



## The Walter F. Snyder Award for 2002

Presented to  
**Gayle J. Smith**

"Water, water everywhere ne any drop to drink," wrote Samuel Taylor Coleridge. "Water, water everywhere, safe drinking water for all," could well be the motto of the recipient of the 2002 Walter F. Snyder Award, Gayle J. Smith. For thirty-one of his thirty-five professional years, Mr. Smith focused his energy on improving public health by addressing drinking water needs.

A farm boy born and raised in Idaho Falls, Idaho, Smith attended Ricks College receiving an associate's degree in mathematics. In 1967, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Utah State University and began his professional career as a highway design engineer with the Washington State Highway Department, Wenatchee, Washington. He expanded his highway engineering skills to urban master planning with Futrell, Inc., Vancouver, Washington, introducing him to wastewater and drinking water treatment.

In February 1971, Smith returned to Utah accepting an Environmental Engineering position at the Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Water Quality. He took this opportunity to complete his studies for a Masters of Environmental/Engineering at Utah State University. In 1978, he was promoted to Director, Bureau of Public Water Supplies, Division of Drinking Water. In this role, he persistently challenged the 'system' laying the groundwork to make this division an efficient, effective regulatory agency. Smith played a major role in securing passage of Utah's Safe Drinking Water Act and obtaining Primacy delegation for the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act in Utah in 1979 and 1980, respectively.

An expert negotiator, Smith formed partnerships between public and private agencies. These partnerships allowed the pooling of

resources both in expertise and materials for finding solutions to environmental problems. A colleague supports this view stating, "There never seemed to be an organization that Gayle did not befriend, see a role for and effectively use to help in solving Utah's local problems." He continues, "...other directors seemed to fear giving up turf...Gayle viewed and treated locals as full partners in assisting him in this important work."

Overcoming the local versus state barrier, he helped found the Rural Water Association of Utah, which now works "hand-in-glove" with Utah's Division of Drinking Water. He established a coalition of support for legislation to require certification of public water systems operators. Initial efforts failed, but persistence paid off, just one year later in 1984, Smith was successful in rallying support and, with his House floor assistance, the bill passed.

A colleague wrote, "Gayle never flinched in defending the need for adequate resources for the drinking water program and in educating policy makers about the public health risks associated with weak drinking water programs. The result has been that the Division of Drinking Water survived tough times, and many policy makers have slowly come to understand the importance of the program."

During an April 1984 meeting of the National Conference of State Sanitary Engineers, Smith met with key drinking water administrators on national issues critical to the drinking water industry. It was apparent that state issues were not adequately represented at the national level. Smith took the lead and the group proceeded to explore how states, through cooperative efforts, could further their interests at the national level. The outcome

was the formation of the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA). Serving as Vice President (1985-1986) and President (1986-1987) he provided leadership during its formative years. Today, the Association is a key player in promoting and resolving national drinking water issues which impact federal drinking water legislation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency appointed Smith as Chairman of its National Drinking Water Advisory Council in 1986. Smith served in this capacity for three years. As Chairman of this fifteen-member Council, Smith's attention was focused on sensible national drinking water rules that could also be implemented by small water systems.

Also on the national level, Smith orchestrated a nationwide comment campaign on EPA's Lead/Copper Rule proposal resulting in modification to the rule. He also facilitated the nation's comments on EPA's proposed Volatile Organic Chemical Rules, which nationally legitimized the "vulnerability" concept.

Mr. Smith is a very active member of the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants, chairs the NSF International Joint Committee on Drinking Water Additives (serving consecutive terms on both the Council and Joint Committee since 1991); and, holds the record of the longest tenure on an NSF Technical Committee. He called upon all his skills as negotiator and mediator to obtain consensus of manufacturers, regulatory officials at federal, state and local levels, and users, including water utilities and trade associations, to help develop the first U.S. national standards for drinking water additives. A fellow committeeman recognized this effort, stating, "The Committee respects his unbiased handling of contentious issues and solicitation of all viewpoints."

In 1991, Utah legislature changed

the structure of its environmental programs. Mr. Smith was appointed Director, Division of Drinking Water and assigned to administer Utah's public drinking water program and its multi-million dollar annual budget and served in this capacity until 1993.

Smith currently serves as Manager of Permits and Compliance with the Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Quality, developing and implementing programs to permit discharge of wastewater to waters of the State (and the U.S.) in Utah. This includes municipal and industrial wastewater and emergency spill response.

Smith's dedication has brought him well-earned recognition. His awards include: Friend of Rural Water, National Rural Water Association (NRWA); George Warren Fuller Award, AWWA; Outstanding Service to Rural Water Systems, Utah Rural Water Association; and, the Environmental Leadership Award, NSF International.

Mr. Smith and his wife of 37 years, Ellen, are well known and active in Salt Lake City where they have raised six children and one foster child.

Mr. Smith is admired and respected by his colleagues; he is a mentor to many practicing health professionals. For his achievements in attaining a quality environment and improving public health, NSF International and the National Environmental Health Association take great pleasure in awarding to Gayle J. Smith the 2002 Walter F. Snyder Award.

"Water, water everywhere..."  
- safe water for all

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