Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting  
2 p.m. April 1, 2017  
Room 142 RNR Building

Dr. Carrie Castille, President of the FWF Alumni Association, called the 2017 Annual General Meeting to order at 2 p.m. The meeting was attended by approximately 45 alumni, faculty, students, and friends.

A moment of silence was observed for alumni who passed away during the last year: Greg Barbe BSF ’95, George Arthur Johnson BSF ’60, Hugh Montgomery Burnham BSF ’50, MF ’65, Robert Bascom Martin BSF ’54, MF ’61, Hugh Raymond Pardue, Sr., BSF ’50, Lewis Carroll Peters BSF ’50, William “Bill” Read BSF ’77, Samuel Nathaniel Saxon BSF ’61, and Salvo Verucchi BSF ’59.

The minutes of the 2016 annual meeting were approved.

Dr. Allen Rutherford, Director of the LSU School of Renewable Natural Resources (SRNR), reported that undergraduate enrollment in 2016 reached 303, a 145% increase since 2008. Graduate Faculty of the department have generated over $6 million per year in research grants. Rooms 141, 142, and 230 of the RNR Building have been renovated with funds provided by alumni donors. Priorities for the department include filling vacant faculty positions, implementing accreditation review recommendations, funding new graduate scholarships, and creating internship opportunities for undergraduate students.

Senior Director of Development Lindsey Fussell for the LSU College of Agriculture and LSU AgCenter welcomed alumni, and reported that the College of Agriculture was one of only 3 colleges on the Baton Rouge campus that was increasing in enrollment. Joint memberships are available for the LSU Alumni Association, the College of Agriculture Alumni Association, and the FWF Alumni Association. She reminded alumni of opportunities for endowment of scholarships or professorships to support the School.

We received updates on the activities of SRNR student organizations. The Aquaculture and Fisheries Club was represented by Miss Courtney Murr, Xi Sigma Pi was represented by Mr. Beau Navarre, the Society of American Foresters (SAF) was represented by Mr. Mason Leblanc, The Wildlife Society (TWS) was represented by Miss Anna West, and Tiger Chapter Ducks Unlimited (TCDU) was represented by Mr. Clint Pace. Highlights of the reports included TWS hosting Southeast Wildlife Conclave at LSU in March 2018, and TCDU winning Ducks Unlimited “Sweet 16” competition as the #1 university chapter in the U. S. in 2016.

Mr. Allen U. Bedell (BSF ’60) and Mr. Thomas J. Hess, Jr. (MS ’78), posthumous, were inducted into the Hall of Fame of the School of Renewable Natural Resources. Mr. Bedell of Hot Springs, Arkansas, received his MS Forestry from Yale ’66, founded Circle B Logging, Inc., and QSDC, Inc., served
as President and member of the Executive Committee of the Arkansas Forestry Association, and accumulated many honors over his career. Mr. Hess had a distinguished career as a wildlife biologist, serving as Program Manager of Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Grand Chenier, Louisiana, and working to restore endangered Bald Eagles, Brown Pelicans, and Whooping Cranes. His distinguished career was cut short by cancer in 2014.

Dr. Luke Laborde, Executive Secretary, (Ph.D. ’14), reported that contributions had been made by the FWF Alumni Association in the amounts of $3,000 to the FWF Endowed Scholarship Fund and $2,000 to the SRNR Excellence Fund. The association’s balance at Campus Federal Credit Union as of 3/31/2017 was $4,627.17. The School of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Alumni Scholarship Fund had a current balance of $94,852.03. During 2016, scholarships of $1,000 each were awarded to Lexus Lejeune, Brandon Hernandez, Ashley Breaux, Cora Woolsey, Anna Davis, and Samantha Hughes.

Dr. Laborde presented the recommendations of the FWFAA By-laws review committee, which was composed of Mr. Buck Vandersteen, Dr. Paul Coreil, Mr. Craig Gothreaux, Mr. Will deGravelles, and Dr. Laborde. Proposed changes, which were numerous, had been circulated to current members 30 days in advance by mail or e-mail. Highlights of these changes included –

1. A name change to “School of Renewable Natural Resources/Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries Alumni Association.”
2. A new objective of the association “to support the School through recruiting and mentoring of students and development of scholarships and internships.”
3. Addition of a “friends” membership category.
4. Eliminate position of “Executive Secretary” and replace with a “Secretary-Treasurer” appointed by the Director of the SRNR.
5. Dues to be determined by a majority vote of the membership.
6. Expenditures > $1,000 require the approval of the President.
7. Expenditures > $2,500 require approval by a majority vote of the membership.

A motion to approve the by-law amendments was made by Kenny Ribeck and seconded by Andy Nyman. The motion was approved unanimously by the membership.

Elected by acclamation to 2-year terms were –

Will deGravelles President
Craig Gothreaux President-elect
Luke Laborde Secretary-Treasurer
At-large Board Member Rachel Villani

In closing comments, new President deGravelles expressed a desire for the association to host new events to help engage alumni in support of the School.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.