

I am most honored to receive this award. I cannot begin to list the Brennan Team members, clients, competitors, engineers, and regulators, as well as friends and family members who have had a positive impact on my career.

More importantly, I want to recognize the people who are not here tonight because they are out aboard dredges, doing our work. Many are in hostile environments far from their homes. They work long shifts in blazing heat and freezing snow and ice. They sleep in noisy crew quarters, or cheap hotels. They suffer through times of prolonged layoffs when work is scarce. They miss their kid's soccer games and graduations. These are the people who do our work, and we owe a profound debt to them.

Dredging is an industry that moves its plant to the product. We all travel. Many of us have been kicking around this industry for so long that we think we know it. That's not true. You don't know this work until you know the people who actually do it.

Go out and get on a dredge. You can't know this work until you shake dirty hands, smell the exhaust, feel the decks surge and list, and hear the engines roar. No matter what you do, it will make you better at it.

When I started, computers were never seen on jobsites. Our work was done with lead lines and transits. To underscore my dinosaurship, I occasionally still take out a slide rule. The people that impacted my career were crusty old dogs who had worked all over the world. I learned project control and chain of command from wise old engineers who took me under their wing.

There were a few mentors in my life who changed my career. They espoused the many core values that we all recognize; safety, quality, efficiency and so on. But as I look back, the common theme was leadership: how to guide people to achieve goals.

This conference is filled with leaders. Most of you are here because you or your organization wanted to enhance your knowledge and influence. We all have enthusiasm for dredging, so pass it on. If you can, be a mentor to a younger colleague.

Another concept I invite you to consider is Servant Leadership. Focus first on the growth and personal development of people. Create a culture in your organization that inspires and equips the people you influence. You will unlock creativity, ingenuity and purpose in your team.

As I look forward, I see the following:

- Demographics will lead to labor shortages. We are seeing this already in some areas. We are a small specialized industry, so academia will struggle to focus on the skillsets we need to do our work. So, as an industry, we will have to internally formalize education and training.
- Our workforce will be different. Each succeeding generation has a new outlook on life that impacts work practices. Some aspects of our work are not that attractive to younger people.

We will struggle to compete with other employers. Those who recruit, train and retain will be the winners. The best organizations have the best people.

- What I don't see is our work disappearing overseas. It has to be done here, and it will probably be done by us.
- We will see increased constraints on funding. Public finances are heading for major problems in the next few years. Private sector clients will expect more production with fewer resources. We must become measured risk takers to accelerate new efficiencies.
- We will see efficiencies that reduce labor. I always say that the dredge of the future will be crewed by a man and a dog. The man will be there to feed the dog, and the dog will be there to keep the man from touching anything.

It's been a good run. I wish I could start over. I am very proud and honored to have participated in a small industry that is complex, fun and vital to world commerce.

It has been great to participate in WEDA for over 30 years; an organization that propagates the knowledge and awareness of dredging.

Most importantly, I wish to thank all of you who carry the torch of enthusiasm and professional continuity that validates my generation's work.