

Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association Award Winners



2015

Category: **Informal Educator Award**

MAMEA's 2015 Informal Educator Award presented to Rosanne Fortner.

A veteran educator with decades of experience, Rosanne continues to find creative and meaningful ways to contribute to the field of marine education. Rosanne's training includes her Bachelor's degree in Biology (1967) and Masters in Earth Science from Oregon State University (1973). With her solid science credentials, she moved into the world of formal education, completing a Doctorate in Education (EdD) in 1978 from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Her dissertation focused on inland high school students' experiences related to marine knowledge. That blend of science and education leadership has been a central theme throughout her distinguished career. Rosanne has served as a research assistant, middle school teacher, teaching assistant, Ohio State University professor, Ohio Sea Grant Coordinator, NOAA Education Liaison, Fulbright Scholar, Associate Director of the Stone Laboratory, Director of COSEE Great Lakes, UNC Wilmington professor, and national Sea Grant Advisory Board Member.

Rosanne is now retired from Ohio State University where she served as professor of environmental science education, teaching environmental communications and education to undergraduates and graduate students on campus and conducting professional development courses for educators at F.T. Stone Laboratory on Lake Erie. As a project investigator, she coordinated the Ohio Sea Grant Education Program until 2005. She directed her research at identifying the needs for science education programs and training, comparing the effectiveness of science education methods, and assessing the impact of environmental education programs in field and classroom settings. An important part of her responsibilities as an educator was the development and assessment of curriculum. Her 12 books of curriculum activities were variously funded by Ohio Sea Grant, the National Science Foundation, Great Lakes Protection Fund and other sponsors. Working with Ohio Sea Grant investigators, she brought the curricula into modern technological forms, including online teaching. As the Director of the Center for Ocean Science Education Excellence [COSEE] Great Lakes, Rosanne lead a collaboration of the seven Sea Grant Education programs in the region, with NSF and Sea Grant support from 2006-2010. With her assistance, scientists and educators developed the Great Lakes Literacy Principles that now complement the Ocean Literacy Principles. Fortner is the author of over 80 research and education-based publications, has advised 15 PhDs and 50 MS programs to completion, and served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Cyprus.

But, that's still not all... Rosanne has also invested her considerable expertise in the Mid-Atlantic. She has taught a graduate credit course "Teaching about Marine Environments" at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. Introducing educators to the Ocean Literacy Curriculum, Rosanne has an incredible way of reaching people at an introductory level (even those who have never seen the ocean) and helping them quickly develop a working knowledge base. She has the ability to inspire action and sustainable behavior



MAMEA President Andy Gould presented the 2015 MAMEA Informal Educator Award to Dr. Rosanne Fortner, recognizing her many accomplishments in marine and environmental education – both in the Great Lakes and Mid-Atlantic regions. Photo courtesy of A.Gould.

change - a monumental task that she makes look effortless. Rosanne now oversees the Oak Island Preservation Committee, an organization of volunteers focusing on beach resilience and marine debris. This summer she will oversee a college intern program giving the next generation their first professional experience in environmental education.

So, it's no surprise that Rosanne has received honors before, she is well-known and respected in the national arena. She was the 2011 recipient of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Walter E. Jeske Award and the National Marine Educators Association's 2014 Honorary Member Award. But, she's a MAMEAn now and we are honored to recognize Rosanne Fortner as one of our own and to add our recognition for the inspiring example she has set.