

Treda McCaw

*Sales Associate,
Kraemer's Nursery Inc.*

Multiple committee and chapter posts make this nurserywoman one of the OAN's most active members

Background: I grew up on a third-generation dairy farm near Walla Walla, Washington. Everyone living on the farm contributed in one way or another. My work skills and ethics are a result of that upbringing. It truly takes a village to raise a child, and there were many people always looking out for me. Cattle and crops have a way of telling on you if they didn't get cared for properly.

Guiding principle: Do the right thing. I am the one in just about any meeting with my hand up asking a question. I like to understand the WHY because it helps me decide how to proceed and get my part of the job done.

Goal yet to be achieved: I was asked by Lee Powell, OAN past president, to take over as chair of the Education Committee and assist in the rewrite of the Oregon Certified Nursery Professional manual and training program. We assembled a strong committee and began the process of wading through important information that could be used to train employees. Fast forward to 2015 and it still isn't complete. I really do believe that this is an important project for our industry to support.

Hardest business decision: Leaving the family farm and moving to Oregon, but my life has been charmed ever since. I got my first job in the nursery industry because I lived down the road from J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. in Independence, Oregon. I was initially hired to drive a tractor (those farm skills really paid off!), but due to an opening in the office, I immediately became inventory/assistant to the manager. After 10 years with JFS, I moved



on to different nurseries and learned skills that help me in the career I have today.

Most significant mentor: My family and farming background has helped me become who I am today. I learned to work hard watching my parents and grandparents work the farm. It was a blessing to work side by side with my dad and learn from him on a daily basis.

Best business advice: Hire good people, teach and support them, and expect greatness. Be honest and grow the absolute best nursery stock in the USA.

What do you love most about the nursery industry? I love the OAN and the people in our association. I know so many people because I am involved and that has helped me advance in my career. Sharing a

meal and good times makes it easier to call another nursery and ask for help with issues.

For example, in 1997, management at J. Frank Schmidt asked staff members to attend our local chapter meetings. After about a year, Mac McCarter, OAN past president, asked me to join the Mt. Hood Chapter board. I went on to spend six years on the board, including one as president. I became active because someone asked me. This is an important part of being an association member — helping to encourage the next generation of members. We know how to grow plants, but we haven't done a very good job growing the next leaders.

What is your greatest challenge? Finding a way to use up all my fabric stash in quilts and the time to actually get them finished.

What motivates you to go to work ►



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every day? I love the people I work with, and knowing that we grow beautiful plant material is a very rewarding feeling. As a sales associate, I strive to do an excellent job helping our customers. The paycheck is also a benefit because it helps me have fun when I am not at work.

What are you most proud of? My husband and children are wonderful people. They have careers that they love and are happy. My dad always said the one thing that made him proudest was that none of his four kids ever moved back home. From my point of view, he meant that he raised us right and with skills so we could take care of ourselves. Life is good.

Involvement with OAN: Mt. Hood Chapter board, Education Committee, Yard, Garden & Patio Show Committee, Awards Committee, Convention Committee. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with so many inspired and hardworking people, working towards the common goal of a strong association. Our OAN staff is hardworking and I appreciate all they do.

In your opinion, what are the most critical challenges facing the nursery industry today? Immigration issues need to get resolved. Labor shortages are making it difficult for nurseries to get the jobs done in a timely manner. Our employees are hardworking and valuable, and they are my friends. I respect them and what they do for our industry.

The product shortage is actually a good thing for the industry, because we are able to ask and get pricing for our product that is fair. This will enable us to continue to be a strong and successful industry.

Favorite quote: "Do or do not. There is no try." — Yoda ☺

Would you like to be a leader too? Get involved with OAN chapters and committees. If interested, please feel free to contact your chapter president, any OAN board member listed on page 7, or OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone at jstone@oan.org or 503-682-5089.