

In Memory of Shirley Hutzler – by Linda New



One of our founding leaders, Shirley Hutzler passed away on December 9, 2018. She dedicated years of service to our industry and our association. Shirley held many association offices including Austin AHU President 1990-1991, TAHU President 1992-1993, Region VI Vice President 1993-1995. She became involved in legislative affairs in 1991 while serving as TAHU 1st Vice President. Her legislative involvement has included acting as volunteer liaison to the Texas Legislature and the TDI, serving on panels, testifying before committees and making presentations to TAHU chapters across the state. Shirley accepted the position of TAHU lobbyist in 1996 and served in that capacity until 2002. Her hard work and dedication earned her numerous recognitions including the AAHU Shirley Hutzler Award, TAHU Volunteer of the Year, TAHU Outstanding Texan, Three NAHU Distinguished Service Awards, NAHU Landmark Award under her TAHU Presidency, TAHU Hollis Roberson Award-1993 and was the first recipient of the TAHU Shirley Hutzler Excellence in Legislation award. When presented with this award her response was what many have heard her say before, “It is incredible to be so recognized and honored for doing something I love so much.”

I asked a few members that were fortunate to have worked with her over the years to share their memories of our friend below...

“I first met Shirley while attending a convention for TAHU (long story). Shirley was one of the main contributors in helping TAHU and NAHU gain success over the years that followed. Shirley combined her extraordinary vision and diverse talents of many to achieve excellence. Few can match her legacy of contribution to the benefits profession in terms of innovation and sustained executive leadership. Shirley was the consummate professional and person; supportive, creative, with personal integrity and uncompromising commitment to excellence in her work, friendships and personal life. She has given of herself throughout her adult life for the betterment of those around TAHU, with a legacy of achievement and lasting friendships that will last a lifetime. She was rock solid through and through.”

- **Trei Wild**, TAHU Past President and NAHU Past President

“My very first introduction to Ms. Shirley Hutzler was at my very first TAHU Board meeting in Austin. As members of the board gave their reports, Ms. Shirley was the only one to stand. She spoke with such eloquence and aplomb I was hooked from that very moment. I tried standing in subsequent years to present my report to the board, but I could never emulate her manner of speaking and it was politely suggested at some point that I needn’t stand either. Memories of Shirley will stay in my heart forever.”

- **Carolyn Goodwin**, TAHU Past President

“Albert Pike said, “What we do for ourselves dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.” Shirley’s contributions to our industry and our professional association, and her love for her friends makes her memories immortal. We love you Shirley. Farewell.”

- **Bill Mann**, TAHU Past President

“As I was about to enter my year as President of TAHU, I was a little intimidated by the responsibility. I made the decision to create an inner circle of a few people, that I could bounce things off of during the year. It should come as no surprise that Shirley Hutzler was one of the three I chose for that inner circle. She was an amazing mentor, and friend. The world is a better place because of Shirley.”

- **Louanne Trebing**, TAHU Past President

“Meeting Shirley for the first time was amazing. She was the reason I became a member and worked to help charter the San Antonio Association back in the 1980's. From that point on she was a mentor to me in my work with the Association and became a wonderful role model for all areas of my life. I will be forever grateful for her love & friendship. I will never forget her spirit of goodness and kindness to everyone she met.”

- **Caroline Hesseltine**, TAHU Past President

“Adorable, precious, funny, intelligent, and a great friend. She can't be replaced. I think Shirley Hutzler, Ouida Peterson and Tom Schilling are watching over us.”

- **Jackie Spragins**, TAHU Past President

“While all of us agree on Shirley’s humor, compassion and all-in style, it is important to recognize again her tremendous contribution to our industry’s health in Texas. During her tenure as President of TAHU, we fought long and hard to turn Ann Richards’ “health reform” into a tolerable piece of legislation. Hence HB2055 finally passed. Her inspiring, tough, fun leadership pulled us to one well-oiled machine. We are forever grateful for what she did for us personally and professionally.”

- **Beth Ashmore**, NAHU Past President

“Memories of my precious friend flood my heart...we were Best Friends from the day we first said hello, and through all those many years. We shared happy times and sad times, mixed with funny times and her fabulous wit, personality and intelligence. Shirley blessed my life and many others...she was a leader, confidant, teacher, mentor and great best friend, I am so lucky to have loved this beautiful lady.”

- **Donna Carnall**, TAHU Past President, NAHU Past President

“Shirley was a gifted unique lady, a great communicator but also a great listener. She was equally at ease eating bar-b-que with a beer at a UT tailgate party or attending a formal black-tie dinner in Washington DC. Shirley was totally and selflessly dedicated to our association and her ultimate objective was to benefit the individual member. A gifted mentor with the heart of a fearless champion, always ready to tackle any problem and resolve it to conclusion. Members, like Shirley, are the bedrock of our association.”

- **Ron Buffum**, TAHU Past President

“Shirley kept my wife Valerie and me thoroughly entertained with her adventure stories with her dog "Flap". When Shirley was TAHU President, she referred to her board members as her "minions". While this could have been construed as a connotative negative, we were honored to be called her "minions". I'll speak for myself...I felt honored and loved it.”

- **Andy Wolfson**, TAHU Past President

“Shirley Hutzler laid the ground work for what TAHU has been able to accomplish at the capitol in Austin and at the Texas Department of Insurance. Her efforts are also responsible for why people seek us out as the go to association for health care related legislation. Never shy to step in to lend guidance and mentorship, she felt it was her job to help others be the best they could be. I remember the first time I

met her, she walked up to me, shook my hand and said, “so, you’re the new kid on the block, let me show you how to make an impact.” Her infectious smile and willingness to show others how to be their best are characters that defined who Shirley was, and will forever be missed.”

- **Rusty Rice**, TAHU Past President, Current NAHU President

“As a close friend of Shirley Hutzler, I was honored to be asked to write this tribute to her life and contributions to our association and industry. Sadly, we lost her to this life on December 9. I met Shirley in 1985 when I promptly invited her to join AAHU and work with us on the local Austin board. I knew she would get any job done and with ease, eloquence and enthusiasm! Shirley was a good friend and mentor to me over the 30 years I’ve known her. I’d visit to watch her Texas Longhorns play as well to attend her annual Christmas Tree Trimming Party. She loved reminiscing about all our adventures in going to conventions and meetings. Our Association grew because of her! She will be greatly missed by many.”

- **Linda New**, TAHU Past President