



Jean Auer Environmental Award



Jean Auer, born in Youngstown, Ohio, played a prominent role in California's water issues for over thirty years. She first learned about water issues with the League of Women Voters and was appointed to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. When her family moved to San Francisco she was appointed to the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Auers moved to Hillsborough in 1973, where she was elected to the Town Council and as mayor.

From 1972 to 1977, Jean served as a public member of the State Water Resources Control Board, voting on regulations to control pollution and establish water rights. Judge Ron Robie, associate justice of the State Court of Appeal in Sacramento, who served with Jean on the board, called her "a marvelous person of great spirit, enthusiasm and intelligence...She was really courageous and not at all timid."

Starting in 1987, Jean worked on the management committee of the San Francisco Estuary Project (now Partnership). Marcia Brockbank describes her ability to forge agreements, saying, "She was a phenomenal woman, a consummate Renaissance woman." In 1991, Jean became the second female president of the Commonwealth Club, and for the next decade ran a fellowship program for young professionals at the nonprofit Water Education Foundation. Jean is survived by her three beloved sons, Lance, Grant and Brad Auer.

2015 Awardee: Zeke Grader



William "Zeke" Grader, Jr. worked for decades to ensure sustainable fisheries for all Californians. His leadership and drive resulted in countless actions to rebuild depleted fish stocks, decrease bycatch, and protect and restore fish habitats. Mr. Grader's tireless campaigns increased awareness among millions of people in the Bay Area, Sacramento, Washington D.C., and beyond of the importance of our fishing communities, and the critical links between these highly valued industries and California's water management actions.

Zeke started as a youngster in the family seafood distribution and marketing business. After obtaining a law degree from the University of San Francisco, he was asked to serve as the executive officer of the newly formed Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA). With Zeke at the helm, the PCFFA took a leading role in crafting important state and federal legislation to preserve the coastal fishing industry. From 1992 until 2015, Zeke served as Executive Director of the Institute for Fisheries Resources, an organization begun by the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. He served as the president of the western region of the old National Federation of Fishermen and the West Coast Fisheries Development Foundation, and also served on the board of directors of the Marine Fish Conservation Network.

Congressman George Miller has been quoted as saying, "Zeke Grader has been my friend almost my entire time in the Congress. During that time Zeke has been a leader in our state, on the Pacific Coast and in our nation to give voice and rights to the men and women of our vital and historic commercial fishing industry... Through it all, Zeke Grader has led this magnificent group of fishers to maintain and grow our fisheries. So many people in California's diverse economy are dependent on their success... Zeke Grader for so many years has successfully advocated for both the fish and the fishers. All of us owe him great thanks."

William "Zeke" Grader, Jr. passed away on September 7, 2015. He is survived by his wife, Lois Prentice.