



History of the Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers

The Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers had its beginnings in the United States, but there is some dispute as to where and by whom it was founded. A commonly accepted thesis is that the Original Chapter of the Five S Society was formed in Arizona in October 1940, the idea being conceived by A.W. "Dusty" Miller and F. Carlyle Roberts, Jr. Other people strongly contend that it had its beginnings in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the Ted Moses High Hat Society in 1937.

Whatever its origins, independent Chapters of the Society have since been formed in many provinces, the USA and in other countries.

It will undoubtedly be of interest to Canadians to know that the former Governor General, the late Madam Sauve, was made an Honourary Member of the Florida Chapter when she spoke at the WPCF Conference in Miami in 1975. The Honourable Roger Simmons, M.P. for Burin-St. George's was similarly honoured at the Conference in Las Vegas in 1980.

The Society was formed to provide a means of recognizing those who have contributed freely of their time and talents to the growth, well-being and success of their individual Associations. Many of these hard workers do not become President of their Association or receive one of the coveted awards associated with wastewater treatment activities, and the Five S Society provides a concrete method of expressing recognition and gratitude for their efforts.

It is important to appreciate that one cannot "join" the Society, but that members are "selected" on the basis of merit. Tradition provides that four Senior members of a Chapter present at a meeting of their Association shall select three new Chapter Members who qualify by their activities. However, most Chapters have developed their own rules, regulations and methods of operation in this regard, although all honour the original purpose and intent of the Society. A cardinal rule is that the induction ceremonies must be conducted by a Sludge Shoveler.

There are no dues for Membership in the Society, nor are there any Officers except the "Influent Integrator", who is designated by the neutral "pH 7", who is elected, or should be elected, by a vote of the Shovelers present at a Meeting of the Association and serves until their successor has been elected or installed. The Integrator's duties are to record and report selections, present official certificates of elevation, bestow badges, and generally keep Chapter Members advised concerning activities of the Society. They can of course delegate any or all of these duties as they see fit. The Ontario 5S chapter has developed its own method of operation with respect to "Influent Integrator", and a "Chairman".

Each inductee receives a badge in the form of a decorative gold pin in the shape of a round-nosed shovel. The shovel must be displayed at all official functions of the Society, the Association, and the Federation. It must always be worn or displayed to indicate a Member in good standing. The penalty of being found without the Shovel by another Shoveler being to provide all those present with a refreshment of their choice.

Each Member is provided with a Membership Certificate signed by the Influent Integrator as pH7 and by twelve other shovelers for the remaining concentrations from pH 1 to pH 13. While the wording on the Certificates may vary from Chapter to Chapter, it normally indicates that selection to Membership is in recognition of "outstanding service above and beyond the call of duty" to the Association. Membership bestows the accolade of elevation "On the official shovel to the highest ridge of the sludge bed with the title of select sanitary sludge shoveler and all the honour, respect, perquisites and dignity appertaining thereto".

Peter Laughton