

KRWA Establishes Scholarship in Honor of Dennis Schwartz

Take the opportunity that this column provides to give tribute for the service of Dennis Schwartz to the Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA). Dennis is known to many people across Kansas and the U.S. for his work with KRWA and on behalf of water systems across the nation. I also am pleased to announce that the Kansas Rural Water Association Board of Directors is establishing a scholarship in honor of Dennis.

Dennis served on the KRWA board of directors from 1977 to 2014 – a total of 37 years. During that period, the Association grew from a struggling

As Board President over many years, Dennis nurtured and supported those programs and initiatives because they would be a benefit to communities in Kansas.

organization to today being recognized as one of the leading and most respected state Rural Water Associations in America. The types of programs and assistance supported by KRWA have grown by leaps and bounds. KRWA initiated those new programs, not to create grandeur for the board of directors or guarantee positions for any staff members, but simply to provide help and support for water and wastewater systems. Mark Twain said, “The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” Work by Dennis and others on the KRWA board and KRWA staff got many things started. As Board President over many

years, Dennis nurtured and supported those programs and initiatives because they would be a benefit to communities in Kansas. None of it was easy; the Association had little if any resources in 1977.

The 37 years of Dennis' service on the KRWA board included numerous trips to meet with members of Congress and in monitoring legislation in Kansas. He served two terms as President of the National Rural Water Association board of directors. He is the longest-serving member of the Kansas Water Authority. He participated on the National Drinking Water Advisory Committee to EPA.

All that aside, Dennis is the type of person who seeks the best in everyone.

And true to form, no matter what group of people he is in, the conversation nearly always returns to his work which was providing good drinking water for the citizens of Kansas. I remember well the many times that Dennis commented that water system board members, city councils and their staffs should always keep in mind that the real customers are the citizens of the state – not the water system board or city council or the utility staff. It was and remains good advice.

To honor the legacy of Dennis Schwartz, KRWA has established the Dennis Schwartz Scholarship. This begins as a stipend of \$1,000. It will be awarded to a high school senior who is planning to enter higher education. The one stipulation is that the applicants are limited to those who are dependents of employees of member utilities of KRWA or employees of KRWA. The



next page provides a further announcement. The application form is downloadable on the KRWA Web site under “Online Resources”

and then, “Scholarship”. If anyone needs to have an application mailed to them, please contact the KRWA office at 785.336.3760 or email to krwa@krwa.net.

The Dennis Schwartz Scholarship is established in recognition of his outstanding dedication and commitment to the Association's members; it honors a person who showed kindness to others, respect, honesty and determination. We hope that it will help inspire, encourage and support a future leader who will also serve others.

KRWA plans to inaugurate the scholarship with the announcement of the recipient at the 2016 conference. That conference also marks the 50th Anniversary of KRWA. A great conference is being planned; I hope that you and others, especially board and council members, will make the investment to attend. Mark your calendars now for March 29 - 31 at the Century II Convention Center in Wichita.

Sam Atherton has been a member of the board of directors of the Kansas Rural Water Association since March 2006. He received a bachelor's degree from Fort Hays State University; he is also the past-president of the National FFA Alumni. He retired in late 2011 as manager of Public Wholesale Water Supply District No. 4.





SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Kansas Rural Water Association Scholarship Committee has established a college scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 beginning with the 2016-2017 school term. The Scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior. Applicants are limited to be children, stepchildren or under guardianship of full-time employees of either an Active Member System of the Kansas Rural Water Association or employees of the Association.

This Scholarship is designated as the **Dennis Schwartz Scholarship** in honor of Dennis Schwartz who served on the Association Board of Directors from 1977 to 2014 and who has served on a host of state and national committees including the National Rural Water Association, National Drinking Water Advisory Committee and the Kansas Water Authority.

The Scholarship will be paid in two installments: 1) half for the 2016 fall semester; 2) half for the 2017 spring semester upon proof of enrollment and continued study.

The award will be issued directly to the applicant and not to the college, university or institution of higher learning.

Applicants must include a copy of his/her transcript for the seven semesters of high school with the application.

Applicants must complete the application form in its entirety by completing all blanks and signing the application. The applicant must include one letter of reference by a teacher or school counselor.

The recipient of the Dennis Schwartz Scholarship award will be announced at the 2016 KRWA Annual Conference & Exhibition, March 30, 2016.

Applications must be postmarked no later than February 1, 2016, and mailed to:

Kansas Rural Water Association
ATTN: Scholarship Committee
PO Box 226
Seneca, KS 66538

The application and rules can be found online at www.krwa.net (under "Scholarship"). Please contact the KRWA office at 785-336-3760 if you wish to have the application mailed or emailed to you.