

Richard Connelly
Cleveland Clean Air Century Campaign Member Spotlight



Richard Connelly 1952-2007

Richard Connelly, NEORSD Superintendent of Environmental Services and 30-year District employee, died suddenly on Thursday evening, August 23, 2007. Rich was an energetic and dedicated employee who was firmly committed to protecting our environment.

Rich held degrees in Forestry and Environmental Science from West Virginia University and Cleveland State University. He began his tenure with the District in 1977 as a Laboratory Assistant. In 1979, he transferred to the Industrial Waste Section (which became WQIS), where he spent the rest of his career. Rich worked as an Investigator, Supervisor, and Manager before being promoted to Superintendent of Environmental Services, where he was responsible for both WQIS and Analytical Services.

Throughout his career, Rich was a leader in the District's efforts related to safety. He coordinated training with numerous agencies, emergency responders, regulators, industrial users, and environmental groups. "Rich was the District's face in many of these team efforts in the region," said former Executive Director Erwin Odeal.

Recently, Rich was nominated to serve on the Board of the local non-profit Environmental Health Watch and had attended his first meeting just two weeks before his passing. Among other leadership roles, he served as Vice Chair of the Cuyahoga County Local Emergency Planning Committee and as a member of the Cleveland Clean Air Century Campaign.

Rich was committed to improving the quality of life for the residents of Northeast Ohio. He was the co-chair for Cleveland Clean Air Century's Indoor Environments Committee. He was an integral component in the success of many of the Campaign's projects including mercury thermometer exchange/collections, metal finishers/electroplaters seminars and the home indoor air education program.

A dedicated and involved manager, Rich held high standards for his employees and everyone around him. "He was a leader who truly believed in the District's goals and expected everyone to follow his values of integrity and trust," said Operations and Maintenance Director Tim Tighe.

"Rich has been an influential force in my career and in the development of the Analytical Services department," said Analytical Services Manager Mark Citriglia. "Without his guidance, mentoring, and knowledge it would have been difficult to reach the goals we have achieved." Rich cared deeply for the members of the Environmental Services staff and people throughout the District. "He helped his staff professionally but was also there for us personally," said Citriglia. "He assisted with personal matters, like how to best coach softball, and advice with kids and education."

"Rich was tough and you might have been intimidated by him at times," said Supervising Chemist Eva Hatvani. "But underneath, he was honest, and he had soft spots, especially when it came to family and kids." Westerly Superintendent Terry Meister said, "Rich was a good friend and a fine man. He will be missed."

