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PRESS RELEASE

NCSEA ANNOUNCES 2021 SPECIAL AWARDS HONOREES

Chicago, IL JANUARY 11, 2022: The National Council of Structural Engineers Associations' (NCSEA) is pleased to announce its 2021 NCSEA Special Awards honorees. The NCSEA Special Awards are bestowed on individuals who exemplify outstanding service and commitment to the association and to the structural engineering field. Awards include the James Delahay Award, the NCSEA Service Award, the Robert Cornforth Award, the Susan M. Frey NCSEA Educator Award, and the Susan Ann "Susie" Jorgensen Presidential Leadership Award.

NCSEA Service Award

This award is presented to an individual who has worked for the betterment of NCSEA, member organizations, and the profession, to a degree that is beyond the norm of volunteerism.

Thomas DiBlasi, P.E., SECB, is the president of DiBlasi Associates, P.C., in Monroe, CT. He is a past-president of NCSEA where he currently chairs the Code Advisory Committee and serves on the Wind Engineering Subcommittee. Mr. DiBlasi also served on the NCSEA Continuing Education Committee as well as the ad-hoc committee that developed the NCSEA Model Code of Ethics. He has been a director of NCSEA Media since its inception. Mr. DiBlasi is past-president of the Structural Engineers Association of Connecticut (SEACConn) where he chairs the Code Advisory Committee and the Peer Review Committee. He also serves as the structural engineering representative to the Codes & Standards Committee of the State of Connecticut.

Robert Cornforth Award

This award is presented to an individual for exceptional dedication and exemplary service to a member organization and to the profession. The award is named for Robert Cornforth, a founding member of NCSEA and treasurer on its first Board of Directors.

Robert H. Durfee, P.E., SECB, is a structural engineer, vice president, and chief bridge engineer at

DuBois & King in the firm's Gilford, NH office. His practice focuses on the design of bridge rehabilitation and replacement; his specialty is the restoration of historic covered bridges.

In 1994, Mr. Durfee helped found Structural Engineers of New Hampshire (SENH) and served on its Board of Directors as secretary (1994–1997) and as president (1998–2000). He has served on several committees, including Nominations, Structural Engineering Awards, Scholarship Award, NCSEA NH Annual Conference, and Public Relations. Mr. Durfee has also served as the SENH delegate to the Annual Conference/Annual Summit since 1998.

Mr. Durfee is a founder of the Northeast Coalition of Structural Engineers Associations (NECSEA), serving as the SENH representative from 2001–2020. He also serves on the NH Engineer/Young Engineer of the Year Awards Committee Jury.

Susan M. Frey NCSEA Educator Award

This award, established to honor the memory of Sue Frey, one of NCSEA's finest educators, is presented to an individual who has a genuine interest in, and extraordinary talent for, effective instruction of practicing structural engineers.

Michelle Kam-Biron, P.E., S.E., F. SEAOC, SECB is a California-licensed SE and has provided education extensively nationally and internationally on conventional wood and mass timber construction. Ms. Kam-Biron brings a unique skill set to her presentations with a background consisting of more than 25 years as a practicing structural engineer and plan check reviewer, an influencer and educator with WoodWorks and American Wood Council, and her current position as a mass timber specialist at Structurlam Mass Timber Corporation.

She is a past-president of SEAOSC and was recently inducted into the SEAOC College of Fellows. She serves on several committees such as NCSEA Basic Education and ICC Professional Development Council Education and is past-chair of ASCE-SEI Wood Education, SEAOSC Foundation, and Women in Structural Engineering.

James Delahay Award

This award is presented at the recommendation of the NCSEA Code Advisory Committee, to recognize outstanding individual contributions towards the development of building codes and standards. It is given in the spirit of its namesake, a person who made a long and lasting contribution to the code development process.

Ramon Gilsanz, P.E., S.E., F.SEI, F.ASCE, Hon. AIA NYS, is a founding partner of Gilsanz Murray Steficek. In his 40-year career as a structural engineer, he has worked on a wide range of new construction and renovation projects and volunteered across the world to help communities in need. Mr. Gilsanz participated in six post-earthquake investigative teams, Hurricane Sandy recovery

efforts, and led the WTC7 collapse analysis on the national ASCE-FEMA building performance assessment team.

Additionally, Mr. Gilsanz actively contributes to the industry through several professional societies and committees including ASCE 7-16 and ASCE 7-22, American Concrete Institute (ACI), and the AISC committee on specifications. He served on the NYC Department of Buildings' Structural Technical Committee in 2008 and was chair in 2014 and 2021, revising the NYC Building Code. Mr. Gilsanz is also the chair for the NYC Existing Buildings Code Development Structural Technical committee, whose building code is forthcoming.

Susan Ann "Susie" Jorgensen Presidential Leadership Award

This new award was created to honor the late NCSEA Board President and advocate for the profession, Susan Ann "Susie" Jorgensen, who passed away in November 2020. This award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated exceptional leadership potential through their activities within NCSEA and/or their SEA (even if they did not serve in a formal leadership role). The award is to be bestowed on candidates who embody Susie's passion, vision, and legacy of leadership and is intended to celebrate the increased participation of emerging leaders and encourage recipients to engage (or continue to engage) in formal leadership.

Katharine (Katie) A. Courtright, P.E., is a project engineer for JVA, Inc. in Denver, CO. She joined the Colorado SEA in 2012 as a student member when she was selected to receive a SEAC scholarship. During college, Ms. Courtright served as the SEAC Young Member Group collegiate liaison for the Colorado School of Mines. Upon graduation in 2014, she joined the Young Member Committee, becoming co-chair in 2016 and chair in 2017. Her service on the YMG Committee has included coordination of the annual SE/PE Study Group Kick-Offs and AASHTO Review Sessions, as well as technical presentations, mentoring, and outreach events. Ms. Courtright has been instrumental in encouraging student involvement in SEAC's annual Gingerbread Bridge Competition. She is currently serving on the newly formed SEAC SE3 Committee.

These dedicated servants, committed volunteers, and industry leaders will be recognized at the Awards Celebration on Wednesday, February 16, at the NCSEA Structural Engineering Summit. For more information about the individual awards, please [visit the NCSEA website](#).

The National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA) was formed to constantly improve the standard level of practice of the structural engineering profession. The Association's vision is that structural engineers are valued for their contributions to safe structures and resilient communities. The Association's mission is that NCSEA, in partnership with its Member Organizations, supports practicing structural engineers to be highly qualified professionals and successful leaders.