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News Release

Randy D Kearns, CEM, Achieves 30 Years of Certification

Apr. 25, 2023 (Falls Church, Va.) – The International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) is proud to announce that Randy D. Kearns, CEM, DHA, MSA, FACHE, FRSPH is the first emergency management professional to achieve 30 years of certification in the IAEM Certified Emergency Manager Program (CEM®). This valued recognition of excellence is earned by those who demonstrate a strong understanding of the emergency management field through knowledge, experience, work history, training, education, and contributions to the profession.

In the late 1980s, IAEM began developing the Certified Emergency Manager Program to raise and maintain professional standards for emergency managers, and the first class of certified professionals was announced in 1993, with Kearns in the class. His involvement began a year earlier.

"In 1992, I was a county emergency management coordinator attending the PDS Capstone program at the Emergency Management Institute," explained Kearns. "The Board was there at the time, exploring the creation of the CEM program with a representative discussing the concept with our class. It's incredible to see how both the organization and the CEM program have grown to become the international standard in emergency management."

There are currently 2,550 certified professionals with Kearns leading the group with the most years of certified success. "I commend Randy Kearns on maintaining the IAEM CEM Certification for 30 years," said Glenn Jones, CEM, current chair of the IAEM Certification Commission. "This milestone achievement exhibits an extraordinary dedication to the emergency management profession. His commitment to excellence is exemplary."

After an individual receives their initial certification, they must recertify every five years by demonstrating continuing education and involvement within the profession. "CEM is challenging both to obtain and to maintain," stated Kearns. "While the bar is high, it is well within reach for most who have those key roles and experiences in emergency management today. Furthermore, the AEM is a good starting point to prepare the next cohort of CEMs in the profession."

Kearns began his career as a firefighter, first responder, rescue diver, and paramedic. These roles later evolved into a paramedic instructor, county emergency management director, and state rescue college faculty, with multiple disaster deployments representing local and state governments and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency. His disaster experience reflects dozens of responses over the past 30 years. A couple of examples include serving as incident commander (IC) for a (North Carolina EMAC provided) field hospital at Waveland Mississippi, following Hurricane Katrina; serving in operations for FEMA Region IV following a series of tornados that struck Georgia in 2011; and IC for a field hospital for the 2012 DNC Convention held in

Charlotte, North Carolina. More recently, he was tapped to be the IC for one of the field hospitals planned in New Orleans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kearns has a Bachelor of Science in Human Services, Emergency Disaster Management from Thomas Edison State College, a Master of Science in Administration from Central Michigan University, and a Doctorate in Healthcare Administration and Executive Leadership from the Medical University of South Carolina. Upon completing his doctoral studies, he joined the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine faculty. There, he oversaw the North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia EMS Data Systems in the Department of Emergency Medicine and the State Burn Surge Disaster Program in the Department of Surgery. During his time at UNC, he taught multiple courses and published multiple papers before retiring as a Clinical Assistant Professor in 2014. After three years of teaching healthcare management as an associate professor and serving as the division chair at the University of Mount Olive, he left for the University of New Orleans. Today, he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses as an associate professor for healthcare management and disaster management, serving as Healthcare Management Program director in the College of Business Administration. He also holds an appointment as an associate professor of research at Louisiana State University, Health Science Center.

Academically, his research includes 30+ PubMed-indexed papers with 90+ overall publications ranking internationally in the top five authors by Expertscape.com for each of the categories: Mass Casualty Injury, Disaster Planning, and Surge Capacity.

IAEM congratulates Kearns on his certification achievement and encourages other professionals to begin their certification journey.

IAEM, with more than 6,000 members worldwide, is a non-profit professional organization representing emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance; the Certified Emergency Manager program; annual scholarships; a comprehensive monthly newsletter; and more.

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