

Meet the Board

Misty Mercier, Physis Laboratory

Hello SoCal SETAC!

My name is Misty Mercier and this is proudly my second year on the Executive Board as a private sector representative.

I am an islander at heart because I spent my early childhood in the Philippines until, at the age of 5, I island hopped the Pacific Ocean to Saipan, one of the largest of the Marianas Islands. I called the 12 mile long by 5.6 mile wide “large” island of Saipan home until, at the age of 10, my parents moved my sister and me to Long Beach for a better education and more opportunities than a 115 km² island could offer. Many years later, I now consider Long Beach my home town even though the islander in me is still trying to acclimate to the chilling southern California winters.

In middle school, my path into marine biology started onboard the R/V Yellowfin identifying polychaetes thanks to the Young Scholars Marine Science summer program. My love of marine invertebrates continued into high school at Long Beach Poly, when I was lucky enough to start my research path in Zed Mason’s laboratory at California State University Long Beach (CSULB). What started off as my junior year science project researching how nudibranchs acquired stinging cells from their prey using electron microscopy eventually lead me to the Los Angeles County Science Fair and then the California State Science fair where I was awarded the John Isaacs Memorial Scholarship. This life-changing scholarship enabled me to be the first in my family to go onto and complete my undergraduate degree in marine biology at CSULB. I continue to encourage future generations of kids just like me find encouragement and scholarships with their science fair projects as a past executive board and current advisory committee volunteer for the Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair.

While at CSULB, I ventured into marine biochemistry researching ubiquitous metal-binding proteins in molluscs, which I presented at many SoCal SETAC meetings as an undergraduate and graduate student. My trace metals research at CSULB led me into a career with CRG Marine Laboratories where my love of marine biology became my passion for marine environmental chemistry. After 7 years as a project/lab manager at CRG, I went onto environmental consulting as a project scientist with Weston Solutions for two years, where I got to see first-hand how our lab data were being used.



Misty at Cabrillo Aquarium with her youngest nephew Owen

I ultimately came back to my true love of marine environmental chemistry lab work when my partners, Rich Gossett, Mark Baker and I opened Physis Environmental Laboratories in 2010.

At Physis, I am also a Senior Project Manager with recent larger programs, including the California Areas of Special Biological Significance monitoring, the Southern California Regional Bight Survey, and recently the 2015 USEPA National Coastal Condition Assessment of sediment and fish from shoreline states, territories and protectorate (including my island home in the Marianas Islands). I enjoy my days developing and implementing analytical approaches with colleagues and clients in the chemistry, ecotoxicology, environmental, engineering, and consulting fields.

Outside of Physis, I nurture my lifelong passion for dance and ballet that started in middle school and still continues today. I also love sailing with my husband Brian and wrinkly sharpei Mochi; going on weekend adventures with my five nephews and one niece; and rooting for the Jets at home games in New York, where my husband is originally from.

I look forward to continuing my tenure on the SoCal SETAC Board in support of environmental sciences in Southern California!