



IN MEMORIAM: GREG GARRETT

By the Recreational Water Quality Committee

OVER THE LAST few years, AQUA has published articles by the Recreational Water Quality Committee, part of what is now known as the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance. This newly minted organization was formed by the unification of The Association of Spa and Pool Professionals and the National Swimming Pool Foundation.

While this committee was originally created within APSP, we have embraced this unification. In fact, our most recent in-person meeting was held at the World Aquatic Health Conference in October, which was created by NSPF. Our work in recreational water quality will continue in 2020.

This small bit of information is mentioned because this month's Tech Notes will not be about a technical subject. It's about something more important than our usual topics like alkalinity, borates, or water testing interferences. This month, the Committee chose to depart from the usual and dedicate this column to Greg Garrett.

You see, this last meeting our dear colleague and friend was not with us. He passed suddenly in August

and has left a significant hole in this group. If you look at the box that accompanies this monthly column, you see the list of companies who participate in the RWQC. A few of these companies compete against each other, but we work together when it comes to the science of the subjects we discuss.

It is our committee's mission to produce information that is scientifically based. On the PHTA website, the committee is recognized as invaluable "in assisting PHTA in the development and maintenance of authoritative information regarding chemical products, processes and devices that affect water quality maintenance in the swimming pools, spas and hot tubs industry."

Many of us, while colleagues of Greg, who owned Applied Materials Technologies and was a representative of the National Plasterers Council and held several positions including Director of Technical Services, called Greg our friend.

In that last meeting, we recognized this great loss and recalled his valued contributions. Terry Arko, a committee member from Hasa, shared that "Greg was a very dynamic

contributor...He had an incredible mind and great passion for education. He was truly a guy in the trenches who related to and understood the needs of builders and service techs."

So many committee members mentioned one interesting and sometimes very useful characteristic of Greg: his photographic memory. Our committee can literally process hundreds of pages of documentation and scientific information in one meeting and Greg could pull a reference with chapter, page, and paragraph like a computer.

He used this gift in pursuit of his great passion: education. He shared this passion with his fellow committee members; he talked about it in podcasts and of course walked the walk, too. His travel schedule for giving seminars for the NPC and most recently the Pool Chemistry Training Institute were filled every single month with classes of people wanting to learn. He reached thousands of pool and hot tub professionals through his many years in the classroom. This does not include the thousands of pool inspections he did to determine root causes of problems that owners were experiencing.



He shared some of them with us. From water balance parameters being measured at unbelievable levels that contributed to his final reports, to encountering domesticated animals (like donkeys?!) that roamed loose in the backyard, he also had practical experience to share with us at our in-person meetings.

Greg certainly memorized an inordinate amount of material. For any of you who had the privilege to visit his office, you would immediately know he loved learning. There were books and magazines everywhere and he knew where everything was! Joe Laurino, Ph.D., our chair, visited him and took a picture of him holding a book he read repeatedly until he literally broke its spine from overuse.

In addition to being an educator, he was a motivator and mentor. His encouragement to colleagues to get out of their comfort zone was notable. A number of people in this industry are thriving in service companies and industry associations and committees because of Greg's kind words and friendly manner. Certainly there are others who wouldn't have applied for that scholarship or grant if it wasn't for Greg's persistence in making

sure they filled out the appropriate paperwork. And persistent is something Greg was good at. At our last meeting, Jody O'Grady of Taylor Technologies stated, "His gregarious, authentic and many times animated personality was a gem and pleasure to be around at every meeting we were with him. I was constantly amazed at the amount of classes he presented at trade shows, to distributors and health departments and am envious of the collection of books he held."

But work wasn't his only passion — his other passion was his family. Greg is survived by his wife and frequent traveling companion, Shawna, and four children. While Greg's career in the industry started in 1969, and he had recently begun to mention retirement, we all believe that he is gone too soon but are grateful for the time we shared with him, the knowledge he imparted on us and the many memories he left with us.

He will not be forgotten. The RWQC is committed to pursuing an award in Greg's name to promote his great commitment to education. If you would like to contribute to this endeavor, please contact PHTA. ~

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Greg Garrett (in commemoration)

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