

Technical Sessions of International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America (SRNA) Annual Meeting

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Summary

The 45th Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America (IPPS-SRNA) convened at 8:00 pm on 25 October 2021 at

the Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel, Mobile, Alabama, with President Brie Arthur presiding.

President Brie Arthur

President Arthur welcomed everyone to Mobile, Alabama for the 45th Annual Meeting of the SRNA. It is so awesome to be here in Mobile to “seek and share” with one another! The relationships and experiences forged at our meetings are what distinguishes the IPPS. She remarked on the challenges of the past two years: cancelling the 2020 meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In place of the annual meeting, the SRNA successfully

led, planned and executed the 3-day North American Virtual Summit (NAVS) during Oct 27-29, 2020. There was a total of a total of 947 participants on the zoom from 15 countries.

She thanked Local Site Committee Chair, Dr. Jeremy Pickens and his committee and volunteers for their outstanding work in arranging the excellent tours, hotel, other planning activities and all their attention to detail. Because of the hotel's Covid

restrictions, attendance was limited to 150 registered participants by the conference hotel, however there are 161 registered for the conference – and many who wanted to register were turned away. The SRNA was one of the few international regions to meet this year and conduct tours.

She acknowledged Sec-Tres, Donna Foster, for her outstanding service. The financial status of the SRNA remains strong.

Arthur thanked the Executive Committee, and the Sponsorship Committee of Tom Saunders, Bobby Green and Judson LeCompte who raised \$54,500 – which was outstanding with the challenges of the pandemic! Arthur encouraged the membership to thank, visit and show their support of our sponsors during the meeting. She encouraged all members to make new members and first-time attendees feel welcome — share with them and seek from them. She called for good questions and enthusiastic participation at the Tuesday night question box & ice cream social. Two questions posed to attendees were: 1) What idea/approach has improved your bottom-line most over the course of your profession? and, 2) What is the greatest challenge that you are facing as a green-industry professional?

Arthur announced that the SRNA is in its fourth year of the Southern Region Educational Endowment, with a base donation of \$20,000 from an anonymous donor. The Education Endowment balance is now \$96,250 – 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 programs our region is known for. At tonight’s banquet, there will be the awards program and recognition of new members - followed by the live auction. All of this year’s contributions to the silent and live auction are to go to the Endowment Fund – so please contribute! She thanked Kevin Gantt for leading the endowment effort. This year the SR-IPPS initiated the *Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship* to support industry professionals attending our conference for the 1st time.

Because of Covid, the *Early-Career Propagator Exchange* program between the SRNA and the European Region was put on hold this year, but will resume in 2022.

This is the tenth year the SRNA is doing the *Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work Program (Vivian Munday Scholarship)*. We currently have two young professionals: Kayla Morrison of Oklahoma State University and Teagan Young of the University of Florida - who are assisting Sec-Tres Donna Foster – and making a strong contribution to this year’s program.

Arthur thanked Program Chair and 1st Vice-President, Bobby Green for the excellent program and world-class speakers he assembled – two years in a row! Because of the pandemic challenge, the 2020 meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma was cancelled, and Green had to assemble a new slate of speakers for the 2021 Mobile meeting

Program chair Bobby Green

Program Chair Bobby Green welcomed all members, guests and students. He acknowledged President Arthur for her leadership and very capably serving as President during the demanding two past years! He thanked the membership for the opportunity

to serve them, and then reviewed the scheduled program. The Question Box, scheduled for Tuesday evening, was to be moderated by Dr. Judson LeCompte. He then introduced the first moderator, Christine Coker from Mississippi State University.



Figure 1. President Brie Arthur (left) with Bobby Green (right), Program Chair of the 2021 Mobile, Alabama, 45th annual conference.