

Charles H. Lyles Award Recipient 2008

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Past Charles H. Lyles Award Recipients

<i>Charles H. Lyles</i>	1984
<i>Theodore B. Ford</i>	1985
<i>J.Y. Christmas</i>	1986
<i>John Breaux</i>	1987
<i>John Ray Nelson</i>	1988
<i>I.B. "Buck" Byrd</i>	1989
<i>Hugh A. Swingle</i>	1990
<i>John A. Mehos</i>	1991
<i>J. Burton Angelle</i>	1992
<i>Louis A. Villanova</i>	1993
<i>Theodore H. Shepard</i>	1994
<i>Edwin A. Joyce, Jr.</i>	1995
<i>Tommy D. Candies</i>	1996
<i>Walter M. Tatum</i>	1997
<i>Thomas L. Heffernan</i>	1998
<i>Trent Lott</i>	1999
<i>James M. Barkuloo</i>	2000
<i>Walter W. Fondren, III</i>	2001
<i>Jerald K. Waller</i>	2002
<i>Andrew J. Kemmerer</i>	2003
<i>Hal R. Osborn</i>	2004
<i>Leroy Kiffe</i>	2005
<i>Robert P. Jones</i>	2006
<i>Wayne E. Swingle</i>	2007



Ralph Rayburn

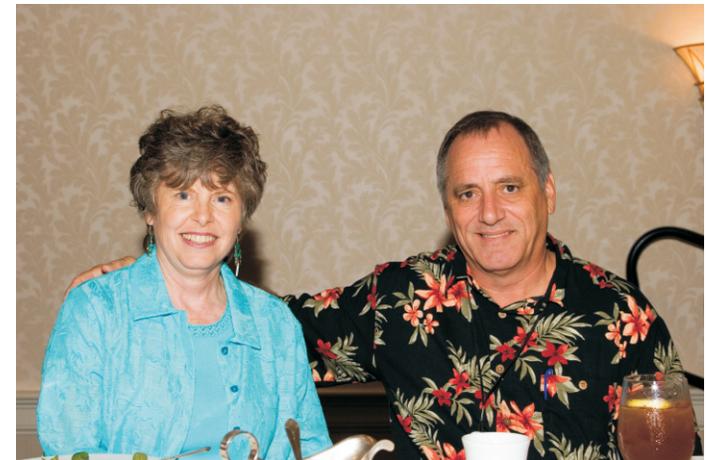
Ralph Rayburn

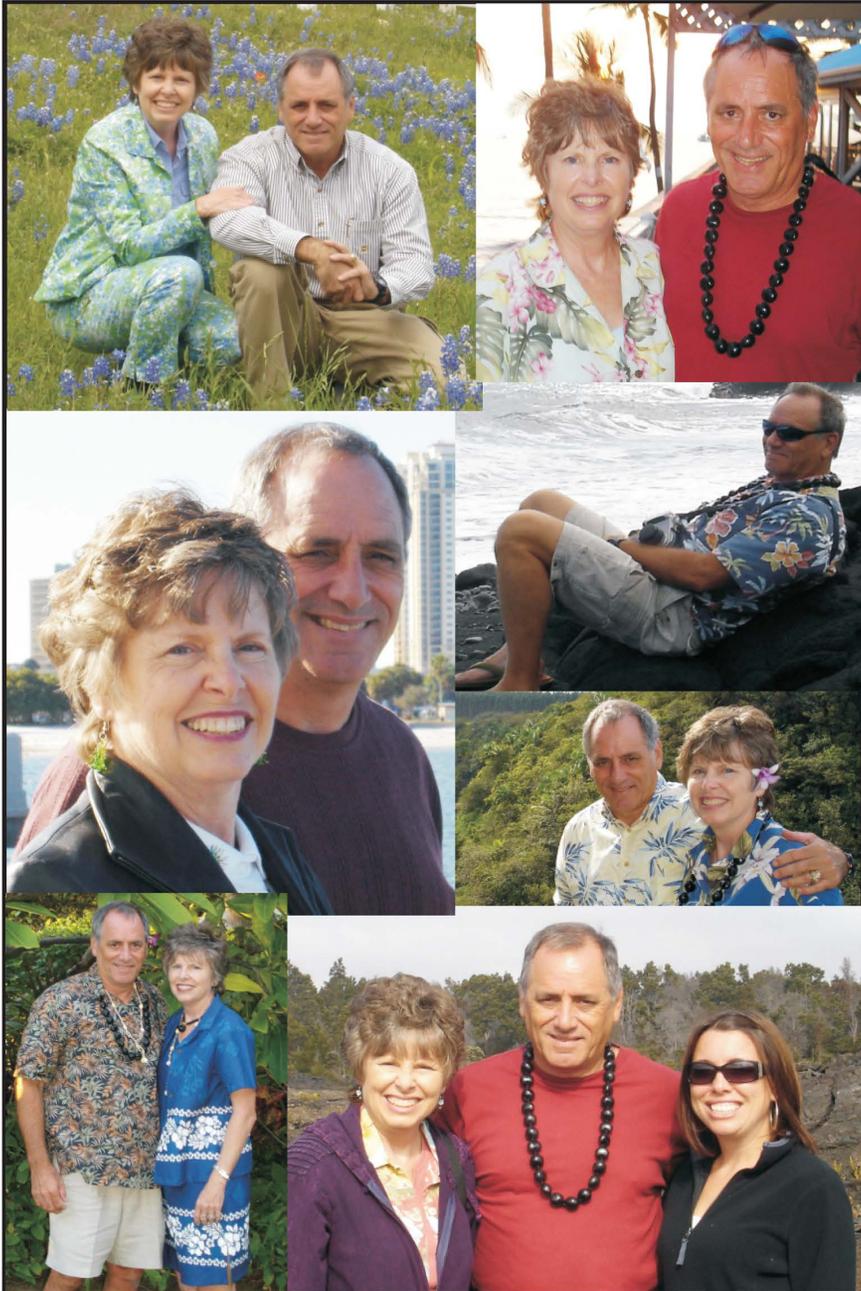
The Commission takes great pleasure in announcing that Mr. Ralph Rayburn has been selected as the 2008 *Charles H. Lyles Award* recipient. However, it is with a heavy heart that this award is given posthumously, as he passed away suddenly at his home on January 31, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Elaine, and daughter, Rachel. His sharp wit, engaging smile, and unconditional friendship will be greatly missed.

Ralph first joined Texas Sea Grant in 1975 as the marine agent for Aransas and San Patricio Counties. He left the program in January 1978 to become the Executive Director of the Texas Shrimp Association (TSA), an offshore shrimping industry trade organization. During his 12-year tenure with TSA, Ralph used his considerable intellect and people skills to help resolve a longstanding dispute between conservationists and shrimpers over sea turtles. Ralph moved from the TSA to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in 1989, where he served in several capacities. As head of the Department's Coastal Fisheries Division, Ralph implemented the State's shrimp management and artificial reef programs. He spent his last eight years with TPWD as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, where he was the agency's liaison with the Texas Legislature, U.S. Congress, and other governmental agencies. He returned to Sea Grant in 1999 as Associate Director for Outreach. His incredible work ethic, professionalism and outgoing personality made an immediate impact on the Texas Sea Grant Program and the National Sea Grant Network.

In addition to his untiring work in the fisheries arena, Ralph was in the U. S. Armed Forces for 28 years, first as an active duty Army Officer (in Air Defense Artillery and in the Engineering Branch) and then a Reserve Officer (in Topography), where he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) culminating his career in the Office of the Chief of Engineers at the Pentagon, Washington, DC. His time in the military helped him develop his strong sense of discipline, motivation and perseverance which served him well in becoming a respected and esteemed fisheries professional.

Mr. Rayburn was a tireless advocate for the protection of marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico and was respected by all who knew him. He will be sorely missed. It is with tremendous pride and honor that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission presents this year's *Charles H. Lyles Award* to such a deserving recipient.





SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Dear Elaine and Rachel,

At this very moment you are surrounded by friends who love you, and hold fond memories of Ralph in their hearts. Take a deep breath and close your eyes. Pull this exceptional energy filling this room into your souls. Visualize the Hawaiian shirt and unique smile that could light up a conversation with a friend or an entire room. Ralph is here because he's in so many hearts at the same time and in the same setting.

I think of you often and know you are doing okay because of your faith in God, your loving family and your abundant friends.

You know how many dragons Ralph tried to slay and lovingly witnessed the times he thrust his sword and spear in the manner of Don Quixote, one of my all-time heroes. There was always a desire to right one more wrong before the sun vanished behind a bushy forest or low craggy hill in the land of Texas. He lived by the simple creed of doing the right thing for the right reason. That particular creed allows a peaceful kind of sleep that's only born from a clear conscience. We should all aspire to peaceful sleep by the way we live.

Ralph epitomizes the Charles L. Lyles Award. Mr. Charlie fought at the Battle of Bastogne earning his place in history. Ralph was too young for Bastogne, but made historic stands defending the fisheries and fishermen of the Gulf of Mexico. And he did it with honor. Ralph Rayburn richly deserves the CHL Award.

I end my note with a quote so applicable to Ralph.

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not." Oprah Winfrey

God Bless You.

Bob Jones ☺)>>>