

# World Dredging Magazine - Turns 50

It was the Summer of 1965 when Publishers Ruel McDaniel and John Latham launched the first issue ( Vol. 1, No. 1 ) of World DREDGING & Marine Construction ( later World DREDGING / Mining & Construction ) in Conroe, Texas ( TX ).

In that first issue's Editorial : NEW BABY it stated, " DREDGING is one of the world's oldest and most-honored industries. Also, it is among the largest segments of the over-all construction and contracting business. Its operations and influence for the betterment of mankind is worldwide. It performs such major tasks as digging the Panama and Suez Canals; and important to progress if not as spectacular, it produces sand for many facets of construction, it keeps harbors cleared of sediment and unwanted debris, it mines gold and diamonds, it mines salt in Arabia, it keeps rivers and canals usable to the commerce of nations.

"No industry is more vital to the progress of the world than dredging, for it makes possible navigation and commerce to thousands of inland and ocean ports which would not be ports at all except for dredging, for you can count the worlds "natural" deep water ports on your fingers.

"Considering the importance and magnitude of the dredging industry, it is somewhat surprising that until now there has been no magazine devoted exclusively to the industry, except for several excellent "house magazines," published by concerns serving the industry to publicize their own equipment and services."

In Mort J. Richardson's book, The Dynamics of Dredging ( pg. 367 ), Richardson describes the impact World Dredging magazine had on the industry in subsequent years :

## "APPENDIX D

### Personalities in Dredging

In his valuable study book Hydraulic Dredging, John Huston, 1986, outlined the History of Dredging. In that chapter he discussed Dredging Organizations and stated the following:

"Of all the advances that have occurred in the growth of the dredging industry, the two most important are the creation of the World Dredging Conference Association (WODCON) and the World Dredging Association (WODA).

Prior to their conception in 1967, the dredging industry existed in a vast informational vacuum. The dissemination of dredging knowledge was almost nil. There was seemingly a barrier of secrecy, not only between individuals, but between dredging companies as well.

A striking example of this attitude was that of a company conceived an invention that increased production. They never used it though - they didn't want others to know about it!

With the origin of WODCON and WODA, however, attitudes began to change, and dredgemen began

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to come together, on an international scale, to promote the exchange of dredging knowledge. The credit for bringing about and nurturing this renaissance must be given to M.J. Richardson.

Richardson's involvement occurred through the foresightedness of John Latham, who at that time was co-publisher with Ruel MCDaniel of a newly-launched publication called World Dredging. Latham, who was also the publisher of Offshore magazine, became acquainted with Richardson through OECON - Offshore Exploration Conference - that Richardson had organized to stimulate the transfer of aerospace technology to the oil industry.

Latham invited Richardson to consider organizing a similar conference for the dredging industry. Although Richardson had a broad background in the marine and aerospace fields, he had little knowledge of the dredging industry. He therefore accepted Latham's invitation conditionally - he would first have to investigate the world of dredging to see if he felt it worthwhile to attempt such a conference.

The investigation convinced him that it was, and he began laying plans.

The Conference as planned was to have the same format as the previous Offshore Conference. There were to be three days of technical papers, a dinner party, and three luncheons with keynote speakers. It was to be held in New York City, U.S.A.

On the sixth of May in 1967 the Conference opened. The luncheons were at the Waldorf Astoria, the dinner party at the Americana Hotel, and the technical paper presentations and industry exhibits in the New York Coliseum. Richardson named the three-day event WODCON for World Dredging Conference, after Latham's magazine.

Richardson's planning, organization, and leadership paid off. The Conference was a resounding success. The general feeling was one of euphoria. Walter Gahagan underscored it by remarking that "If nothing else had happened, just seeing the word DREDGING in three-foot letters on the marquee of the Coliseum made it all worthwhile."

Before the Conference was over, a consensus developed that future conferences should be held every 18 months under the auspices of an organization to be formed by Richardson, and supported by leading dredging contractors. Consequently, following the Conference, Richardson incorporated a non-profit organization called WODCON ASSN. for World Dredging Conference Association.

This was not the end of Richardson's involvement, however. In a subsequent meeting at the Elliott Machine Corporation in Baltimore, Maryland, Alf Sorensen suggested that the industry needed a professional society for individual members - one that would be separated from the influence of the dredging companies. With the same forthright planning, organization, and leadership he had provided for WODCON,

Richardson formed the World Dredging Association, (WODA). He travelled throughout the western hemisphere, Europe, and the Far East making contacts and organizing chapters, the first being the Pacific Chapter in San Francisco Officers were elected, and WODA was off to a good start.

WODA flourished for ten years with Richardson guiding it as Executive Secretary. During that time he organized seven WODCON's that were held throughout the world."

World Dredging magazine continues to strive to be a significant contribution to the development and prosperity of the industry.

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