

# Workforce Development

Helping You To Meet Your Workforce Challenges

## Training the Next Generation:

# Two PMPA Members Selected for 2018 STEP Awards

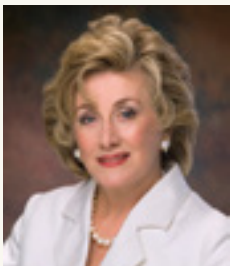
By Miles Free – Director of Industry Research and Technology

Two PMPA members were honored by the Manufacturing Institute's 2018 STEP Awards for excellence in manufacturing. The STEP Awards, part of the larger STEP Ahead Initiative, were launched to examine and promote the role of women in manufacturing. Nancy Peterson, chairman and CEO of Peterson Tool, and Joan Wrenn, co-owner, Hudson Precision Products, were this year's nominees by PMPA.

The STEP (Science, Technology, Engineering and Production) Awards recognize women who demonstrate excellence and leadership in their careers and represent all levels of the manufacturing industry from factory floor to the C-suite.

"These women are the faces of exciting careers in manufacturing," says Miles Free, director of industry research and technology for PMPA. "We chose to nominate these women because they each made significant achievements in manufacturing through positive impacts on their company and the industry as a whole. Not to mention the positive impact they have had on their communities."

Our nominees were both accepted by the STEP Awards, which recognizes their contributions, and is publicizing their achievements as a means to examine and promote the role of women in the manufacturing industry through recognition as a means to inspire, attract,



**Nancy Peterson,**  
Chairman and  
CEO at  
Peterson Tool  
Company Inc.

advance and retain strong female talent in manufacturing.

"Manufacturing brings innovative, functional products to life," Mrs. Peterson says. "I am passionate about that process and about the people who make their contribution at our facilities. Our people make the tools that permit other manufacturers to make the critical products that make a difference in all of our lives. I first fell in love with this industry working alongside my husband at Peterson Tool Co. and have cherished leading our company since his death in 1979."

Nancy's technical leadership and noteworthy accomplishments have had a profound impact on Peterson Tool Co. Following the untimely passing of her husband, Nancy was thrust into the top position of chairman and CEO and has since led the company to continued success. She was one of the first female business owners to win a small business administration loan, which she used to grow the sales of a revolutionary line of patented quick-change tools she launched in 1981. Driving increased precision capabilities and reduced downtime for tool change-over on multi-spindle machines, Nancy's work on the new toolholders earned her the Gold Micrometer Award from the PMPA.

In addition to making safety and wellness a priority among her team, Nancy has developed innovative ways to ensure talent retention. From leading campaigns to help individuals overcome alcohol and substance abuse, to connecting others with women's groups surrounding abuse and violence, Nancy's connected, committed and compassionate leadership has touched many. Outside of her company, Nancy is well known for her personal mentoring, which has earned her recognition from a number of state, national and international organizations. She has served as vice chair of the foundation for C200, as well as chaired the C200 scholarship auction, which raises millions of dollars for scholar-

ships for students. Likewise, Nancy served on the Aquinas College Board of Governors and the Mississippi University for Women's National Board of Distinguished Women.



**Joan Wrenn,**  
Co-Owner at  
Hudson  
Precision  
Products Co.

"Passion? Yes!  
Routine? Yes  
– enough to  
provide stabil-

ity to the processes, without strangling the creative responsiveness required to make our customers happy," Mrs. Wrenn says. "Our workers can take pride in producing a product you can hold and measure, providing a tangible experience of accomplishment. That's why we have 25- and 50-year clubs."

As a member of the executive board, vice president, president and corporate secretary, Joan's leadership has touched on almost every aspect of Hudson Precision Products Co. As one example, her leadership in quality and enterprise resource planning (ERP) shopfloor management systems has been essential to the growth of Hudson Precision. She personally served as management rep when Hudson aligned their quality systems to ISO 9000 and was involved with the review and documentation of all covered processes. Joan continues to be actively involved in the upgrading of quality systems, and she took the lead in implementing an ERP system and team within the company.

Joan has spent much of her career as an advocate and mentor to her employees. She's also advocated for manufacturing careers to local citizens regularly. For six years, Joan served as a member of the Chicago Workforce Board. She also

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## When Things Go Bad, Don't Ask Who, Ask ...

count for failing to follow a process where the inputs are not as spelled out and may not be relevant to the work being attempted.

### Was it Effective?

Just because there is a written process (and work instruction), doesn't mean that it is effective. What circumstances have changed since the process was first laid out. What has changed? In addition to changing inputs and tools, could it be that the outputs desired were not appropriate to the process as defined? Trying to hold too fine a tolerance, or take too heavy a cut? Changing expected outputs without reviewing the entire process including inputs such as job specifications, work instructions, time allotted, tools or other resources is not likely to work out well.

### Is There a Process? Was it Followed? Was it Effective?

These are the questions to ask when an unexpected event occurs in your shop. The question "who?" is not appropriate until after asking and answering these three queries. In my experience, after considering these three questions, it is generally not necessary to ask "who?" The "who" is the performer, the one that brought their capacity and knowledge and skill to do their best with the inputs that we gave them. They created the outputs that reflected the real state of our system. The performer is only one aspect of our system of providing products to our customers.

Is there a process? Is it effective? Is it being followed? These are the three questions you can use to audit your shop right now to see if you have a significant emotional event in the making.

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served on the Chicago Renaissance Council, the Chicago Public Schools for Manufacturing Advisory Council and several other prestigious organizations. She is a long-standing advocate for manufacturing in the community and has shared her experiences often to help make a difference and educate about the opportunities available.

The stories of Nancy and Joan are both inspiring in their accomplishment as well as instructional as to how they truly made a difference throughout their careers in manufacturing. Our industry is better for their involvement and the differences they have helped to lead.

Their stories make it clear that there is plenty of need for strong talent, regardless of gender, in our precision manu-

facturing shops today. They have had an important part in helping their companies improve technologies, systems and processes while helping their people to upskill and adapt. Today, 82 percent of manufacturers report that they cannot find the skilled workers they need. With women making up 50 percent of the workforce, but only 25 percent of the manufacturing workforce, the STEP Awards show the contributions that women can and do make in manufacturing.

Manufacturing makes a difference in the economy, and these women make a difference in manufacturing. Every dollar of final sales in manufactured products supports \$1.89 in output from other sectors, the largest economic multiplier of any sector.

## Why Join PMPA? GROW!

To grow and profit today, you have to work smarter. You have to relentlessly eliminate waste. PMPA is the way to expand your knowledge and increase your capabilities in order to grow your business. Through daily interaction with PMPA staff members, you have access to our expertise on important issues. You're also able to tap the collective knowledge of your peers: those who have "been there" and "done that."

Through the meetings, resources and online connections, reports and more, we give you the tools to grow. We look at emerging markets and let you know what's hot and what's not. PMPA programs help you understand your markets so you can make sense of the issues. And we provide relevant information to help you make informed decisions.