



# Interiorscape Hall of Fame



## Linnaea Rose Newman 2001 Allied Trade Professional

Linnaea was born in Milwaukee, WI on September 23, 1953, the youngest of four children. Her father was a machinist and her mother was a homemaker with an avid interest in horticulture. Linnaea is named for her mother's two favorite plants, *Linnaea borealis*, or "Twinflower" and *Rosa carolina*, the "Wild Rose."

Linnaea's siblings all followed a military path, as both brothers entered the Air Force after high school, Tom retired as a Major, Dan went on to work for the F.A.A., and her older sister, Tana, married a career Army man. Linnaea, as always, followed a different path.

Painfully shy were the two words that best described Linnaea throughout her school years. As a result, she joined the newly formed Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) which provided career training through a half day of classroom instruction, followed by a half day of on-the-job training in the workplace. The only training she was doing at this point involved dogs and horses.

With Katherine, her mom, as role model, Linnaea worked three jobs to pay her way through the University of Wisconsin-Madison - one of which was working in the University greenhouses. Yearning to travel, Linnaea took a semester off during her sophomore year, and hitchhiked around the entire country by herself. Linnaea then returned to school and switched her major from English to Horticulture.

Linnaea's first job after college was with Schroeder's Greenhouses in Green Bay, WI. During her final two years of college, Linnaea spoke with two representatives of Tropical Plant Rentals, each telling of opportunities in Interior Landscaping, which to her seemed unappealing. As fate would have it, some of Schroeder's retail customers were demanding maintenance services on plants in their homes and offices, so as the new kid on the block, maintenance became part of Linnaea's responsibilities, in addition to growing potted and cut flowers for the retail store. Having no clue how interior plantscaping was done, each job became an adventure of creativity and innovation. Watering was done with a five-gallon bucket (the original "splash and dash" technique), or by installing drip irrigation lines that could be individually adjusted according to the light levels of the plants. Again, Tropical Plant Rentals entered Linnaea's life. They arrived in Green Bay to install a newly enclosed mall, and stored their plants at Schroeder's Greenhouses. Curious to see how the twenty foot tall ficus trees were going to be picked up and placed into their individual pots, Linnaea went to observe, and wound up assisting with the installation. Myth has it that she was hired on the spot when she swung a 50-pound winch overhead with one arm, but the truth was, it merely won her an interview.

In the summer of 1978 Linnaea noticed that plants kept getting replaced due to inconsistent watering, and lack of insect control and pruning. Thinking that someone should address this problem with education and training, Linnaea headed for Gerry Leider with her idea. When Linnaea mentioned training, he replied, "Do it! Write something up, and bring it to me." Linnaea was now in charge of Special Services. The job was to keep the plants in the field, looking better, for a longer period of time.

This was the birth of Tropical Plant Rental's training program. Not only did she write the training manual, she was then put in charge of presenting it, and she was back in the grips of her greatest fear, public speaking.

Linnaea's first formal presentation to the Professional Interior Plantscape Association in Cincinnati, in conjunction with ALCA was in 1981. In 1983 Linnaea developed the original ALCA Technician Training Program. So began her world traveling and training as she spoke at every interior plantscaping association in this country, then on to Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Costa Rica and Mexico.

Linnaea also donated countless hours to give back to the industry that developed her talents. Linnaea served on the Interior Plantscape Short Course Planning Committee for the Ohio Florist's Association (OFA), for 12 years earning an award for recruiting the most new members in a year, and also serving as a Director of the Board of OFA for three years.

Linnaea passed the first Certification Exam given by the National Counsel for Interior Horticultural Certification (NCIHC) in 1983, then became a Governor of the Board and helped rewrite the next two exams to make them more applicable to our industry. She served on the NCIHC Board, filling the Vice-Chairperson and finally the Chairperson position. Linnaea served on ALCA's education committee, and continues to assist ALCA in their most recent rewrite of the certification exam, as well as developing and teaching a one-day review course for technician certification.

1985 brought recognition as Linnaea was elected as a member of the Outstanding Young Women of America and by 1989 was listed in Who's Who in the World. 1989 brought big changes. After 10 years with Tropical Plant Rentals Linnaea went out on her own to become the best-known professional trainer and consultant to the interiorscape industry.

Linnaea traveled to South Africa for a six city training series in 1991. Training non-English speaking workers unlocked the door of results-oriented training for Linnaea. When there is no common language, people naturally revert to show-and-tell, head movements and hand gestures. Linnaea added non-verbal training to her training, and began asking the question, "What's in it for them?"

Linnaea taught our entire industry correct pruning techniques for indoor trees, and in 1995 received an ALCA Environmental Improvement Award at JC Penney Headquarters for using pruning techniques to save 200 ficus trees from being cut down.

Linnaea 'the writer' is also well known for her training articles in Interiorscape Magazine, this being the best way to get information to the greatest number of people.

As a consultant to mall owners she is the liaison between the owner and plantscaper. This facet led Linnaea to help in the design of a soil mix that eliminates soil compacting, fungus gnat problems and mushrooms.

Recently, Linnaea earned her Feng Shui teaching credentials. It is the easiest way she's ever found to convince clients to enhance their professional and private spaces with plants. When asked how she defines her mission in life, Linnaea quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To leave the world a better place, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition, to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded".

