

Thank you Ken for the kind introduction and the opportunity to speak to all of you today. And I can't think of a better setting for today's conversation.

The National Press Club is one of DC's great architectural, historical and cultural icons and a place where the most important issues of the day are discussed and debated. And ironically, it was founded around the start of the last century – just around the time that clean water's true value was recognized.

This may come as a surprise to many but perhaps not to many in this room, but do you know what one of the greatest achievement of the 20th century was, according to the Center for Disease Control? It was the understanding of the importance of excellent water sanitation in our world. Starting in the early 1900's and continuing over the next several decades, engineers and scientific professionals, with nothing more than a #2 pencil, graph paper and slide rule, developed methods to clean the water made dirty by each and every one of us. They found ways faster and more efficient than nature alone could accomplish. It was a great honor to become a sanitary engineer. Even my company was named the Alexandria Sanitation Authority, the very first Authority created in the Commonwealth of Virginia – a tribute to our pioneering and critically important profession.

But those professionals faced huge implementation challenges – a burgeoning population whose waste could not be contained by the limited technology available back then. The Potomac River, often referred to as our "nation's river," was cited as a public disgrace in 1970.

Surprisingly, opportunity for success came from a group that today few of us would think of as being bold enough or brave enough to create the understanding among it's constituents of the universal value and importance of clean water...our own Congress. By making sweeping amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 and overriding a presidential veto , they enacted the landmark and visionary Clean Water Act that has produced the safest, most reliable system of water in the world. And they audaciously dedicated tens of billions of dollars to make that initial investment in technology and infrastructure happen.

And this happened in large measure because our leaders, our industrial base, and our citizens from the biggest cities to the smallest communities understood the value of clean and safe water ...because it was something that was lacking in so many parts of our country. Our leaders worked together. They listened and learned. Their shared goal was the common good. They had the vision to see that our nation's continuing social and economic success hinged on the cleanliness of every precious drop of water within our boundaries. It was a great time to become a water professional.

Fast forward to today, the 21st century and beyond. Clean and safe water abounds in our country. And you need look no further than our own backyard. The Potomac River is haven to water sports of all kinds, as well as a well- known spot for local fishermen to spend a lazy afternoon in the peace and solitude of its beauty. Wildlife has not just returned but thrives.

Our nation's river is home to our national symbol, the bald eagle, emblematic of the success dedication to a vision can bring.

Turn on a faucet, flush a toilet, go to a restaurant, grocery store, grab a coffee... all of these companies, and the jobs they bring, succeed because of a reliable source of clean water that we as water professionals provide. That represents the foundation of the lives we live today. And a challenge to our future success.

So what about the prospect for our future success? What is our vision for the next century of clean water? In my mind, it can't be a repetition of our past activities and successes. Instead, it is being led by award winners like you... and risk takers in our profession who recognize that our enterprises actually renew our little planet with each drop of water cleaned and returned to it.

Like the sanitary engineers of the past, we must embrace innovation, question conventional wisdom, engage in thoughtful and respectful discourse and always stay curious. As Walt Disney observed, "We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."

And of course, a talk about the future must include social media. I think we need to rely much more heavily on the "social" element of that statement – not the electronic gadget element. A computer can't feel... it can't share the joy of a child's first swimming ribbon... it can't embrace the companionship

of friends sharing that perfectly brewed cup of Joe at the local coffee bar... it can't touch a heart the way a family dinner warms our very souls.

And there is not one of those images that isn't totally dependent on clean water. Around the room, we know OUR stories. Water's future and our greatest opportunity for success, is within each one of us. Because through our chosen vocations we live the value of clean water each day, to our neighbors, our society and our nation's economic well-being.

Our water story isn't a cliché, and it can't be relegated to a 30-second sound bite or 240 characters. It's about passionate people recreating and renewing their environment through clean water and the technologies used to make it water clean.

Some of you today are just starting your water story journal; for others, you may feel your journal is already a shared story. To me, a Native American saying sums it up best: "It takes a thousand voices to tell a single story". Each of us is part of a success story of epic proportion – and one that isn't even to the middle chapters! Let your voice and your vocation be part of the successful story of water for our next century.

Again, congratulations and may success follow you in all of your life's endeavors.

Thank you.