



Paul N. McCracken

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In 1998, the North American Wholesale Lumber Association (NAWLA) gave Paul McCracken the industry's highest honor, the John J. Mulrooney Memorial Award. At the ceremony, the presenter said, "The NAWLA Mulrooney Award is intended to be given with inspiration to those persons, generally and most often in the industry, who have contributed mightily to it, with all of the industry's decency and idealism. Mr. Paul McCracken exemplifies this definition."

The Early Years

Paul was born on June 29, 1928 in Dallas, Oregon to Paul N. and Grace Williams McCracken. He was the oldest of three boys. His father was a businessman and his mother was a school-teacher. Paul was raised in Lebanon, Oregon. After graduation from Lebanon High School in 1945, he set off to the University of Oregon to study economics. Upon graduation in 1949, Paul elected to enter the forest products industry with the Willamette National Lumber Co. in Foster, Oregon. He left the mill in July of 1950 because a strike had been declared and an August wedding to Sally Moore was on the schedule. Paul needed to find a job. Many years later, when he became a Director on the Board of Willamette Industries, Paul commented that he was back with the same company he had started with in the lumber business—from the mill to the boardroom.

Paul and Sally did marry in August 1950 and have three children, John, Mary, and Peter. Paul found a position in Portland with Georgia Pacific, which was new to the area. After a few months, Georgia Pacific decided they could not afford the \$275.00 a month they were paying him, which was bad news for the newlyweds but ultimately led to the birth of Tumac Lumber Company and Paul's partnership with Bill McPherson.

Contributions to the Industry

Bill McPherson ran the Portland office for Hallinan-Mackin Lumber of San Francisco. He hired Paul in 1951 as the other person in a two-man office. A wonderful working relationship developed between Paul and Bill and deepened when, in 1959, the two Macs founded Tumac Lumber Company. Tumac is a wholesale distributor and importer/exporter of lumber and wood products. The company's sales and marketing efforts are directed towards industrial users such as furniture manufacturers, the manufactured housing industry, recreational vehicle manufacturers, kitchen cabinet makers, manufacturers of moldings and millwork, pulp and paper mills, power and telecommunications utilities, and other industrial users of wood products.

In that first year of business, Tumac reported sales of \$1.3 million dollars and a profit. Under Paul's leadership and guidance, Tumac has grown to a business with sales in excess of \$350 million, 170 employees, distribution yards in Oregon, California and Colorado, nine offices in the U.S. and Mexico and agents in several foreign countries. These results would not have been achieved without Paul's passion for the forest products industry and the role played by wholesalers. Paul has proved to both suppliers and customers the vital role that wholesalers play in the distribution channel.

While building a business, Paul found time to support his industry. Tumac became a NAWLA member in that first year of business. Paul became active in the Association, first as a member of the Executive Committee in 1976, and then as Second Vice President, First Vice President, and in 1981, he was elected President. Locally, the Portland Wholesale Lumber Association elected Paul Lumberman of the Year in 1999.

Paul's contributions to the forest products industry have been of an international nature through his tenure as a longtime member of the Board of Directors of the World Forestry Center. He served four years as Chairman of the Executive Committee. This participation has provided the opportunity to visit and observe forestry practices worldwide. During his years on the Board, Paul has been a powerful advocate for building strong local, national, and international education programs at the World Forestry Center. And he has taken a particular interest in the development of Magness Memorial Tree Farm.

As fellow board member John Hampton says, "Paul's active leadership during the time of the World Forestry Center's most dynamic growth helped to secure the support and confidence of those less accommodating to change. His intellect, combined with a genuine and selfless interest in the World Forestry Center, has resulted in careful analysis and solid decision making."

Paul's management, leadership and people skills have also benefited companies other than Tumac. He has also served on the board of directors of Lone Star Plywood and Door and as Chairman of the Disdero Lumber Company. For many years he was a Director of Willamette Industries and served on their Executive Committee. Bill Swindells, Chairman of the Board of Willamette Industries, says, "Paul McCracken has been an outstanding member of Willamette Industries' Board of Directors. His energy, enthusiasm and extensive business experience have combined to make him invaluable as a supporter, advisor and friend to the management of the company and to me personally."

Contributions to the Community

Church, flag and country have played important roles in Paul's life. As a young father, he was an active teacher at the church school. His involvement in scouting began as a boy and when his sons got involved, Paul became a troop committee chairman to support their activities. Both sons, John and Peter, became Eagle Scouts. Paul's scout leadership actually had a direct affect on Tumac. Three of his young Eagle Scouts grew up to be key associates at Tumac and are now running the company.

Paul was just young enough to have missed service in World War II, but upon graduation in 1949, he was commissioned a second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve. Paul served proudly for 29 years, retiring in 1978 with the rank of Colonel.

Contributions to Salmon Restoration

Paul is an accomplished and skilled fisherman. His interest in fishing began in the early 1960s and resulted in the purchase of property on the North Fork of the Nehalem River in western Oregon. It just so happened that this area had the best steelhead drift on the entire river. One purchase led to another and today Paul personally manages a tree farm of more than 1400 acres. When he got started, Paul was determined to combine intensive silviculture practices with a serious commitment to fish and

wildlife. He was trying to find a fit for small woodlands owners between flourishing fisheries and forestry-by-the-book. "I'd consider the whole effort to be a failure if it was not commercially successful," he said.

The hope of commercial success seemed meager at first. Early century logging practices had severely scoured the land, resulting in thick brush fields and poorly stocked stands of trees. In addition, many of the land's watercourses had also been severely degraded over the years. With advice from the Oregon Departments of Forestry and Fish and Wildlife, McCracken tackled the poorer sites first. To his surprise, he made profits on the first thinnings, profits that covered his site preparation and planting costs. He also experimented by planting grass in newly planted stands and creating clusters of trees along stream banks. Bolstered by his early successes, Paul became more deeply involved in searching for unique management methods. "From the first time on, the overriding ideal on my forest land has been to determine and demonstrate the compatibility of forestry with active management for fish and wildlife," he said.

Now coho salmon and steelhead are returning to McCracken's streams, while Douglas fir, cedar, and spruce poke up in sites once dominated by brush. For his efforts, stewardship and contributions, Paul was acknowledged as the 1994 Land-owner of the Year by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commissioners (ODF&W). In 1996, Paul was appointed as a member of the Commission and in 1999 he became its chairman. He is also a member of the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation Board (OWHF).

Paul's influence in salmon recovery efforts goes far beyond the boundaries of his own land. As an OWHF board member, Paul was instrumental in creating the North Coast Salmonid Restoration Project as a cooperative effort by OWHF, ODF&W, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Oregon Restoration Enhancement Program, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Cavenham Forest Industries, Hampton Tree Farms, Boise Cascade Corporation, Willamette Industries, Stimson Lumber Company, and Simpson Timber Company. The project identified 63 sites on private land between the Nestucca River and Seaside where there was a need for restoration of winter rearing habitat. Since 1995, more than 83 restoration projects have been completed and the North Coast Project is now being replicated in the mid-coast, south coast, and Willamette east areas -- all because of the vision of Paul McCracken. Paul and OWHF received the American Forest & Paper Association's 2000 Outstanding Industry Cooperator-Wildlife Stewardship Award for their work on this project.

Paul is now retired from the Willamette Board and as Chairman of Tumac. His legacy within the forest products industry and as a conservation-minded representative of the industry is secure. However, it is easy for Paul to name as his top achievement his 52 years of marriage to Sally and his three children, nine grandchildren, and three (so far) great-grandchildren. What a legacy indeed.

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