

Technical Sessions of the International Plant Propagator's Society – Southern Region of North America (SNRA) Annual Meeting

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Summary

The 47th Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America (SRNA) convened at 8:00 am on 30 October 2023 at the DoubleTree Hotel,

Raleigh-Durham Airport Research Triangle Park, Durham, North Carolina with President Judson LeCompte presiding.

INTRODUCTION

President LeCompte welcomed everyone to Durham, North Carolina for the 47th Annual Meeting of the SRNA. It is so awesome to be here in Athens to “seek and share” with one another! The relationships and experiences forged at our meetings are what distinguishes the IPPS. LeCompte came to his first SRNA meeting in

2009 in Biloxi, Mississippi - with eight fellow students who shared one hotel room. He has not missed a meeting since! He remarked that the SRNA has been so important for his career – and professional relationships developed.

He thanked Local Site Committee Chair, Dr. Elizabeth Riley, Co-Chair, Dana

Massey and their committee and volunteers for their outstanding work in arranging the excellent tours, hotel, other planning activities, and all their attention to detail. The SRNA remains financially strong, with the due diligence of Sec-Tres, Donna Foster, and is the largest international region with 245 active, paying members, and 67 student/military veteran members for a total of 312 members.

LeCompte thanked the Executive Committee, and the Sponsorship Committee: Chair, Michael Row, Dr. Elizabeth Riley, Dr. Anthony Witcher and Matt Sawyer - who raised \$56,667, which is outstanding! LeCompte encouraged the membership to thank, visit and show their support of our sponsors during the meeting. The SRNA is deeply indebted to our loyal sponsors who make our annual meeting financially possible. He encouraged all members to make new members and first-time attendees feel welcome — share with them and seek from them.

LeCompte announced that the SRNA is in its sixth year of the Southern Region Educational Endowment, with a base donation of \$20,000 from an anonymous donor. The Education Endowment balance is now at \$127,020 – and growing. It will greatly enhance our region’s ability to support students and early career professionals – and ensure continued quality of the outstanding educational, out-reach programs our region is known for. All of this year’s contributions to the silent and live auction are to go to the Endowment Fund – so please contribute! He thanked Kevin Gantt for leading the endowment effort.

The SRNA currently supports 5-scholarship programs – that cost around \$20,000 per year. This includes: Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Research Scholarship Work Program, Charlie

Parkerson Student Research Competition, Early-Career Exchange Program, Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship, and new Vince Dooley Scholarship.

Three years ago - the IPPS-SR initiated the **Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship** to support industry professionals attending our conference for the 1st time. Margie Jenkins had a major impact on the Louisiana Nursery industry with her plant selections. LeCompte recognized this year’s recipient: Emily Ellis. He recognized the 2023 Vince Dooley scholarship recipient: Kayla Morrison. Coach Dooley was a big proponent of landscape horticulture, taking a plant materials course with Dr. Michael Dirr at the University of Georgia – and developing great interest in new landscape plant selections.

For the **Early-Career Exchange Program** between the SRNA and the European Region, Teagan Young of the University of Florida, represented the Southern Region at the European Conference and toured the European nursery industry. LeCompte remarked that he was the first recipient – and the wonderful professional and personal experience he had visiting the European Region. Thomas McDonald of the European Region was their professional nominee for the program; he accompanied the International Tour, hosted by the SRNA. LeCompte asked McDonald to come forward and presented him with a gift. This is a wonderful exchange program for an early career professional to go to Europe and visit the European Region. He also recognized the International Board Chair, Tim Lawrence, from the European Region – who hosted LeCompte in England as part of the exchange program.

This is the twelfth year the SRNA is doing the **Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work Program** (formerly Vivian Munday Scholarship). He introduced the four interns: Jerry Yu of North Carolina State University, Grace Carapezza of the University of Florida, Katelyn Reffler of Stephen F. Austin State University, and Kaitlyn Swaintek of the University of Georgia. These young professionals are making a strong contribution to this year's program. LeCompte remarked that our future is young people!

Next year at the 2024 mid-year board meeting in Orlando, Florida – the SRNA will be doing a strategic planning session – and developing a 5-year strategic plan for the organization.

LeCompte encouraged the membership to fill out questions for the Question Box – and attend the Tuesday night Question Box/Ice Cream Social.–The Question Box was to be moderated by Dr. Mengmeng Gu and Richard May.

LeCompte thanked Program Chair and 1st Vice-President, Dr. Cheryl Boyer for the excellent program and incredible group of speakers she assembled!

PROGRAM CHAIR, DR. CHERYL BOYER

Program Chair Boyer welcomed all members, guests and students. She acknowledged President LeCompte for his leadership and very capably serving as President. She thanked the membership for the opportunity to serve them, and then reviewed the scheduled program.

There were eight outstanding paper submissions for the Charlie Parkerson Student Research Competition. There will be four students competing in the oral competition, and poster presentations for the membership to visit with student presenters during the meeting. She acknowledged International Delegate, Laura Miller, and Director, Dr. Anthony Witcher – for seamlessly running the audio-visuals for our speakers and meeting. She then introduced the first speaker, Dr. Andrew King of King's Nursery and Stephen F. Austin State University.



Figure 1. President Dr. Judson LeCompte (left) with Dr. Cheryl Boyer (right), Program Chair of the 2023 Durham, North Carolina, 47th annual conference.