New York Water Environment Association Announces Executive Director Patricia Cerro-Reehil to Retire

The New York Water Environment Association, Inc. (NYWEA) has announced that Patricia Cerro-Reehil, NYWEA’s executive director since 2000, will retire in June 2023. The announcement was made by NYWEA’s President-Elect, Donna Grudier, who is chairing the search committee to identify Cerro-Reehil’s successor.

Cerro-Reehil started working for NYWEA in 1987, and went on to become the first woman to hold the position of Executive Director for the organization. “Since taking the helm, Patricia has helped the organization fulfill its mission and grow,” said Grudier. “Her impact on the organization has been tremendous.”

Grudier continued, “Under Patricia’s leadership, NYWEA’s impact on the water industry has broadened. Among her many accomplishments, she was instrumental in the success of the organization’s scholarship program that reached its $1 Million goal in 2000. During her tenure over $700,000 in scholarships have been awarded to 240 students pursuing environmental degrees. That program is now expanding to provide scholarships to individuals interested in becoming water resource recovery operators.”

Grudier noted, “Also notable during her tenure, NYWEA took over the administration of the NY State Operator Certification program that is now in its 11th year. While Executive Director, NYWEA received the Outstanding Member Association of the Year award from the Water Environment Federation in 2016. She was also instrumental in building a relationship between NYWEA and environmental advocacy organizations. In 2020-21, she worked to pivot the organization during the pandemic from in-person meetings and conferences to remote to fulfill NYWEA’s educational mission.”

Cerro-Reehil noted she is honored to have worked for an organization with such an admirable mission, and dedicated volunteers.

“It has been a privilege to work with so many talented volunteers, Cerro-Reehil stated, especially all of the past presidents and my predecessor, Robert D. Hennigan. NYWEA has more than 400 volunteers that are the lifeline to protecting public health and the environment and carry out the clean water mission for the organization. It has been a great opportunity to work with these amazing individuals to help the organization grow and succeed.”

She also credited the professional office staff who have been a truly indispensable part of NYWEA’s team. Cerro-Reehil, is a graduate of Adirondack High School, Green Mountain College, Empire State College and Case Western Reserve University, she is an advocate of promoting water careers, and is passionate about environmental education of youth. The decision to retire comes as she celebrated her 35 anniversary with NYWEA. “NYWEA will celebrate its 95th anniversary in 2023, and after serving as Executive Director for 22 years, it’s time for a change. The decision was difficult, but the timing feels right.”

“The Search Committee has begun the process of finding a successor for Patricia’s position.” Grudier said. “We’ll miss Patricia’s passion and enthusiasm for helping to carry forward the mission set in motion in 1929.”
by people who we now regard as New York’s environmental pioneers.” Patricia will remain Executive Director until June 30, 2023 while she trains her successor.

The position is posted on the Jobs page of the NYWEA website, [https://www.nywea.org/SitePages/About/Jobs.aspx](https://www.nywea.org/SitePages/About/Jobs.aspx).

**About NYWEA:** Founded in 1929 by professionals in the field of water quality as a nonprofit educational organization, NYWEA has 2,500 members statewide and hosts several technical conferences each year for environmental engineers, scientists, water resource recovery operators, public officials and others who work in water quality management and water resource recovery. In addition, NYWEA sponsors a scholarship program, publishes Clear Waters – a quarterly educational magazine, administers wastewater operator training and certification, and supports humanitarian clean water projects. Headquartered in Syracuse, NYWEA has seven regional chapters, 15 college student chapters and is a Member Association of the international Water Environment Federation (WEF). For more information, please visit [www.nywea.org](http://www.nywea.org).

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