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Len Pietrafesa received Bachelors (1965) from Fairfield University (Fairfield, CT), Physics & Mathematics, Masters (1967) from Boston College and the University of Chicago, Geophysics/Fluid Physics (Fr./Dr. J. DeVane, BC; Dr. L.F. McGoldrick, UC) and a PhD from University of Washington (Seattle, WA), Fluid Physics/Geophysical Fluid Dynamics).

He is former chair of the NOAA Science Advisory Board. His teaching and research areas include physical oceanographic processes, geophysical fluid dynamics, satellite oceanography, air-sea coupling, coastal flooding due to hurricanes and severe storms, air-sea interaction, weather and climate impacts.