

## 2015 AMCA PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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Good morning everyone and welcome to the 81st Annual Meeting of our American Mosquito Control Association here in ...” (*phone rings*) “Wait a minute, while I take this call.” “Hello, oh, hi, Mom. Yes, I am fine. Well, I am in New Orleans, giving a presentation to open the AMCA Conference. What is the group? Remember, it’s the American Mosquito Control Association, people from all over the United States, and the world, from 35 countries actually. We have over 1,300 members who work to protect people from mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases. Yes, like chikungunya, and it is a strange word. The world does need mosquito control. Well, I do need to get back to my address. Thank you, say hello to Dad. Goodbye.”

Well, thank you for humoring me with my thespian excursion, but my point in doing so is to get us to think about how we define to others who we are and the importance of what we do. Whether we are talking to those who know us well, as my 89-year-old mother, or my six-year-old granddaughter, or, importantly, to those who may be totally unfamiliar with us. Those people who might not fully understand or appreciate the services we provide and who, with their families and neighbors, are the ultimate beneficiaries of our work. Our work protects people, everyone, from mosquitoes and other vectors and from the unhealthful nuisance and diseases that they can transmit, and we are contributing to the betterment of humanity. You may not hear this often enough, but I want to commend you and thank you all for the work you do.

You never know when or where an opportunity to talk about your profession will arise. Traveling here by train, my wife and I had a meal across from a young European man who now lives and works in Thailand. After I told him we were going to a mosquito control meeting, he asked if we might soon be using lasers to kill mosquitoes or laser curtains to ward them off. After a short discussion of current mosquito control and mosquito-borne diseases, he said that he had contracted dengue—twice. Fortunately his second infection was not severe.

The mission of the AMCA is to provide the leadership, information, and education to enhance public health and quality of life, and our Association can be of great assistance in helping us to educate and inform the public of our services and in better explaining to them who we



are and what we do. It has been doing an outstanding job of describing and defining our profession for 81 years. We have a rich history filled with interesting players and landmark discoveries, with workers literally toiling in trenches, and others working behind lab benches to better understand and combat our common nemesis, *dame* mosquito. Our website offers a good overview of the history of mosquito control and the development of state programs and the AMCA, as well as our mission and work.

On a historical note, I would like to remind everyone that this year marks the 100th anniversary of California’s Mosquito Abatement Act. This law was preceded by similar legislation in New Jersey, the first such in the nation in 1912, and both led to the creation of mosquito abatement districts, and the proliferation of mosquito control, as well as to the eventual organization of the Eastern Association of Mosquito Control Workers, which led to the incorporation of the AMCA. But we must remember that history is a continuum running in two directions, and the AMCA and her history can be pushed aside, forgotten and lost, unless all of us take an active role in sustaining her and in nurturing future generations of dedicated members that understand and value mosquito control and its history.