet Your Regulator”, where we will introduce you to various staff you may encounter through the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Our latest interviewee is Ms. Rachel Dickens, Environmental Chemical Specialist 1, Office of Environmental Services/Air Permits Division/Petrochemical Section.

### **How long have you been with the agency, and in what capacity?**

I began working with DEQ in October 2021 as an Environmental Chemical Specialist.

### **Name functions/circumstances where you interact with members of the regulated community.**

As an Environmental Chemical Specialist, I am responsible for drafting various Title V and/or minor source air permits for the regulated community. I enjoyed meeting consultants and industry representatives at the A&WMA-Louisiana Section's annual conference earlier this year.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

It gives me the opportunity to learn more about my field of study.

### **Most interesting little known fact about yourself:**

I was born on Halloween!

### **If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?**

Japan to see the cherry blossoms (sakura season).

### **Give us your best advice for young professionals:**

It is good to be curious and to ask questions so that you can strive to be the best in your field.





## 2021 Board Members

Jason Midgett	Chair	Placid Refining Company, LLC
Allyson Morales	Vice-Chair	Total Petrochemicals & Refining USA
Jessica Aisner	Past Chair	SLR International
Lauren Rucinski	Secretary	Kean Miller LLP
Emily von Qualen	Treasurer	Liskow & Lewis
John King	Director – 2019-2021	Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, L.L.P.
Brandon Lithgoe	Director – 2020-2022	Nova Chemicals Olefins, LLC
Karen Brignac	Director – 2021-2023	PPM Consultants, Inc.
Mary Claire Petit	Director – 2022-2025	Valero
Jennifer Tullier	S&CC Chair	Spirit Environmental
Greg Johnson	S&CC Representative	Liskow & Lewis
Paul Algu	YPAC Chair	RTP Environmental Associates, Inc.
Dr. Maud Walsh	A&WMA Director	LSU
Paula McCain	SW Chapter Chair	Westlake

## 2021 Committee Members

John King	Membership	Breazeale, Sachse & Wilson, L.L.P.
Boyd Boswell	Education Committee Chair	T. Baker Smith, LLC
Paul Algu	YP Chair	RTP Environmental Associates, Inc.
Kelly Phillips	Facilities Chair	Nucor
Amanda Polito	Communications Chair	Energy Transfer Partners
Brandon Lithgoe	Website	Nova Chemicals Olefins, LLC
Doug Melancon	Corporate Relations Chair	ExxonMobil
Ashley Viator	Newsletter Committee/LDEQ Liaison	LDEQ
Maureen Ducote	Website/LDEQ Liaison	LDEQ
Nathan McBride	Program Chair	Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association (LMOGA)
Tokesha Collins-Wright	Program Chair	LCA
Michael Waguespack	Awards Chair	Waldemar S. Nelson & Company
Victoria "Tori" Nguyen	Student Chapter President	LSU Student

The Louisiana Section is one of nearly 140 geographical member units of the Air & Waste Management Association. As such, we plan, organize and present activities that focus on local and regional environmental issues. This includes holding luncheon and dinner meetings, technical seminars, annual conferences, workshops, continuing education courses, and social outings. We publish a newsletter, launch outreach activities and provide funds for scholarships. For more information about the A&WMA, [visit the A&WMA website](#)

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