

2017 Walter S. Mangold Award Recipient Robert W. Powitz, MPH, PhD, RS, DLAAS



Denver – The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is proud to present the 2017 Walter S. Mangold Award, its premier honor, to Robert W. Powitz, MPH, PhD, RS, DLAAS, of Old Saybrook, CT. The Walter S. Mangold Award recognizes and honors individuals for outstanding contributions to the advancement of the environmental health profession. It is the highest honor that the NEHA can bestow on one of its members.

Dr. Powitz is receiving the Walter S. Mangold Award because of his illustrious career and the respect he has earned among his peers and colleagues in the environmental health profession. Documentation of Dr. Powitz’s achievements was compiled and submitted by a group of NEHA members to a committee of judges, who have themselves received this award. Dr. Powitz was the top candidate for this year’s award. Michéle Samarya-Timm of the American Academy of Sanitarians, who nominated Dr. Powitz along with the New Jersey Environmental Health Association, praised him for the impact he has had on the evolution of environmental health. In her nomination letter, she stated, “Dr. Robert W. Powitz has spent his career championing evidence-based practice in environmental health; all of his work is framed by a commitment to the sanitarian profession and illustrates the opportunities for the professional outside of the traditional health department role. As his long and storied career illustrates, Dr. Powitz’s work has changed the classic meme of the environmental health profession through his commitment to continuing education, stimulating others to be knowledgeable and proficient in the sanitarian craft, and assuring and creating innovations in environmental health practice. He is the personification of a model sanitarian.”

Dr. Powitz launched his career in environmental health in 1967 as a sanitary inspector for the state of New Jersey after completing his bachelor’s degree in agriculture at the State University of New York and the University of Georgia. For the next several years, Dr. Powitz circled back and forth between Minnesota and New Jersey and during that time, he earned a Masters of Public Health and a Doctor of Philosophy in environmental health and epidemiology from the University of Minnesota. He then turned to NEHA to focus on a post-doctoral project where he worked on a role delineation model for the sanitarian profession. This project was the beginning of his decades-long professional relationship with NEHA.

Following his tenure at NEHA, Dr. Powitz worked at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where he built the environmental health and safety department—one of his proudest career accomplishments—and helped establish a masters program in hazardous material management. The lure of the sanitarian field, however, drew Dr. Powitz back to

Connecticut where he worked as the director of biological safety and environment for the U.S.D.A. at Plum Island. At this point, he had established himself as an expert in the field and in 1984, he established R.W. Powitz & Associates, PC, a professional corporation specializing in environmental and public health and contamination control advisory services to industry, law firms, insurance companies, and government agencies. He is currently principal and forensic sanitarian. He currently also serves as Health Director for the Town of Franklin, CT.

The Walter S. Mangold Award is a highlight achievement for Dr. Powitz, who has already received several professional awards. After 50 years, Dr. Powitz is active in several environmental health organizations, an author of articles and books, and a member of several boards and committees. He is also a leader in the community where he regularly gives talks to high school students, Rotary Clubs, and literary groups on environmental health topics. He has spent his career working to elevate the practices of environmental health, and his involvement and achievements are impressive and extensive. Dr. Powitz's peers continually highlight his passion for elevating the environmental health profession and innovation. He has immersed himself in the field and has risen to the top of his field.

Dr. Powitz received the Walter S. Mangold Award during an award ceremony at NEHA's Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on July 12, 2017. Dr. Powitz received his first license as a sanitarian 50 years ago and throughout his career, he has demonstrated initiative, leadership, and dedication in the environmental health field.



About the National Environmental Health Association

The National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) is a professional society with more than 4,500 members in the public and private sectors as well as in universities and uniformed services. NEHA's mission, "to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all" is fulfilled in the products and services offered by NEHA to advance the environmental health professional through credentialing, training, education, networking, professional development, and policy involvement opportunities. Learn more about NEHA at www.neha.org.