

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each year, at selected conferences, the Conference Paper Committee is asked to recommend a prize winner whose paper makes a significant contribution to the literature on dredging and related fields. Since 1987, IADC has presented 42 Young Author Awards. Curious to see where they are now, we asked previous winners what impact winning the award had on them and their career.



**J. Marco Groot, Manager Rock Department, Boskalis International**

**Paper: Criteria for the backfilling of excavated trenches for transmission lines and immersed tunnels**

**What did winning the award mean to you?**

It was absolutely an honour to be selected and to be addressed personally by Mr J.J. DeCloedt, IADC's President at that time, during the award ceremony. The prize money was appreciated as well.

**What impact did winning the award have on your career?**

It did not impact my career directly but it certainly emphasised the importance of gaining knowledge and presenting it in articles. There were quite a few occasions, and even many years later, that external contacts referred to the article as being very useful due to its practical information content.

**What are you up to now?**

I have had many different steps in my career within the marine dredging and construction industry and spend most of my time working abroad on projects, varying from landfalls, port construction and land reclamation whereby rock installation has been the common thread. Looking back at the past 40 years, I feel that all this experience has contributed to becoming a valued professional within the industry. Four years ago, I moved back to the Netherlands and joined Boskalis. In my present position as Manager Rock Department, I am involved with all rock installation projects worldwide.

Jean-Jacques De Cloedt, President of IADC, presenting the first Young Author Award to J. Marco Groot during the CEDA Dredging Days in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, November 1987.

**Sape Andries Miedema, Associate Professor Dredging Engineering, Delft University of Technology**

**Paper: The cutting forces in saturated sand of a seagoing cutter suction dredger**

**What did winning the award mean to you?**

International recognition.

**What impact did winning the award have on your career?**

It connected me to American dredging companies, which resulted in consultancy

until now. It also made me encourage and stimulate young colleagues to publish, resulting in many (IADC) awards.

**What are you up to now?**

Retiring in June 2022.



Charles Hummer presenting Sape Miedema with the award at WDDCON XII in Orlando, USA, April 1989.

## Marc Van Torre, Professor Emeritus, Ghent University, Belgium

### Paper: Navigation in muddy areas: Establishing the navigable depth in the port of Zeebrugge

#### What did winning the award mean to you?

The award meant a recognition for the relevance of the research projects I was involved in at that time. It also made me aware of the importance of the co-operation between (dredging) companies, port authorities, waterway authorities and research institutions/universities.

#### What impact did winning the award have on your career?

Awards certainly play a role in an academic career. IADC's Young Author Award also opened doors to international committees

of organisations like PIANC and ITTC (International Towing Tank Conference). The appreciation received from IADC also stimulated to continue research in the field of interaction between ships and mud layers.

#### What are you up to now?

In 2019, I retired as senior full professor and head of the Maritime Technology division at Ghent University. However, I am still involved in (selected) research topics of the Maritime Technology Division (UGent) and of Flanders Hydraulics Research, in the frame of the Knowledge Centre Ship Behaviour in Shallow and Confined Water.



Dr Marc Van Torre (right) receiving the award, together with Karel van Craenenbroeck, from IADC President Robert Brouwer during the CEDA Dredging Days in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, November 1991.



IADC President Robert Brouwer presented Ahmed Mohammed with the young author award during the CEDA Dredging Days in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, November 1993.

## Ahmed Rufai Mohammed, General Manager, Engineering and Technical Services, Nigerian Ports Authority

### Paper: A low-cost dredging device: A laboratory and field study

#### What did winning the award mean to you?

It helped in building self-esteem and confidence.

#### What impact did winning the award have on your career?

The award created opportunity to progress in my career to the post of General Manager

in charge of Engineering and Dredging Works in Nigerian Ports Authority.

#### What are you up to now?

Currently serving as the General Manager, Engineering and Technical Services in Nigerian Ports Authority. This includes overseeing dredging activities at all port locations in the organisation.

## Leaf Erickson, Senior Engineer, Coastal Design & Engineering

### Paper: Case study on local sediment management at Leeward-Going-Through in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos

#### What did winning the award mean to you?

Having spent most my life writing technical papers in coastal engineering, this recognition gave me the confidence in going beyond technical details in my approach to add interesting elements of both the design and construction process.

#### What impact did winning the award have on your career?

I have continued both my professional and academic careers advancing to a Senior Engineering position with the same firm and completing my doctoral

studies focused in sediment resources at Florida Institute of Technology.

#### What are you up to now?

I'm still with Coastal Design & Engineering and currently working on a range of coastal projects, including dredging for the Turks and Caicos Islands Ports Authority's North Caicos and South Caicos Port rehabilitation projects – blending a beneficial use of dredged material for beach and dune restoration projects within a fiscally sustainable construct for both public and private stakeholders.



Leaf Erickson received the award from IADC Secretary General Constantijn Dolmans during WEDA XXV in New Orleans, USA, June 2005.



**Stéphanie Groen, Director Coastal & Climate Change Asia, Aurecon Group**

**Paper: Environmental monitoring and management of reclamations works close to sensitive habitats**

**What did winning the award mean to you?**

Recognition of this process ensured that over time, EMMP or EMP became the norm for marine and terrestrial projects under construction. Whilst an EIA is done before works start, and EMMP is done during construction to ensure full compliance with EIA long term. For me, this was more important than the EIA alone, as these documents still end up forgotten on a dusty shelf. Nowadays, the EMMP process is a recognised tool for projects under construction.

**What impact did winning the award have on your career?**

DHI Singapore managed to set the scene with EMMP projects, which were adopted in other countries afterwards. Therefore, with the increase in project exposure, there

were more opportunities to improve and automate the process, to become more efficient and deliver more accurate results. Personally, I was fortunate to grow with the organisation, get exposed to more than 15 large reclamation EMMP projects and eventually become Managing Director of Singapore in 2013.

**What are you up to now?**

Currently, I am the Director Coastal and Climate Change Asia for Aurecon, looking after all sustainability, coastal adaptation and climate change related opportunities in Asia. At Aurecon, we believe that our future economic success has direct links to its sustainability and climate change performance. Therefore, we work with our clients on the transition towards net zero and climate positive solutions, which is good for our business and for our planet.

Stéphanie Groen receiving the Young Award from Constantijn Dolmans, Secretary General of IADC, presented at WODCON XVIII, Orlando, USA, May 2007.

**Suze Ann Bakker, Sr. Project Engineer; Project Lead for Enter Energy Mozambique, Shell**

**Paper: Uncertainty analysis of the mud infill prediction of the Olokola LNG approach channel**

**What did winning the award mean to you?**

When starting my thesis, probabilistic assessments of dredging volumes were at best uncommon. Winning the award showed that it is worthwhile breaking new grounds.

**What impact did winning the award have on your career?**

It definitely gave me a kick start in my role. But even more important, it taught me how important assessing uncertainties is when working on large infrastructure and energy projects. To this day, assessing uncertainties helps me in making the right decisions in my projects.

**What are you up to now?**

So far, I have been very fortunate to have worked in a variety of exciting roles across the globe: from maintenance in Pernis refinery in the Netherlands, to offshore structures engineer on a multi-billion-dollar LNG project in Paris, to lead engineer on a terminal conversion project in Houston, Texas. This led me to my current role working on Shell's global social investment programme, Enter Energy, which brings electricity to refugees in support of Sustainable Development Goal 7. I am truly grateful that I have the opportunity to provide access to energy to improve the lives of displaced people in my country of birth, Mozambique.



Rene Kolman, Secretary General of IADC congratulated Suze Ann Bakker, winner of the award at PIANC MMX in Liverpool, UK, May 2010.



### Kaitlin McCormick, Senior Manager, Renewable Development, Invenergy

#### Paper: Masonville dredged material containment facility: Environmental planning, compliance and compensatory mitigation

René Kolman, Secretary General of IADC presented Kaitlin McCormick with the award at WEDA 30<sup>th</sup> Technical Conference and the 41<sup>st</sup> Texas A&M Seminar in Puerto Rico, June 2010.

#### What did winning the award mean to you?

It was a confidence boost for my technical abilities and expertise associated with navigating complex regulatory frameworks for in-water infrastructure projects. My professional mentor Jane Boraczek had passed away unexpectedly the year before and this award also reflected the support and mentorship (and technical wisdom) she had shared with me.

#### What impact did winning the award have on your career?

This award helped facilitate further opportunities to learn and advise permitting

on coastal and in-water infrastructure within and around the Chesapeake Bay – and began a career of advising and leading permitting for in-water and coastal projects.

#### What are you up to now?

I serve as a Senior Manager, Renewable Development for Invenergy, the world’s leading privately held sustainable energy company. My focus is on permitting energy generation and association transmission infrastructure.

### Rudy Helmons, Assistant Professor (Delft University of Technology) and Adjunct Associate Professor (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)



#### Paper: Modelling the effect of water depth on rock cutting processes with the use of discrete element method

#### What did winning the award mean to you?

It feels wonderful to win such an award. It’s a confirmation that the work that you present is of high quality and that it is perceived by others as highly relevant for the dredging industry. It really is great to receive such a compliment from experts in our field.

#### What impact did winning the award have on your career?

It’s difficult to say. In my case, it gave recognition for the small niche that my research focusses on and it serves as a very good encouragement to notice that others see value in it as well. It did help me to remain within the field of dredging engineering. I have to say, I’m not entirely sure that I’m in the position that I am today because of the Young Author

Award. If I go through the list of previous winners, I notice that I know quite a few of them directly. All those people are talented and seem to share a passion for the field of industry. In that sense, I think that the award is a perfect example of recognising those talented people and giving them encouragement to continue their work.

#### What are you up to now?

In my current positions at Delft University of Technology and Norwegian University of Science and Technology, I am mainly responsible for the research and education related to the application of deep-sea mining. In those positions, I try to combine the expert knowledge from dredging industry with other fields of industry and research, for example, deep-sea biology/geology, oil/gas technology, mining industry and bulk handling.

Rudy Helmons received the award from René Kolman, Secretary General of IADC at CEDA Dredging Days in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, November 2015.