

NCCOAST.ORG | Working Together for a Healthy Coast | SUMMER 2023

OUR COAST



North Carolina
Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

INTRODUCING OUR 2023
PELICAN AWARD WINNERS

*This year's award photo is "American Oystercatchers" - taken by Tom Earnhardt
writer, co-producer and host of UNC-TV's Exploring North Carolina.*

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year's Pelican Award winners inspire us by not only their actions, but their tangible and meaningful contributions to protect and restore our coast. They remind us that our coast is special, and it needs active stewardship to stay that way. The recipients are both old and relatively new friends of the North Carolina Coastal Federation who use their time, talents, and resources to advance the Federation's mission.

Two decades ago, we started giving Pelican Awards to celebrate the achievements of so many seemingly ordinary people who do extraordinary things for our coast. This program is rooted in the belief that success breeds success, and that these award winners inspire others to follow in their footprints. That strategy works as evident each year by the fact that it becomes much harder to cull down the potential list of recipients to the select few that are recognized.

The expanding number of people and organizations that the Federation staff considers for awards each year makes these final selections increasingly more difficult.

This is a good problem to have and one that we can address in future years since our work on behalf of the coast is never finished.

Our awards are typically given to people while they are still actively engaged with our work. That is why we're not giving an award

to one individual who passed away on April 4, 2023, even though he contributed significantly to the Federation's mission. Dr. Richard T. Barber, professor emeritus at Duke Marine Laboratory, served on the N.C. Environmental Management Commission more than three decades ago.

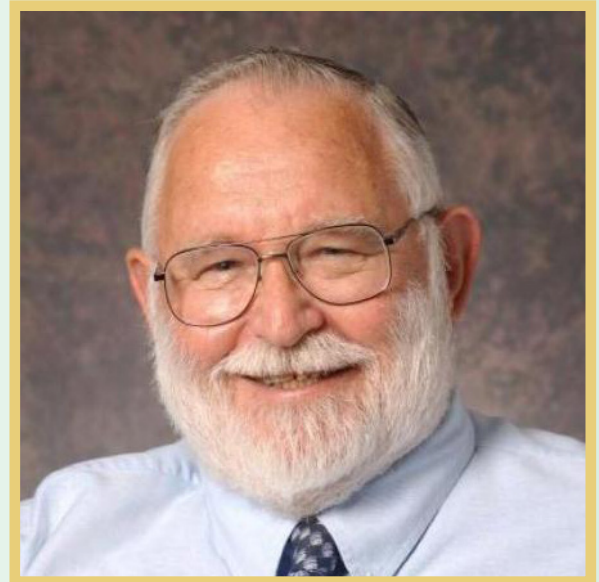
He championed our work to protect and improve coastal water quality. His leadership as a member of the commission was vital to achieving coastal stormwater rules in 1988 and the designation of Outstanding Resource Waters within ten percent of our coastal estuaries back in 1989. Dick was renowned worldwide for his creative and accomplished scientific contributions as an Oceanographer.

His legacy to protect and restore the coast is less well known, but will always endure with the Federation. We just wish we had recognized his service while he was still with us.

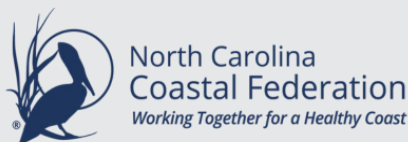
I hope you are inspired by the stories of our Pelican Award winners and will be moved to find avenues to help us become even more effective in accomplishing our mission in the years ahead. We welcome your help since it's vital to stimulate new ideas and strategies to enhance our work.

Thank you.

Todd Miller



Dr. Richard T. Barber
Photo courtesy of Duke University



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This marks the 20th year the Coastal Federation has recognized the exemplary actions and achievements by people, organizations and agencies who have made significant contributions to the North Carolina coast. Without these winners, we would not be able to keep our coast healthy and beautiful. Congratulations to the 2023 Pelican Award Winners recognized in this edition of Our Coast.

We would like to thank our 2023 Pelican Awards and Taste of the Coast Sponsors for their generous support. See back cover for a complete listing these supporters.

NORTHEAST WINNERS



Blue Water Grill & Raw Bar

For Dedicated Partnership to Recycle Oyster Shells for Coastal Restoration

Blue Water Grill & Raw Bar has taken the Restaurant to Reef partner title to a new level. Blue Water has made a significant contribution to the coast. Being the first restaurant partner in the Northeast region to host a 5x8 dump trailer, Blue Water has recycled about 300 bushels of shell since the trailer's installment in September of 2022.

They are committed to supporting local watermen

and women, buying locally farmed oysters, and promoting oyster restoration efforts by recycling their oyster shells.

Blue Water is also being recognized for its collaboration with the Federation's fall 2022 and spring 2023 oyster farm tours, where participants toured the

Federation's demonstration oyster lease in Wanchese, then ventured to Blue Water for a sampling of a half-dozen N.C. oysters and their signature oyster shooter – a full farm-to-fork experience.

We are very excited to continue this partnership with Blue Water Grill & Raw Bar to help raise awareness of the important role that oysters play in maintaining a healthy and sustainable coast, while also inspiring more people to support oyster restoration efforts.



Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy

For Decades of Reliable and In-Depth Press Coverage on Coastal Environmental Issues

Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy has demonstrated an incredible commitment to the Outer Banks community and works tirelessly to keep the villages on Hatteras Island informed and pristine. As a reporter for The Coastland Times, her coverage fosters environmental stewardship and contributes to an informed and environmentally conscious community.

As the director of the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway Advisory Committee, Mary Helen also led a grassroots effort to secure scenic byway

designation. In this role, she assembled a team to address stormwater runoff, increase green areas, and improve water quality in the seven villages of Hatteras Island.

In addition to receiving the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2012 and being named Outer Banks Citizen of the Year in 2013, Mary Helen remains committed to the Hatteras Island community. She is a founding board member of Outer Banks Forever and also serves on the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Civic Association Board of Directors. Mary Helen has partnered with the Federation on numerous cleanups of Rodanthe Harbor and Highway 12 and was instrumental in obtaining grant funds to establish multi-use pathways on Hatteras Island. As Vice President of Radio Hatteras, she also hunkers down during storm events to maintain island-specific broadcast radio communications to her beloved community.

CENTRAL WINNERS



Todd Kelly

For Promoting and Advancing the Use of Living Shorelines in Carteret County

To preserve and restore our productive salt marsh and oyster habitats, one of the Federation's major goals is to make living shorelines the norm for shoreline stabilization instead of bulkheads. For over 16 years, Todd Kelly, technician for the Carteret County Soil and Water Conservation District, has partnered with the Federation to implement 28 marsh sill

projects in the county through the state's Community Conservation Assistance Program. Despite the minimal funding that is provided to this program each year, we were able to combine forces and leverage over \$2.7 million to make these projects possible. But Todd's work didn't stop there. He also worked to install several stormwater best management practices including cisterns, rain gardens, and wetlands in our community. These projects are working to reduce shoreline erosion, provide habitat, and are helping to improve the water quality of our coast. We are truly thankful for our long-term and valued partnership with our friend Todd Kelly.



Janice Allen

For Decades of Effective Leadership to Protect Our Coast's Natural Heritage and Environmental Quality

Janice Allen is a dynamo in the world of coastal conservation. She has worked for the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust for more than 26 years, leading their land protection efforts, and has been the driving force behind the protection of almost 100,000 acres of coastal land. She uses her extensive knowledge of wildlife biology and prior work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to win tens of millions of dollars in state and federal grants to protect the habitat that's vital to North Carolina's terrestrial and aquatic life.

Her role as a conservation leader on the coast has her designing and implementing complex, multi-million-dollar conservation real estate transactions to preserve vital habitats and open space for fish, wildlife, and people.

Janice has been a wonderful partner with the North Carolina Coastal Federation. Most recently, we've embarked on an ambitious partnership to conserve forest land along the Newport River that is instrumental to our efforts to protect and restore oysters in the Newport River. Due to her work, we will be receiving ownership of 1,400 acres of property near Mill Creek later this year, which we will restore to its natural hydrology and forest cover. This project is part of a larger plan that not only protects the river but also provides safeguards for the military mission at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point by keeping its flight paths from becoming urbanized in future years.



Dr. Carresse Gerald

For Impactful Leadership that Inspires the Next Generation of Coastal Environmental Professionals

Several years ago, Dr. Carresse Gerald chaperoned one of the Federation's Coastal Discovery Field Trips to Hammocks Beach State Park as a board member of the environmental education program, EnviroKIDS. On the ferry back from the trip, she struck up a conversation with our Federation educator about her

work and role as a professor at North Carolina Central University, a Historically Black College & University, in the Department of Environmental, Earth and Geospatial Sciences. This conversation led to a flourishing partnership and throughout the years, Dr. Gerald has been instrumental in connecting her students to coastal environmental issues, resources, and opportunities. Partnering together, we've witnessed how loved she is as a professor, and how she effortlessly serves as a role model for her students to pursue a STEM career. Looking ahead, Dr. Gerald is leading an effort to help build the restoration pipeline amongst historically underrepresented students in coastal STEM and restoration fields.

SOUTHEAST WINNERS



Joe Suleyman

For Support of and Dedication to Oyster Shell Recycling

Joe Suleyman, Director of the New Hanover County Environmental Management Department is truly committed to making sure oyster shells make it back to our coastal waters instead of the trash. With unwavering commitment, Joe addresses the diverse needs of the community, with programs that include composting, convenient hazardous waste pick up, and reverse osmosis treatment system to remove harmful PFAS from the landfill-produced leachate in addition to his department's commitment to oyster shell recycling. Joe and his team have provided a 10-yard dumpster dedicated to oyster shell recycling in Wrightsville Beach. Without Joe's support, we would not be able to recycle the hundreds of bushels of shells collected from oyster roasts, restaurants, seafood markets, and individuals.

As a decorated United States Army infantry and combat engineer veteran, Joe's extensive experience has shaped his deep appreciation for sustainable

practices and responsible waste management. Joe's remarkable dedication, leadership, and expertise in environmental management have significantly contributed to the well-being of the residents and businesses of New Hanover County and serve as an inspiration to all.



Nancy Faye Craig

For Exceptional Volunteer Contributions to Our Coast

In 2013, when the Federation's Stanback Coastal Education Center was moved by barge to its current location at Wrightsville Beach Historic

Square, Wrightsville Beach's do-everything volunteer, Nancy Faye Craig knocked on the door and asked if she could lend a hand in the house's restoration efforts. She's been lending a hand at the site every week since. From painting, cleaning, weeding, and mulching, Nancy Faye's dedication to maintaining the Historic Palmgren O'Quinn cottage is unmatched. Not only does her meticulous care of our native plants and rain gardens help to keep them functioning to soak in stormwater runoff, but it also provides the Federation with beautiful and thriving grounds that serve as a model and living classroom.

Nancy Faye's exceptional contributions to our coast serve as a testament to the power of volunteerism and its capacity to create lasting change. Nancy's passion, selflessness, and leadership inspire us all to take action and protect the natural treasures that grace our shores.



Cody and Rachel Faison

For Advancing Community Oyster Shell Recycling and Coastal Restoration

Under the visionary leadership of Cody and Rachel Faison, Ghost Fleet Oyster Company has emerged as a true leader in promoting community

oyster shell recycling and spearheading coastal restoration efforts in North Carolina. Ghost Fleet Oyster Company has pioneered an innovative and inclusive approach to oyster shell recycling, revolutionizing the way discarded shells are repurposed. By collaborating with local restaurants, seafood markets, and community organizations, they have successfully established a robust shell recycling program that encourages the responsible disposal and reuse of oyster shells. This groundbreaking initiative not only reduces waste but also supports the restoration of vital oyster habitats along the North Carolina coast. Through their comprehensive restoration projects, they have revitalized oyster populations, enhancing biodiversity and water quality.

Ghost Fleet Oyster Company is an exemplary leader in environmental conservation and coastal resilience helping shape a sustainable future for North Carolina's coastal ecosystem and communities.

COASTWIDE WINNERS



John Griffin and Bill Husted

For Outstanding Volunteer Efforts to Advance the NC Oyster Trail

John Griffin and Bill Husted are to be commended for their efforts to help the NC Oyster Trail grow

and thrive. The Oyster Trail, launched in 2020, is a grassroots effort by people who love our state's oysters. The goal of the trail is to provide and promote experiences that help sustain and grow N.C. oysters, resulting in economic, environmental and social benefits to the state's seafood industry and coastal communities. John and Bill have demonstrated exemplary leadership and dedication to local seafood and coastal protection. Without them, the Coastal Federation and N.C. Sea Grant would not have been able to successfully engage volunteers and businesses coastwide when launching the Trail.

Bill and John were at the table from the beginning to develop the Trail's vision and helped make it a reality. They have been steadfast in recruiting businesses to join the Trail and have coordinated a dozen volunteers to keep it running smoothly. They are some of our most enthusiastic oyster ambassadors, hosting informational booths and educational displays promoting the Trail. John and Bill are dynamic volunteers who have helped shape the success of the NC Oyster Trail leading to statewide recognition of all things oysters.



Jimmy Johnson and Anne Deaton

For Being Enduring Champions of Coastal Habitat Protection and Restoration

Jimmy Johnson and Anne Deaton are extraordinary state employees

who, for more than two decades, have served to protect and restore our coast's fish habitats. Jimmy was Chair of the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission from 1998 to 2005 when the Fisheries Reform Act was enacted and first implemented. Anne joined the state government in 2000 soon after the Act became law, and she did much of the initial staff work to draft the first Coastal Habitat Protection Plan, or CHPP. After stepping down from the commission and selling his Washington, N.C., based seafood business, the Department of Environmental Quality hired Jimmy to assist with the implementation of the habitat plan as well as to support the work of the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership. Anne is now the Habitat Assessment Program Supervisor for the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries. Jimmy and Anne are a dynamic duo who are both deeply committed to their jobs. They drive many thousands of miles each year to connect with stakeholders and agency officials since they understand they can't succeed without building more diverse alliances and enlisting the help of others. Their sincere personal commitments to protect and restore fish habitats is truly inspirational. Jimmy and Anne are model public servants that make us proud of our state government.

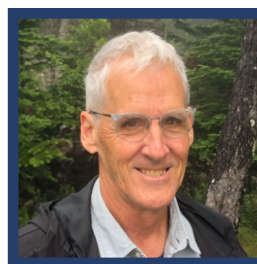


Richard Cecelski

For Providing Decades of Impactful Coastal Educational Experiences for Students and Teachers

Richard Cecelski has been at the helm of Carolina Ocean Studies or COS, for the past 30 years. His environmental education non-profit has introduced more than a half-million school

children to the wonders of our coast. These kids reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of our state's population and many come from less advantaged backgrounds. Joining Richard's trips are hundreds of environmental educators who have been able to expand their knowledge and appreciation of our coast making them more informed teachers. COS has also provided hands-on work to train hundreds of marine science graduates as they launch their professional careers. It is a model eco-tourism business that demonstrates that when people learn to love our coast, they are even better environmental stewards. Richard grew up in Harlowe in Carteret County where at an early age the coast shaped his environmental interests and ethics. The Federation is very pleased to recognize Richard and his hard-working staff for engaging and enlightening everyone who has had the pleasure of participating in his programs.



David Cecelski

For Inspired Community Service Guided by a Lifetime of Sharing Our Coast's History and Traditions

David Cecelski was the Coastal Federation's first volunteer. Back in 1983 when the Federation objected to a project to strip mine

nearly 120,000 acres of peat lands in northeastern N.C. He spent weeks in Hyde County reaching out to local fishers other residents and leaders to inform and engage them in objecting to this proposed massive project that would have been financed with \$500,000 in federal government subsidies. His community outreach generated public support and traction to eventually stop this massive wetland drainage and land-clearing project. His vital efforts set the stage for the creation of the Alligator River and Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuges. Since then, David has distinguished himself as a coastal historian, who has written several award-winning books and hundreds of articles about the North Carolina coast's rich history and culture, and politics and his insightful articles frequently appear in Coastal Review published by the Federation. His quiet and persistent manner, perhaps shaped by growing up in the rural community of Harlowe in Carteret County, has significantly propelled the work of the Federation forward since day one of our existence.



Chris Matteo

For Unwavering Dedication to Growing NC's Mariculture Industry

Chris Matteo's journey from hedge fund research analyst to an oyster grower exemplifies an unwavering dedication to growing North Carolina's mariculture industry. Relocating from Connecticut to Chapel Hill in 2008, Chris initially pursued a different path but found himself irresistibly drawn to the coast. In 2013, he made the momentous decision to establish his first oyster aquaculture farm. Over the past decade, Chris has played a pivotal role in fostering the sustainable growth of shellfish aquaculture including significant contributions to the development of the North Carolina Shellfish Mariculture Strategic Plan. Chris now serves as president of the N.C. Shellfish Growers Association, helping aspiring entrepreneurs seeking guidance to start up new farms.

Chris helped forge a strong partnership between the Coastal Federation and local shellfish growers working to restore and protect the coastal waters that serve as the lifeblood of oyster and clam farming. Through his tireless efforts and dedication, Chris has become an inspiring force driving the advancement of North Carolina's mariculture industry, earning him the well-deserved honor of this award.

Brian Rubino

For Leadership in Living Shoreline Design, Permitting and Implementation

Brian and his team at Quible & Associates first dipped their toes into living shorelines when the town of Manteo approached them to design a project along their waterfront. Since then, they have promoted, researched, designed, permitted, and built an ever-expanding number of living shorelines along our coast. Brian strives to stay abreast of the latest advances in living shoreline engineering and materials and learns from his past project's performances. He understands the concerns and needs of the regulatory agencies and has been instrumental in moving projects through complex regulatory hurdles.

In recent years, Brian has worked with the Federation to implement living shoreline projects at our field office in Wanchese, Jockey's Ridge State Park, Whittaker Pointe in Oriental, Sugarloaf Island, and Fort Macon State Park. Partnering with Brian is a pleasure and he is committed to providing outstanding environmental consulting and engineering services along our coast.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT WINNER



Kenneth S. Chestnut, Sr.

For a Lifetime of Dedicated Leadership and Community Service

Kenneth S. Chestnut, Sr. is the retired President and Chief Executive Officer of IBG Construction Services LLC based in Atlanta, GA, which he founded in 1998. Under his leadership, IBG grew its revenues, expanded its core business activities geographically, and positioned IBG as an industry leader in the area of sustainability. As the Vice President of the Coastal Federation, Kenneth has put his lifetime of skills to work being an indispensable asset throughout our journey of navigating the intricate construction process for our new Center for Coastal Protection and Restoration. With his wealth of knowledge and experience, he has provided invaluable guidance during the architect and general contractor selection process, ensuring that we made informed decisions and secured solid contracts. His meticulous attention to detail has enabled us to act as responsible stewards for the Federation and the coast as we embark on this ambitious

endeavor. Kenneth was recently honored as a Distinguished Alumni of the Duke University Engineering Council. He grew up in Wilmington and is a graduate of Williston Senior High School. He is a Vietnam War veteran and has always been passionately active and committed to his church, several nonprofits, and the Ocean City Community that his family helped establish in 1949 as the first residential beach community with Black home ownership in North Carolina.



North Carolina Coastal Federation
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Save and Share the Coast with the Summer Membership Drive!

Join the Coastal Federation as a new member this summer for a chance to win a raffle for a weekend for two in Beaufort, N.C., including two nights at the Beaufort Hotel, breakfast at 34° North, and dinner at the Blue Moon Bistro.

Current members can also enter the raffle by referring a friend!
Visit nccoast.org/summerdrive.

You can also participate by mail: 3609 N.C. 24 (Ocean), Newport, NC 28570
Enter by Sept. 15.

Raffle details including rules, drawing dates, and chances of winning available online at nccoast.org/summerdrive.

Introducing Coins for Conservation

Special thanks to the Inlet Inn in Beaufort, which donates a portion of every room reservation to support coastal conservation. They also launched an inspirational new platform, Coins for Conservation, that invites other businesses to find ways to give back.



Learn more at coins4conservation.com.

Thank you to our Leadership Sponsors of the 2023 Pelican Awards and Taste of the Coast

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