



**Southern
Nursery
Association, Inc.**

PRESS RELEASE

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SNA Announces 2018 Award Recipients

Atlanta, Ga., January 24, 2018 – The Southern Nursery Association (SNA) has announced the recipients of the 2018 SNA Awards. The awards were presented at the 119th Annual SNA Business Meeting held at the Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, Md., during The SNA Conference.

The SNA Awards Program began in 1956, when the late John B. Wight, Sr., suggested to the officers of the Southern Nursery Association that an award be offered annually to the person of their selection who, in their opinion, had contributed most to the advancement of the industry in the South and to the welfare of the Southern Nursery Association. This first award, considered a lifetime achievement award, was named the **Slater Wight Memorial Award** in memory of the late J. Slater Wight, brother of the late John B. Wight, Sr. Nomination. Selection is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient of the **Slater Wight Memorial Award** is Donna C. Fare, Ph.D. She is a recently retired research horticulturalist from the U.S. National Arboretum McMinnville, Tennessee location. Her research program addressed environmental issues with field and container nursery systems and germplasm evaluation of ornamental trees and shrubs for production and landscape interest.

Donna received the Environmental Leadership Award (1999) and the Porter Henegar Memorial Award (2002) from the Southern Nursery Association. She has been an active participant with the SNA Research Conference since 1983 when she first competed in the graduate student competition.

Donna is a past President of the Southern Region IPPS and a recipient of the IPPS Sidney B. Meadows Award of Merit.

Established in 1974 by David E. Laird, Jr., in memory of his father, SNA Past President David E. Laird, Sr., the **David E. Laird, Sr. Memorial Award** is presented each year to recognize qualified young men and women for outstanding service in the field of environmental horticulture and to offer inspiration for others starting out in the field. The recipient must be 39 years of age or younger and must be a member of his/her state nursery association. Nominations are made by the State Associations within the SNA region with final selection by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient of the **David E. Laird, Sr. Memorial Award** is Sonya Lepper Westervelt, Chief of Wholesale Sales, Saunders Brothers, Piney River, VA.

Sonya began her career in horticulture as a cashier at a garden center in Roanoke, Virginia in 1999. She went on to Virginia Tech where she received a B.S. in Horticulture and a B.S. Agricultural and Applied Economics in 2005. From there, she participated in the Longwood Graduate Program in association with the University of Delaware and received her Master's in Public Horticulture in 2007.

After a brief stint working in development for the University of Virginia, she joined her husband, Paul Westervelt, and began working for Saunders Brothers as a regional sales associate in 2009. Sonya served on the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association board for seven years including serving as the board President in 2015. In December 2016, Sonya was promoted to the Chief of Wholesale Sales for Saunders Brothers.

She is the proud mama of four year old Magnolia and nearly one year old Crosier.

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Established by the SNA Board in 1992, the **SNA Pinnacle Award** is given to the individual within the allied industry who, in the opinion of the SNA Board, has contributed most to the advancement of the industry in the south and to the welfare of the Southern Nursery Association. This award is limited to SNA members. Nomination and selection of recipients is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipients of the **SNA Pinnacle Award** is Ken and Bob LeGette, Graco Fertilizer Company, Cairo, GA. Founded in a 1954 partnership between H.T. LeGette (Ken and Bob's grandfather) and Robert Johnson, Graco Fertilizer Company was predominately a fertilizer manufacturer and cotton gin. Today, Graco has evolved into a leader in the production of specialty fertilizer and potting soil thanks to the vision of Tom LeGette (Ken and Bob's father), who became company president in 1970.

Ken and Bob were both born and raised in Cairo, Georgia. From about the ages of 14, both held various jobs at the company warehouse helping blend fertilizer, spread fertilizer, deliver fertilizer, etc.

Ken and Bob are both graduates of Brookwood School in Thomasville, Georgia, Ken in 1976, Bob in 1978. Ken attended Auburn University and the University of Georgia before returning to the family business in 1980. Bob graduated from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. Tom LeGette, passed away in April of 1983, and Bob joined his brother Ken in the family business after his graduation in May of that year. Ken and Bob carry on the vision of their father and grandfathers in the tradition of creating premium quality specialty fertilizers and potting soils.

Ken is a member of GGIA, FNGLA, SNA, and FANN. He is a former member of the FNGLA State Board, a longtime president of the FNGLA Big Bend Chapter, a former member of Scotts' Distributor Advisory Board, a current member of Capital City Bank Advisory Board, and an active member of Cairo First United Methodist Church. Ken is an avid hunter and fisherman, a proud father, and a proud grandfather to twins, Owen & Kennedy.

Established by the SNA Board in 1999, the **SNA Environmental Award** recognizes individuals and businesses that have demonstrated exceptional leadership and through their voluntary efforts exemplified inspiration, vision, innovation, leadership and action to preserve and protect the environment. This award is not limited to SNA members or to the horticulture industry. Nominations for this prestigious award are made by the SNA Participating State Associations and SNA Members with final selection by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipients of the **SNA Environmental Award** is This year's recipients of the SNA Environmental Award is Dr. Sarah A. White, Nursery Extension Specialist at Clemson University in SC and an Associate Professor. Sarah has worked for 15 years on developing best management practices and treatment technologies that growers can use to clean water. She manages and conducts research projects and communicates information related to water management, water quality (chemical and biotic parameters), ecologically based treatment technologies, and integrated pest management to green industry stakeholders. Her lab is currently investigating the applications of vegetation-based technologies (constructed wetlands, floating treatment wetlands, and vegetated buffers) for cleansing agrichemical and plant disease contaminants from production runoff to encouraging water reuse and conservation.

Sarah White and a national team of researchers from 8 other universities received \$8.7 million in funding in September 2014 from USDA-Specialty Crops Research Initiative to evaluate "Clean Water3 - Reduce, Remediate, Recycle: Informed Decision-Making to Facilitate Use of Alternative Water Resources and Promote Sustainable Specialty Crop Production." The Clean Water3 team is working to help growers develop the tools and information resources necessary to make informed decisions about water management and recycling so that they can remain profitable well into the future.

Sarah earned a B.S. in Horticulture at Clemson University in 2000, a M.S. in Horticultural Science at Virginia Tech in 2003, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Toxicology from Clemson University in 2007. Sarah serves as an education advisor to the South Carolina Green Industry Association (formerly the SC Nursery and Landscape Association) and to the South Carolina Farm Bureau Ornamental Horticulture Committee.

In her time away from work, Sarah enjoys nature photography, hiking, and singing in her local church and community choirs.

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In 1969, an Award of Merit was created to honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to ornamental

horticultural research and, more specifically, to SNA. In 1972, the SNA Board of Directors resolved that the Award of Merit would be renamed the **Porter Henegar Memorial Award** for Horticultural Research in memory of the late Porter Henegar, Past Executive Secretary of SNA (1959 - 1972), to commemorate his years of tireless effort and service to the SNA. The recipient is selected annually by fellow research workers for his/her concern and work toward improving the nursery industry.

The recipient of the 2018 **Porter Henegar Memorial Award** is Dr. Marc van Iersel, Professor, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Marc van Iersel was born in the Netherlands and exposed to horticulture at a young age, playing in his grandfather's flower shop and greenhouses. He studied horticulture in the Netherlands, where he received his MS degree in 1989. He then came to the US and received his PhD from the University of Arkansas in 1994. He has been with horticulture department of the University of Georgia since 1995, where he now holds the Dooley professorship.

His current research focuses on cost-effective supplemental lighting technologies in greenhouses and vertical farms. He does so by studying plant physiological responses to different light intensities and spectra. The goal is to develop crop-specific, cost-effective lighting protocols. Past research focused on efficient irrigation and fertilization in the production of ornamental plants. He has published 120+ scientific papers and has given invited lectures about his research around the world, including in Italy, Spain, Taiwan, Kenya, Canada, Chile, and Brazil.

The SNA Board of Directors also honors individuals that have served this association and the nursery industry in various capacities throughout the years and have made outstanding contributions during their active participation in the Southern Nursery Association with honorary membership awards. This year, one deserving industry member has been selected to receive an SNA Honorary Member Award. He has, no doubt, made outstanding contributions to the association and the industry during his participation in the Southern Nursery Association.

This year's recipient of the **SNA Honorary Member Award** is William J. "Bill" Boyd, Owner of Flower City Nursery, McMinnville, TN. Bill purchased the business from his father Joe Boyd in 1988. The business is truly his lifeblood. He began his career in horticulture at a very young age helping out at the nursery. He has been attending nursery meetings and conventions since he was about nine years old and has since devoted a large part of his life to nursery associations.

Boyd served on the Middle Tennessee Nursery Association board from 1979 - 1984 and as president in 1983. From 1985 - 1998 he served for the Tennessee Nursery & Landscape Association (TNLA). In 1991, TNLA honored him with the Young Nurseryman of the Year Award. This same year, the Southern Nursery Association (SNA) awarded him the David E. Laird, Jr. Memorial Award. He served on the SNA Trade Show Committee in 1994 and served on the SNA board from 2001 - 2007, serving as president in 2006. Once again he came to the call of duty and served on the SNA board to fill a vacant spot from 2008 - 2014. Bill is the only person to serve on the SNA board for thirteen years. Bill gives unselfishly in other ways to the association. He has moved the SNA office three times and continued to serve on the trade show move-in committee through 2016. He received the Slater Wight Memorial Award in 2015, and most recently was inducted into the TNLA Hall of Fame (2017).

Boyd has served on the McMinnville-Warren County Chamber of Commerce as a board member from 1994 - 2000. He has served on the Warren County Planning Commission and the Warren County Fair Board. He has also served on the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Advisory Committee.

Bill is a member of the First United Methodist Church and has served on several committees. He is currently on his fifth term as Chairman of the Trustees.

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The Don Shadow Award of Excellence, named for the first recipient, Don O. Shadow, Shadow Nursery, Winchester, TN, is

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presented to an individual, corporation or organization that has provided exemplary service, leadership and generosity in the development, promotion and use of new and improved landscape plants. Recipients must demonstrate a sincere commitment to and passion for expanding knowledge and use of new and improved plants for the landscape. Nominations are accepted from attendees of the Southern Plant Conference and SNA Members. Nominees may be carried forward from one year to the next. Selection is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

The 2018 recipient of the **Don Shadow Award of Excellence** is Robert "Buddy" Lee, Transcend Nursery, Independence, LA. Robert 'Buddy' Lee and his wife Dixie live in Independence, Louisiana. They have two children, Ryan and his wife Lauren, Kelsey, and her husband Alan. They have been blessed with five wonderful grandchildren with another little one to arrive soon. Buddy is owner of Transcend Nursery in Louisiana and works closely with Plant Development Services, Inc. in Loxley, Alabama.

Buddy is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana; University of New York, Albany, New York, and the school of extremely hard knocks. Buddy contributes his steadfast work ethic, values and faith to his caring parents and siblings and also his large circle of extended family and friends.

Buddy's interest in plants began at an early age. He grew up on a dairy farm owned by his parents Robert and Maxine Lee. At age fifteen, he talked his father into letting him work summers and part time at Folsom Nursery owned by Price Magee. This nursery is where he 'cut his teeth' in many aspects of nursery industry. Local nursery owners, Price Magee, Howard Schillings H.D Loyd, Clarence Mizell and Buster Mizell were great industry role models that had a major influence on him in his early years in the horticulture industry.

In the early 1980's, Buddy started Savannah Spring Nursery in Folsom, Louisiana, a wholesale operation specializing in container production of evergreen azaleas and other of woody ornamentals. Encouraged by the enthusiasm and knowledge of other plants people such as Margie Jenkins, Don Shadow, Dr. John Thornton, Tom Todd, Bill Todd, Dr. John Creech and many others, Buddy vigorously pursued collecting unique and different plant species and cultivars, growing off populations of open and control pollinated seedlings and evaluating these seedlings for desirable landscape traits and environmental hardiness. Over the years and through the evaluation of many thousands of seedlings his work has resulted in 54 plant patents, numerous foreign plant breeders rights, and numerous U.S. plant trademarks. These new plant introductions include the very successful Encore® Azaleas and cultivars from several other genera that are featured in the Southern Living® Plant Collection and the Sunset Western Plant Collection®. Plant breeding, evaluation and selection work presently continues at Transcend Nursery in Louisiana.

Buddy gives numerous horticultural presentations each year to a wide range of audiences and is also an international speaker. He is active in many horticultural organizations and is past president of the Southern Region International Plant Propagators Society (Fellows Award), past president of the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association (Professional Achievement Award, James Foret Award), past president of the Azalea Society of America (Outstanding Achievement Award), and member of the Louisiana State Horticultural Society (Lifetime Member Award).

SNA believes industry members should be recognized for their distinguished talents, extraordinary service and life achievements. The SNA Awards Program is designed to recognize professionals who have demonstrated their commitment to the Southern Nursery Association and the industry through these annual awards. For a list of previous SNA award winners, visit the SNA website at www.sna.org.

Founded in 1899, the Southern Nursery Association is a non-profit trade association representing the horticultural industry in the southeastern U.S. SNA provides member services to wholesale growers, brokers, retailers, landscape contractors, landscape architects, grounds maintenance contractors, interiorscapers and allied suppliers. The SNA strives to unite and advance the horticulture industry through educational, research and marketing efforts.

Photos of all award winners can be found on the SNA website at www.sna.org/awards or www.sna.org/page-1863052. For more information on SNA, contact the Southern Nursery Association, Inc., PO Box 801454, Acworth, GA 30101, 678.809.9992, mail@sna.org, or visit the SNA website at www.sna.org.

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