

## MEHA History Chronology

Our professional association was a mere vision when a group of local professional sanitarians began meeting to discuss common environmental health problems in the late 1950s. They decided that a professional organization was in order to address their career needs. This visionary group of professionals included Jim Hensley, City of Edina, Harvey McPhee, City of St. Louis Park, Immanuel Roesler, University of Minnesota Health Service, and Carl Moline, City of Bloomington.



The group traveled throughout Minnesota to promote environmental health and especially their idea of developing a professional association for sanitarians. Some recruitments included the health departments of the cities of St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth, and Rochester and the Minnesota Department of Health.



Their efforts were rewarded when the Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians formed in March 1961 to promote environmental health and to develop and enhance professionalism. This may have been the first official annual meeting. President of the new organization was Jim Hensley, Vice-President John Mahoney, and Secretary/Treasurer Wayne Daley, the first Board of Directors. Shortly after organization, the Secretary/Treasurer position was changed to Secretary and Treasurer thereby establishing four members on the Board of Directors.



Charter members of the Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians were Jim Hensley, Robert Hunt, John Mahoney, Wayne Daley, Harvey McPhee, Jerry Zeleznikar, Robert Sharp, Professor Lee Stauffer, Immanuel Roesler, and Carl Moline.



## CHARTER MEMBERS



NEW OFFICERS AND CHARTER MEMBERS of the newly-formed Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians are shown during the group's March gathering. President of the organization is Edina-Richfield Sanitarian James Hensley, sitting third from left. Seated, from left, are Robert Hunt, Director of Hotel, Restaurant, and Resort, Minnesota Department of Health; Vice President John P. Mahoney, Duluth Health Department; Hensley of Edina-Richfield; Secretary-Treasurer Wayne W. Daley, University of Minnesota Health Service; and Harvey J. McPhee of St. Louis Park Health Department. Standing are Jerry S. Zeleznikar, St. Louis County Health Department; Robert Sharp, Duluth Health Department; Prof. Lee Stauffer and Immanuel F. Roesler, University of Minnesota Health Service; and Carl Moline, Bloomington Health Department.

At a special meeting of the Executive Committee held on Friday, June 9, 1961, a tally of the votes of the officers, directors, and by-laws committee members of the National Association of Sanitarians was unanimously in favor of accepting the Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians as an affiliate of the N.A.S. (Picture and article courtesy of National Environmental Health Association.)



## **1961**

- Organizational By-Laws were established
- March, First Annual Conference
- June, Affiliation with National Association of Sanitarians. Charter members of the Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians believed in supporting a strong national association and therefore established mandatory membership requirements in both the state and national associations (Closed Membership)

## **1960s**

- Members wrote and presented position papers, the forerunners of current legislative reports
- Formulation of Programs, Publications, Membership, Education, Finance, and Resolutions Committees
- Educational conferences began. Focus was presentation of position papers which became the start of more formal educational conferences

## **Late 1960s**

- Local agency members actively pursued professional registration but attempts were unsuccessful
- Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians changed name to Minnesota Environmental Health Association to be consistent with National Environmental Health Association (National Association of Sanitarians (NAS) changed to National Environmental Health Association)
- The MEHA lighthouse became the recognized symbol as a “beacon light of public health” for the association. A four foot lighthouse statue stood pillar at all of the early association meetings

## **Early 1970s**

- MEHA booth first displayed at the Minnesota State Fair and the Upper Midwest Hospitality Show (UPS)
- MEHA newsletters were first written to inform members of issues, events, and educational opportunities
- Kellys Bash, a special education and social function started to acquaint and develop communication lines among public health sanitarians, the media, legal advisors, and industry suppliers. Program was named after Kelly, manager of Lemington Motor Inn, Minneapolis, where the program was first held
- First Sanitarians/Industry Breakfast sponsored by the Minnesota Restaurant Association, held at the Upper Midwest Hospitality Show at the Minneapolis Convention Center

## **1972**

- Margaret Christianson (St. Paul) became first woman sanitarian and MEHA member

## **1973**

- First MEHA Golf Social at Roseville Par 3 Golf Course, August 3

## **1974**

- Program registration fees were \$3.50 for members and \$5.00 for nonmembers
- Ed Eberhardt (St. Paul) served as Region Four Vice President from 1974-77

- MEHA incorporated to become an entity and address organizational liabilities
- MEHA logo was developed and designed by Henry Urban (Minneapolis) into patches for promoting the 1975 National Environmental Health Association Annual Education Conference in Minnesota

## **1975**

- MEHA hosted the National Environmental Health Association Annual Educational Conference at Radisson Minneapolis. Jack Caldwell, MEHA industry member (Glenwood Inglewood) spearheaded this very successful event
- Caldwell Fund established with profits from the 1975 NEHA conference. Fund designed to be used for education conferences and professional training

## **1977**

- Regional Vice President Del Matasovsky (Minneapolis) served Region Four from 1977-1983

## **1979**

- Sanitarian Registration became law in spite of being a very political issue at a time when other professions were also attempting mandatory requirements for state licensing. Bob Hutchison (Anoka), Red Omundson (Albert Lea), Frank Staffenson (St. Paul) were active in developing registration requirements. Jack Wallace, MDH Division of Manpower, coordinated the Registered Sanitarian Advisory Council established to review and oversee applicants. The Council name changed to Registered Environmental Health Specialist/Sanitarian Advisory Task Force and responsibility moved under MDH Hotel Resort & Restaurant Section (now Environmental Health Section)
- Professional Examination Service (PES) sanitarian exam first administered
- During a movement to expand the sanitarians role and establish state sanitarian registration, MEHA members voted to change the professional name from sanitarian to “Environmental Health Specialist”

## **1981**

- October, President Dale Schroeder (St. Louis County) held the first Presidents Recognition Dinner to recognize members volunteering their time to serve on the Board of Directors or as Committee Chairs. Event was held at Majestic Oaks Golf Club in Ham Lake

## **1982**

- “Frankly I’m For Frank” Campaign for Frank Staffenson (St. Paul) running for NEHA President
- Dora May Coleman, MEHA industry member (Pillsbury) became first MEHA woman president

## **1983**

- Regional Vice President Dora May Coleman (Pillsbury) served Region Four from 1983-1989

## **1988**

- Mary Lauren Olson Scholarship Fund established as a lasting memorial to Mary Lauren Olson who was killed in a day care setting in July 1988. She was the daughter of MEHA member Steve Olson (St. Paul). MEHA members were recruited to donate blood to the Blood Bank to replenish that used in efforts for Mary Lauren

## **1988-89**

- MEHA membership pin was designed by Dora May Coleman (Pillsbury), Colleen Paulus (Brooklyn Park) and Sherry Engelman (St. Louis Park) to help promote MEHA membership and for very popular pin exchange at NEHA and international conferences

## **1989**

- Regional Vice President Robert Hutchison (Anoka) served Region Four from 1989-1995
- Local membership dues were increased from \$5 to \$10
- Promotional beginnings of MEHA golf shirts, jackets, coffee mugs, glasses, sweatshirts and bags with profits contributed to Scholarship Fund
- History committee was established to collect and preserve MEHA historical information. Ed Eberhardt (St. Paul) served as the first historian

## **1990**

- First Mary Lauren Olson Scholarship Award granted to Margaret Zeug Brown, University of Minnesota, Environmental and Occupational Health MPH student pursuing studies in child abuse and injury in day cares
- MEHA booth displayed at the Minnesota Beverage Association Show and the University of Minnesota Career Day

## **1992**

- Harvey McPhee (St. Louis Park) nominated as a candidate for the National Walter S. Mangold Award, the highest award bestowed upon a NEHA member for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the environmental health professional

## **1993**

- Membership requirements changed from closed membership to open membership. Members could join Minnesota Environmental Health Association without joining the national association

## **1995**

- MEHA established a formal mission statement
- Larry Carlson (Ramsey County) campaigned for Region Four Vice President

## **1996**

- MEHA participation in International Federation of Environmental Health Association (IFEHA). Petrona Lee (Bloomington) appointed as MEHA liaison

## **1997**

- Marketing & Outreach Committee established to promote Minnesota Environmental Health Association
- Emergency Preparedness Committee established as a result of the 1997 flooding of the Red River Valley and the need for environmental emergency response

## 2000

- Strategic Planning by Board of Directors to foster and promote high standards and professional qualification, achieve harmonious and cooperative effort, advance professional recognition, restructure the organization and establish legislative goals, and achieve financial goals
- MEHA hosted the first NEHA Region Four Conference in Rochester
- Olmsted County Health Department received the National Crumbine Award, an award given by the Food Service and Packaging Institute to local food protection agencies who demonstrate excellence and continual improvement in a comprehensive food protection program
- MEHA list server established to provide communications link for agencies

## 2001

CONGRATULATIONS  
***40 YEARS***  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALISM

- MEHA hired a consultant to develop a website
- Board of Directors revised the mission statement to reflect environmental health in the Twenty First Century
- May, MEHA celebrated 40 years of professionalism at the Annual Education Conference at Maddens Resort in Brainerd. Recognition luncheon honored MEHA charter members
- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Booklet was dedicated to James Hensley

## 2002

- MEHA website, with distinctive loon call, became operational
- Succession to Presidency improved by adding "president-elect" and removing "3rd past president". Vice-President, President Elect, President, Past President, Second Past President
- Minnesota Environmental Health Specialist of the Year Award was renamed as Frank A Staffenson Award to honor Frank A. Staffenson, R.S. for his many years of service to the citizens of Saint Paul, to MEHA, and to the environmental health profession.
- MEHA requested Governor's Proclamation for Environmental Health Week in Minnesota during month of May

## 2003

- New MEHA logo

## 2004

- MEHA By-laws updated
- Bette Packer elected NEHA Region Four Vice President and served six years
- First Electronic MEHA Newsletter
- MEHA logo registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State

## 2005

- MEHA and MPHA held a joint spring conference

## 2006

- MEHA co-sponsored the Association of Minnesota Building Officials conference
- MEHA spoke at the Conference for Food Protection regarding inspector credentials (RS/REHS)

## 2008

- Student Committee was established
- Rolling screen display "Day in the Life of an Environmental Specialist" purchased for events
- "MEHA" name trademarked with the Minnesota Secretary of State
- MEHA U of M School of Public Health student group developed

## 2009

- MEHA joined Facebook
- Scholarship was established to send a MEHA member to NEHA Annual Conference

## 2010

- Hamline University Marketing students working with MEHA to improve strategic plan
- Sharon Smith campaigned as a candidate for NEHA Region Four Vice President position
- Emerging Professional Award created to recognize outstanding new environmental health professionals
- MEHA presented "Excellence in Environmental Health Science" awards to high school and middle school students at the Minnesota State Science & Engineering Fair

## 2011

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
**50 YEARS**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALISM**

- MEHA celebrates "50 Years of Protecting, Promoting and Improving Public Health" at the Annual Education Conference at Ruttger's Lodge in Deerwood. Evening Awards Banquet
- MEHA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Booklet dedicated to Harvey McPhee
- MEHA Time Capsule assembled and sealed – open in 50 years, 2061
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Cookbook assembled with recipes from MEHA members
- Mississippi River Paddlewheel boat ride planned for a summer social
- MEHA to host NEHA Region Four Conference in September in Rochester
- MEHA web site redesigned
- On-line payment for membership dues/conference registrations being developed

## THEN, 1961 . . .

Association Name	Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians
President	Jim Hensley
Membership	Closed Membership
Total Membership	10
Women Membership	0
Student Membership	0
Board of Directors	3
Dues	\$ 5

### *Minnesota Society of Professional Sanitarians*



"THE BEACON LIGHT OF PUBLIC HEALTH"



## NOW, 2011 . . .

Association Name	Minnesota Environmental Health Association
President	Robert Servian
Membership	Open Membership
Total Membership	370
Women Membership	133
Student Membership	55
Board of Directors	11
Dues	\$30

### *Minnesota Environmental Health Association*

