

# Eight inducted into Hall of Fame



From left: Rod Parks, Joy Guidry, Doug and Jamie Zielinski, Rick Anderson (son of George Anderson), Allen Burden, Kathleen (Kathy) Polley, Charlie Burden (sons and dauter of Irene and Ray Burden, and Jan Barkley (grand-daughter of J. Frank Schmidt Sr.) PHOTO BY VIC PANICHKUL

BY VIC PANICHKUL

**E**IGHT INDIVIDUALS who were instrumental in the Oregon nursery industry were inducted into the Oregon Nurseries' Hall of Fame Class of 2024 on February 29, to the applause from about 100 attendees at the Abernethy Center in Oregon City.

"This event is special, not only because of the titans of the industry we induct into our Hall of Fame, and not just because of our master of ceremonies, my uncle Jim Simmitt, who will lead us through this evening, but it is special because of all of you," OAN President Amanda Staehely said. "There is no industry without you, and we celebrate tonight together as a nursery and greenhouse family."

"It is wonderful to see so many members here to share their love and admiration for those being honored tonight," OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone said.

The eight inductees joined 53 previous inductees. They included the following:

**George Anderson** (deceased) founded **Anderson Die and Manufacturing** on Macadam Avenue in southwest Portland, Oregon in 1954. Originally the firm was a custom die-maker and the manufacturer of various injection-molded plastic products. Only a few years after their founding, in 1957, the first Anderson nursery container — a 2-inch square pot with drainage holes — hit the market as their first plastic nurs-



ery pot.

George was a leader in the Oregon nursery industry's movement from growing in used food containers and tin cans to the reusable plastic containers of today. Anderson Die & Manufacturing was one of the first companies to offer plastic pots for growing and propagation in the Northwest. The ready availability of George's containers helped propel the growth of Oregon's nursery industry.

Growth in the nursery pot business led to a move to a new location off McLoughlin Avenue in Milwaukie, Oregon in 1965. Many additional plastic pot designs were soon in full production, and it wasn't long before Anderson Pots were known throughout the world.

With the growing concern about throw-away plastics going into landfills, Anderson's long-standing reputation for long field life and their pots' water saving

qualities, continues to be a valuable commodity in the nursery industry.

"Certain people introduce new product technologies that are transformative to the growth of an industry, and our first Hall of Fame inductee did just that," said Pete Brentano, who presented the award to Rick Anderson, George's son, who runs the business today.

"Dad was an innovator, not a businessman," Rick said.

**J. Frank Schmidt Sr.** (deceased) was among the pioneering nurserymen of east Multnomah County who made a name for Oregon-grown nursery stock by establishing East Coast markets early in the 20th century.

Born of German immigrant parents on May 21, 1888, John Frank Schmidt began his nursery career in the 1920s by growing plants for East Coast customers of Avery Steinmetz of Portland Wholesale Nursery. Located on Sandy Boulevard west of Fairview, J. Frank Schmidt Nursery quickly became known for top quality grafted Japanese maples, beech, dogwoods, and specialty conifers. In the late 1940s, Frank changed the name to Schmidt Ornamentals Nursery.

Throughout his nursery career, Frank maintained a close friendship and business relationship with Steinmetz (1991 OAN Hall of Fame) and sold most of his plants via this wholesale channel. He was an active member of the Portland Nursery Club and served as OAN President in 1938. ➤➤

---

## Hall of Fame

Frank and his wife Edna's four children followed their father's career path. Twin sons Dan and Don founded Schmidt Brothers Nursery. Don later established Don Schmidt Nursery, continued today by Frank's great-grandson, Eric Schmidt.

After Frank's death in 1968 at the age of 80, daughter Betty continued Schmidt Ornamentals under the Weedin Nursery name. Third-born son and namesake J. Frank Schmidt, Jr. founded **J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co.** in 1946.

"This family has created a dynasty of nurseries," said Kathy LeCompte, who presented the award to Jan Barkley, Frank's granddaughter.

"I'm proud to accept this honor on behalf of Grandpa," Barkley said. "I remember me and my cousins running around all over the place and Grandpa would just sit there at his table grafting his trees."

**Irene and Ray Burden** (both deceased) set the standard as pioneering leaders at the OAN.

Julia Hausch, co-owner of Roseway Nursery in Beaverton, was OAN's first woman president in 1948. She was inducted into the OAN Hall of Fame in 1993. Irene became the OAN's second woman president 31 years later, in 1979.

"Sometimes you need to break the glass ceiling twice," said Rod Park, owner of **Park's Nursery**.

As Irene Burden took the helm, the association was amid a battle to be considered part of agriculture. It was also dealing with subsequent high insurance costs. This sowed the seed for our long-standing relationship with the State Accident & Insurance Fund (SAIF).

Ray Burden, served as president in 1971, at a pivotal time for the OAN. The association had grown into the top five nursery groups in the nation but needed more progressive management to continue its pace with the rapidly increasing Oregon nursery industry. Ray was instrumental in transferring all management of the OAN at the time to the Agri-Business Council and new executive officers Jim Heater and Carl Hatfield. Jim and Shirley Heater would later be inducted into the

OAN Hall of Fame in 2006.

"Ray and Irene made an excellent team" said Staehley, who presented the award to their daughter, Kathleen (Kathy) Polly, and sons Allen and Charlie Burden. "Ray was the expansion visionary, and Irene was very prudent at keeping the nursery financially well balanced. Both enjoyed helping others."

"Mom and Dad didn't talk much about what they did," Polly said. "They led by example."

**Rod Park and Joy Guidry** became steadfast leaders in the nursery industry and their own community.

Harry and Rocky Park started what would be called Park's Nursery in 1947 and went into greenhouse production in 1950 in time for a freeze that hit the operation hard.

Rod has served the Oregon Board of Agriculture as its chairman and his 12 years of service at Metro shaped policy on land use and water and still resonate today. Rod was the Young Nursery Professional of the Year in 1986 and OAN president in 1991. He earned a plethora of other meaningful awards before being awarded the Clayton W. Hannon Distinguished Service Award in 2006. In 2018, he was inducted as an Honorary Life Member.

OAN Executive Director Jeff Stone presented the hall of fame honors to the Parks.

"Resilience is a hallmark of the Park family," Stone said. "In the 1960s the operation went into nursery production and the hook was set for the lives of Rod and his spouse Joy."

"Joy's humanity and high school teaching background (with two master's degrees) matched Rod's considerable intellect and nursery experience," he said.

Rod and Joy are both fighters and deflect public attention for their love for industry and the community. "Joy's battle with lymphoma is an inspiration to many and the number of nursery workers who had her in the classroom is legendary," Stone said. "Rod is respected for his ethics and strategic thinking. His warm personality made fertile ground for friendships in the industry. Service over self is a defining

characteristic for Rod and Joy."

"I look at this industry as self-regenerating," Rod said. We take care of each other and that's what makes us like family."

**Doug and Jamie Zielinski** are continuing to write the story of **Alpha Nursery**, already one for the ages.

Doug's father, Ernie, had taken over the Zielinski family farm when Doug was just 15 years old, after Doug's grandfather, Charlie, suddenly passed away.

The farm had never grown nursery crops, but Doug wanted to change that. He felt it would generate year-round work while diversifying revenue. So, he threw some gravel for containerized plants on a small portion of the family's prime farmland and asked three seasonal farm employees to help him start the nursery operation.

It was a humble beginning; with one greenhouse, a table for propagation and a single order of liners. That was it.

Doug's involvement is an inspiration: 1990 Young Nursery Person of Year; 1999 OAN President; 2002 Political Awareness Award; 2012 OAN Outstanding Service Award; 2018 Jamie & Doug — President's 5 Star Award; and 2021 Honorary Life Membership. Doug and Jamie are worthy inductees into the OAN Hall of Fame.

"Making a life in the industry was not Doug's best decision — it was marrying Jamie," said John Coulter, who presented the award to Doug. "The fact that Jamie is the lesser known Zielinski is fine with her. Make no mistake about it — she is the rock of the operation and makes the organization perform seamlessly. Without Jamie, Doug's success in the nursery world and community would not have been the same."

"I wouldn't be up here without help from a lot of people," Doug said. "First of all, it's about family and first and foremost it's Jamie. She's been with me 45 years through the whole thing. She's the rock. So thank you, Jamie." ☺

---

*Vic Panichkul is publications manager at the Oregon Association of Nurseries and managing editor and art director for Digger Magazine. Contact him at 503-582-2009 or [VPanichkul@OAN.org](mailto:VPanichkul@OAN.org)*