



# American Water Works Association Nebraska Section

## COLONEL THEODORE A. LEISEN MEMORIAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ENDOWMENT FUND

The Nebraska Section American Water Works Association (AWWA) established the Colonel Theodore A. Leisen Memorial and Training Endowment Fund in 1993 to encourage water industry professionals to obtain additional training and encourage graduate and undergraduate students to choose the water industry as their field of work.

Colonel Theodore Alfred Leisen was one of the incorporators of AWWA and served as president from 1917-1918. He also chaired several national committees on public health and pollution.

Leisen completed high school in his native Philadelphia and received only private engineering instructions. His father had been an engineer and his grandfather, an architect in England.

The Omaha World-Herald, November 1, 1923, described him as "rather thick set and about five feet six inches tall." Soft-spoken and very dignified, he was all business. Leisen began his involvement with the water industry in 1886, at age 21, as a chief engineer for a South American construction project. He later designed the Wilmington, DE wastewater system and served as superintendent of the city's water department.

In 1908, Leisen was named superintendent of the Louisville, KY Water Department. Six years later he moved to Detroit, MI as superintendent of its water department where he supervised the construction of the world's largest filtration plant (350 MGD).

During World War I, he held the rank of a major in charge of construction and utilities officer at Camp Custer, MI. Leisen was named general manager of the Metropolitan Utilities District (M.U.D.), Omaha, NE, in 1923 at age 59, at a salary of \$12,500 a year.

From **Trial and Triumph**, the first 100 years of the Metropolitan Utilities District, by David F. Barber (1989): "Colonel Leisen lost no time making sure that "mud fiasco of 1923" could never happen again. On May 8, 1924, he informed the (M.U.D.) Board that the Florence plant now had a different method of disposing of sedimentation in the settling basins. "Instead of emptying the basins and washing them out," he said, "the mud is now being run out during the operation... Mud valves are opened for a short period at frequent intervals and the mud is flushed from the bottom... Daily turbidity tests show this process has worked satisfactorily thus far and will undoubtedly result in a material saving in labor and cost of pumpage during the year. "Maintaining his reputation as a builder, General Manager Leisen directed the construction of the Downtown Headquarters Building at 18th and Harney Streets., and the Service Building on 20th St., north of Center St. Each cost approximately \$275,000. The new office building opened in early 1927. During his 16-year tenure at M.U.D., the water and natural gas utility also began the changeover from manufactured gas to natural gas. The process started November 5, 1934."

When he announced his retirement July 19, 1939, at age 74, both gas and water rates had been drastically reduced. Bonded indebtedness was down to \$1.6 million for the water department and \$1.5 million for the gas department. The District had improved its physical facilities as well as its financial standing. Leisen returned to Detroit and died in 1944. In 1993, AWWA inducted him into the AWWA National Hall of Fame.



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## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Instructions: Please fill in all information. **Application must be typed.** Incomplete or handwritten applications may not be accepted.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name:	Middle Initial:	Last Name:
Home Address		School Address
Home Phone:		School Phone:
Email:		
AWWA Membership Information (if a member)		
Type of Membership:		Member No:

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

List colleges and Universities attended starting with the most recent

Name of Institution	Major	Dates Attended	Degree Received

### INFORMATION PERTAINING TO PROPOSED UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE PROGRAM

College or University that you attend/plan to attend: \_\_\_\_\_

Planned area of study: \_\_\_\_\_ Full time or part time? \_\_\_\_\_

Degree objective: \_\_\_\_\_ Starting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of your scholastic record/transcript (unofficial transcripts will be accepted).

List scholarships received previously either as an undergraduate or graduate student

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List memberships in other professional/student organizations, societies, etc.

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List community activities, civic involvement, volunteer efforts, etc.

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List your work experience. Start with the most recent experience first.

Employer	Nature of Work	Dates Employed	Hrs per Week

Explain your plans following graduation. Include discussion of what you feel are the greatest challenges facing the water treatment/public works industry and the role you hope to play. (Use separate sheet(s) if needed).

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What are your career interests and objectives? As part of this description, note any experiences you may have in the water treatment and supply field or in the environmental field either through coursework, employment, or community involvement. (Use separate sheet(s) if needed)

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# American Water Works Association Nebraska Section

**Please ask an advisor or another university official to certify the following:**

I hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_ is an Undergraduate/Graduate  
Name of Applicant

student in the \_\_\_\_\_ Department at \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Department College or University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Advisor or School Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I declare that all the information supplied on this application is true and accurate**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Your completed application should be submitted electronically in a pdf file to Dr. George Hunt ([ghunt2@unl.edu](mailto:ghunt2@unl.edu)) by Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. If you are unable to provide your application in a pdf file, please submit the hard copy of your application by the same deadline to:

Lincoln

Dr. Bruce Dvorak  
W150C Nebraska Hall  
Civil Engineering  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE 68583-6105

Omaha

Dr. George Hunt  
204A PKI Building  
Civil Engineering  
University of Nebraska  
Omaha, NE 68182-0178

Application must be received no later than **October 8, 2021**. The scholarship will be awarded at the Nebraska Section AWWA virtual fall conference with award information and fund transfer arranged separately. You are encouraged to attend the virtual conference.

In addition, please provide your t-shirt size: \_\_\_\_\_