The Walter J. Weber, Jr. Distinguished Lecture in Environmental and Energy Sustainability

LECTURE SCHEDULE

4:15 - 5:00 p.m.
Reception
Gerald Ford Presidential Library

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Lecture
Gerald Ford Presidential Library

ABOUT THE LECTURE

This lecture series brings one of the world's foremost experts in environmental engineering and science to campus each year to share the results of their work and their vision for the future. This seminar is made possible through the endowment to the University by the 1996 Athalie Richardson Irvine Clark Prize awarded to Professor Walter J. Weber, Jr., Ph.D., P.E., D.E.E., by the National Water Research Institute for Outstanding Accomplishments in Water Science and Technology. Dr. Weber, a University of Michigan faculty member since 1963, is the Gordon Maskew Fair and Earnest Boyce Distinguished University Professor and Director of the College of Engineering's concentrations in Environmental Sustainability (ConsEnSus) Program.

Marc Edwards

Charles P. Lunsford Professor of
Civil Engineering
Virginia Tech

Tuesday, October 25, 2016
5:00 p.m.
Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

"The Flint (2015-2016) and Washington D.C. (2001-2004) Drinking Water Lead Crises: How Scientists and Engineers Betrayed the Public Trust"

The 2001-2004 Washington D.C. lead in drinking water crisis (and its aftermath to the present day) is a unique case study in the history of engineering and scientific misconduct. The multi-year exposure of an unsuspecting population to very high levels of the best-known neurotoxin was perpetrated by multiple government agencies whose mission was to protect the public health. These agencies published falsified research reports, covering up evidence of harm and justifying ill-conceived interventions wasting hundreds of millions of dollars and which created even more harm. Aspiring to uphold the duty of scientists and engineers to hold paramount the public good and welfare, Marc Edwards worked alongside collaborators in the public, press and in Congress for over a decade to expose scientific misconduct. Those experiences raise concerns about the veracity of "research" conducted and funded by government agencies, especially in crisis situations when public harm has occurred, as well as the lack of checks and balances on agency power. Moreover, due to our inability to learn from the DC disaster, a similar crisis such as that occurring in Flint MI was inevitable, but in that case after outsiders exposed the problem harm to Flint residents was acknowledged--over $400 million in relief money has since gone to assist in the disaster recovery and several agency employees have been criminally indicted. Flint reminds us that academics have an important role to play in confronting misconduct and environmental injustice-if we do not do so, public trust in science will never be restored.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
CIVIL & ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN