

Volume 2, Issue 4, July 2018

Announcement - 2018 Alfred E. Alquist Special Recognition Award and Medal

Recognizing a lifetime of Earthquake Engineering Achievement

On June 28, 2018 our friend and colleague Michael "Mike" Mahoney of the Risk Management Directorate, Building Science Branch, received the 2018 Alfred E. Alquist Special Recognition Award and Medal for lifetime achievement.

Presented by David A. Friedman, President of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI), at the 11th National Conference on Earthquake Engineering, in Los Angeles, California, the award recognizes Mike's exceptional contributions to advancing seismic risk reduction through a career dedicated to designing and supporting FEMA projects that have led to major advances in professional practices, the development of influential risk mitigation resources, and enhanced seismic safety both in the United States and internationally.

At the event, which was attended by 1,500 professionals including Architects, Engineers, Seismologists, Geologists, Geophysicists, and Emergency Planners and Regulators, Mike was praised for being a steadfast advocate and supporter of projects that advance the application of research and practice of earthquake and tsunami engineering. He is a friend of earthquake professionals in academia, practice, and government, and he has a passion for improving the practice of earthquake engineering through the application of research, post-event inspections, and design practice improvements.

When asked what the award meant to him, Mike simply stated "...the Alquist Medal is the highest honor I could ever hope to receive from my peers and I am humbled and honored to have received it."

Mike is right about it being a high honor. The Alfred E Alquist Special Recognition Medal is one of the most prestigious awards that the earthquake community can bestow. The recipient is selected by a panel of independent members and must be approved by the EERI Board, so it is truly awarded by the recipient's peers.

In Mike's case his peers recognized a remarkable 40 years of service in the risk management field, 34 years of public service at FEMA and his 27 years working in the earthquake world. Much of that experience has been on ground breaking work, including the first flood retrofitting design guide, the EERI School Earthquake Safety Initiative project, contracting and completing the first phase of what would eventually become HAZUS, investigating and documenting the unacceptable performance of steel moment frame construction after the Northridge earthquake and developing a five volume set of guides that resolved the issues, a 15 year effort developing performance based seismic assessment and design guidelines, and preparing the first design guide for vertical evacuation from tsunamis.

All told, Mike has contributed to over 300 different risk management products and resources. Those resources have influenced mitigation work implemented at the regional and local levels, enhanced the knowledge of the public and decision makers about earthquakes and prudent earthquake risk reduction practices, improved the technical basis and validity of building codes and their provisions, and

encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration amongst many professionals that has advanced the practice of earthquake engineering.

While Mike may have downplayed the recognition, others were happy to trumpet the significance of his work and the award. Laurie Johnson, Chair of the NEHRP Advisory Committee for Earthquake Hazard Reduction, took to Facebook to thank Mike for his many years of hard work and dedication to ensuring our nation's people, buildings and infrastructure are safer from earthquakes and other natural disasters.

FIMA Risk Management Director Nick Shufro said, "FEMA's Earthquake Team plays an important role in preparing our citizens and Nation for catastrophic events. Mike is a key member of the team and his work is widely recognized and appreciated by his peers inside and outside the Agency. Wherever you go in the Earthquake community, Mike's name brings nods of appreciation and respect."

So here's to Mike for being 40 years ahead of the rest of us in supporting our strategic goals of building a culture of preparedness and readying the Nation for catastrophic disasters. Well done Mr. Mahoney; well done.

For additional information on the Alfred E. Alquist award, [click here](#). For more information on earthquakes, check out [Ready.gov](#), and for more information on FEMA's National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), [click here](#).