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.

Sape Andries Miedema, Associate Professor Drilling 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?
It was absolutely an honour to be selected and is still addressed personally by Mr. J.J. De Cloedt, 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?
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 Flemish Hydraulics Research in the framework of the EU-funded Centre for Ship Behaviour in Shallow and Confined Water (CE-SHACW) and of organizations like PIANC and ITTC (International Towing Tank Conference). The appreciation received from IADC also stimulated me to continue research in the field of interaction between ships and mud layers.

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?
This recognition gave me the confidence in going beyond technical details to approach to add interesting elements of both the design and construction process.

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 time writing technical papers at coastal engineering, this recognition gave me the confidence in going beyond technical details to 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 doctorate studies focused in sediment research 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 Port Authority in 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 context for both public and private stakeholders.

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 recognition for the research at the time, which was involved in that time. It also made me aware of the importance of the cooperation 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 Awards opened doors to international committees of organisations like PIANC and ITTC (International Towing Tank Conference). The appreciation received from IADC also stimulated me to continue research in the field of interaction between ships and mud layers.

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

J. Marco Groot, Manager Rock Department, Boskalis International

Paper: Criteria for the backfilling of excavated trenches for transmission lines and immersed tunnels
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What impact did winning the award have on your career?
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What are you up to now?
I have had many different steps in my career within the marine dredging and construction industry and spent most of my time working abroad on projects, varying from offshore, port construction and sand reclamation whereby rock installation has been the common thread. Looting 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.

Ahmed Mohammed, Senior Engineer, Coastal Design & Engineering

Paper: Paper: Case study on local sediment management at Leeward-Going-Through in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos
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Leaf Erickson receiving the award from IADC Secretary General Constantijn Craenenbroeck during WEDA XV in New Orleans, USA, June 2005.
YOUNG AUTHOR AWARD WINNERS

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 time, and EMMP 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 are laid out in a binder 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?

On my LinkedIn, I 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 in the organisation, get exposed to more than 15 large reclamation EMMP projects and eventually become Managing Director of Singapore in 2015.

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. Here, Aurecon believes that our future economic success has direct links to its sustainability and climate change performance. Therefore, we advise our clients on the transition towards net zero and climate positive solutions, which is good for our business and for our planet. 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 to transmission infrastructure.

Kaitlin McCormick, Senior Manager, Renewable Development, Invenergy

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

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 the 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 Senior Manager, Renewable Development for Invenergy for a world-leading privately held sustainable energy company. My focus is on Permitting, energy generation and association to transmission infrastructure.

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

Paper: Uncertainty analysis of the mud infill prediction of the Okikoto 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 worth taking breaking new grounds.

What impact did winning the award have on your career?

It definitely gave me a kick start in my career. But even more important, it taught me how important assessing uncertainties is when working on large 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, this was more important than the EIA alone, as these documents are laid out in a binder on a dusty shelf. Nowadays, the EMMP process is a recognised tool for projects under construction.

What are you up to now?

So far, I have been very fortunate to have won in a variety of exciting roles across the globe. I’ve maintained my position in the Netherlands, as offshore structures engineer on a multi-billion-dollar LNG project in Qatar, as lead engineer on a terminal conversion project in Houston, Texas. This led to new opportunities 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.

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 are performing is of high quality and that it is perceived by others as highly relevant for the dredging industry. It’s really 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 me great encouragement to continue their work. I believe that the award is a perfect example of recognizing 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 responsible for the research and education related to the application of deep-sea mining. In those positions, I try to combine the expertise knowledge of the mining industry with other fields of industry and research (for example, deep-sea biology, geology, big data technology, mining industry and heavy handling).