

NEWS RELEASE – July 23, 2020

UCA Announces 2020 Award Recipients

Denver, Colo. - The Underground Construction Association, a Division of SME (UCA), is pleased to announce the recipients of its top awards: Lifetime Achievement, Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Individual, and Project of the Year.

The UCA Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes outstanding achievements in the underground design and construction industry, including seeking advances in new methods and materials, and advancing the public understanding and concurrence with the beneficial uses of underground space. This year three Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to these exceptional members:



John J. Reilly



Henry A. Russell, Jr.



George E. Williamson



The UCA Outstanding Educator Award: Dr. James W. Mahar. James Mahar is known for his passion for teaching students in the fields of engineering geology and underground construction, and how these subjects apply to real world tunneling and underground construction. Dr. Mahar has more than 47 years of experience in design and/or construction on more than 200 projects involving openings in soil and rock. The award is presented to professors and teachers who have had an exceptional career in academia and education in the area of underground design and construction.

The UCA Outstanding Individual Award: Gary A. Almeraris. Mr. Almeraris is being presented the Award for achieving unprecedented and innovative engineering to challenging, design-build construction of tunnels and underground spaces. The Award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of tunneling and underground construction and to UCA during the last two to five years, as well as sustained involvement in UCA activities and its committees.



The Project of the Year Award: Regional Connector Project. A JV among nearly 13 companies including LA Metro, Skanska-Traylor, Mott MacDonald, WSP, AECOM and Arcadis, the Regional Connector Project is being honored for the outstanding and safe construction of the connector of three metro lines underneath the heart of downtown Los Angeles, overcoming challenges through innovation and teamwork. “While tunneling the first drive, the TBM encountered unexpected obstructions: two steel piles and 48 tie backs which damaged the equipment,” said **Christophe Bragard, Tunnel Manager.** “For the TBM reassembly and 2nd tunnel drive, the team worked around the clock to minimize delays, broke records (190 ft./day) and completed a month early.”

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The Underground Construction Association (UCA) brings together tunneling’s brightest and most dedicated professionals. Global association members advance their careers with the world-class technical resources, educational programs, networking opportunities and professional development tools from UCA. Our members are focused on sharing best practices in safety, environmental stewardship and technological advancements.

UCA. Inspiring tunneling professionals worldwide.

For more information on UCA, a Division of SME, contact Jackie Dorr, Communications Manager, dorr@smenet.org.

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