

Affiliate Society

NEWS & UPDATES

Gulf Estuarine Research Society (GERS): Biennial Conference Recap

The biennial Gulf Estuarine Research Society was held 8-9 November 2018 in the brand-new meeting facility on the Texas A&M University at Galveston campus. GERS welcomed more than 140 participants from across the Gulf of Mexico, including more than 75 graduate and undergraduate students. Plenary talks by Dr. Denise Reed and Dr. Marcus Drymon provided unique and complementary insights into the challenges of long-term fishery and ecosystem management. Other highlights included a career panel for students and recent graduates, a raffle to raise student travel funds, kayaking and bird-watching field trips, an R Statistics workshop, and a waterfront banquet in the historic Strand District in downtown Galveston.

The meeting would not have been possible without many generous sponsorships. Travel awards were presented to 20 students, thanks to sponsorships from Texas Sea Grant, Louisiana Sea Grant, Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant, and the University of Southern Mississippi. Program book and facility costs were offset by Texas A&M University at Galveston. Additional donations



GERS student travel award recipients at the closing banquet

were received from the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC); Whitenton Group; Tampa Bay Estuary Program; Turner Designs; Marilyn & Kevin McKay; Drs. Merrell, Rooker, Brody, and Schwarz at TAMUG; and the TAMUG Departments of Marine Biology and Marine Sciences. The GERS board and meeting planning committee deeply appreciate the community of support that made this meeting possible!

Student presentations stole the show at this meeting. Selecting presentation award winners was a tough job! This year, the student presentation awards were dedicated to the memory of Dr. Wes Tunnell, who passed away on 14 July, 2018. Dr. Tunnell had a four-decade career at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, where he was Professor of Biology in

the Life Sciences Department and Endowed Chair of Biodiversity and Conservation Science at the Harte Research Institute (HRI) for Gulf of Mexico Studies. At the closing banquet, Dr. Paul Montagna gave a touching tribute to Dr. Tunnell, pointing out his academic accomplishments, but also emphasizing that it was especially fitting to dedicate a student

award to Dr. Tunnell, because of the many former students who all testified that “Wes had transformed my life...” or that “Wes had completely changed my life for the better...”. The Wes Tunnell Student Presentation Award Winners for Best Oral Presentation were: First Place, Haley Gancel, Dauphin Island Sea Lab; Second Place, Victoria Congdon, University of Texas Marine Science Institute; Third Place, Janelle Goeke, TAMUG. Best Poster Presentation awards went to: First Place, Caitlin Young, University of Texas Marine Science Institute; Second Place, Allen Schaefer, Louisiana Tech University; Third Place, Erin Miller, University of Houston.

In other news, nominations for the 2019-2021 GERS board election will open soon. There will be opportunities for members of the GERS community to serve as President-Elect, Member-at-Large, Student Representative, or Media Coordinator. Self-nominations will be welcome!

Stay tuned to our social media pages and upcoming newsletters for more news and updates (@GulfEstuarineRS on ¹Twitter and ²Facebook) and the ³GERS website.

¹ <https://twitter.com/GulfEstuarineRS>

² <https://www.facebook.com/GulfEstuarineRS/>

³ www.gers.us