

An early PLCAA board meets, circa 1980.



# PLCAA met a growing need

*PLCAA was formed by a band of eager industry professionals to meet the needs of a growing number of lawn care operators.*

**O**n June 14, 1979 a small gathering of lawn care businessmen met at the Cincinnati-South Holiday Inn, and decided to form an association, and agreed on "Professional Lawn Care Association" as a working name for the group. They raised nearly \$15,000, appointed pro-tem officers and hired a management company to put it all together.

**First show in 1980**

The first PLCAA convention and trade show was held November 12-14, 1980, at the Commonwealth Convention Center in Louisville, Ky. Attendance was about 700 lawn care businessmen, which told the board members that their decision to emphasize business management topics at the show had been a good one.

From 1979 to 1989, PLCAA jumped out front with education programs, an annual conference and show, and legislative activities. PLCAA quickly established itself as the "voice of the lawn care industry."



The Association stabilized its finances and created a surplus budget under Ann McClure's management as executive vice president. Membership grew from 978 companies in 1990 to 1,200 by 1997 when she left PLCAA to join another association.

**Green Industry Expo**

The Green Industry Expo, a first-time venture based on the cooperation of PLCAA, Professional Grounds Management Society and Associated Landscape Contractors of America. In its 1990 debut, GIE attendance topped 2,000, attracted more than 250 exhibitors and sold 54,200 square feet of exhibit space. 3,000 attended in

From its inception in 1990, PLCAA has managed the trade show and in 1994 hired Eleanor Ellison as its trade show manager.

**Government affairs**

In the early 1990s the lawn care industry was the focus of intense media and congressional scrutiny. The future of the industry was at stake as Congress investigated the use, regulation and potential health risks of lawn chemicals, and the advertising and safety claims made by the lawn care industry. Government affairs director Tom Delaney and Ann McClure testified in two Senate Subcommittee lawn



**Delaney: monitors legislation for fairness.**

care hearings in 1990 and 1991.

The Association stressed the environmental importance of a well-maintained turf and the necessary role played by lawn care professionals.

Delaney continues to monitor national, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances. Through PLCAA, he's always available to advise members battling unfair pesticide and business regulations in their communities.

PLCAA continues to grow and educate the industry about professional practices, issues management and environmental stewardship, as well as inform the public, media, government agencies and political leaders about the benefits of turf.

"As we approach the millennium," says Delaney, "PLCAA will play a vital role in continuing to educate a maturing industry about new products and technologies, and the importance of environmentally sound lawn and landscape practices. Industry professionals are ambassadors. They must be active members practicing grassroots politics and using the information PLCAA provides to inform their customers and communities about the benefits of turf and professional practices."

—From "PLCAA: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow;" additional history by Karen Weber, PLCAA director of communications.