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Life on the bleeding edge

Time does not stand still – and neither should we! Our world is continuously growing and changing, and if we stand here and watch it happen, our lives will pass us by before we have a chance to jump on board.



Mark Bigej
OAN PRESIDENT

My dad taught me from a young age to enjoy the “now” but always keep an eye on the future. A business that is sustainable can span many decades — even generations — and succeed, but only as long as there’s a willingness to change with consumer needs.

One of my dad’s favorite sayings, or what we affectionately call a “Jackism” (anyone who knows Dad knows exactly what I’m talking about), is that “leading edge is bleeding edge.” This means that you have to boldly take chances, even though sometimes that path leads to a flop — hence the term, “bleeding edge.”

I love the quote from Jim Rohn that says, “If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary.”

On February 22 the OAN had the great privilege of honoring six people who have left, and continue to leave, their mark on the nursery industry. These people did not stand still, but rather led the way by helping our industry forge ahead.

Ray Klupenger, Bruce Usrey, Jack Bigej, Dick Joyce, and Glen and Viola Walters comprised the 2017 class inducted into the Oregon Association of Nurseries Hall of Fame.

As I heard about each of their accomplishments throughout their careers, I was both inspired and I have to admit, intimidated. It was intimidating to hear that they have all done so much. How were they able to do it all? They faced innumerable challenges and setbacks, yet had the guts and determination to keep going.

It was, however, equally inspiring to realize that none of them set out with the goal to have such a large impact on the nursery industry. They were all doing what needed to be done to move their business forward and help those around them when they needed it.

They each did it one day at a time. There was no one large event that made each of them so special, but rather a culmination of several everyday events that enabled them to leave such a large mark on the industry they worked in and loved.

These titans of the nursery industry were all willing to share with others, and help others learn from their successes and failures. Each of them could look past their own immediate needs and realize that if those around them were stronger — competitors or not — it made for a stronger industry.

They all possessed the ability to see the bigger picture. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Ray, Bruce, Dad, Dick, Glen and Viola for everything they have done for the industry!

Each one of us has the ability to do just what these six, and many before them, have done and leave our mark on our great industry — one day at a time.

My favorite Jackism is this: “The only way to coast is downhill.”

I, for one, do not want to coast and jeopardize the hard work of those before us.

No one in our industry is ordinary. We are far from it. I encourage each one of us to continue carrying the torch the six new OAN Hall of Famers have carried for our industry — and keep pressing forward! ☺

Mark Bigej