



Pam Berrios

secretary of the National Hispanic Landscape Association board of directors, owner of Alexandria Lawn Service, Alexandria, Va.



Who is your mentor? It's been a lot of people. My total years in business have been 17 years. Six years ago, I bought my partner out. I knew everything on the back end as far as the billing and customer service, but I didn't know anything about the field, (so) my mentors became the crew members I have. I went outdoors to see what they do on a day-to-day basis.

What led to your involvement with the National Hispanic Landscape Association (NHLA)? My brother Raul Berrios,

who is the current president, is a founding member. He's been extremely involved in the NHLA and he got me involved as well.

As a woman in the Green Industry, how do you get a leg up on your male competitors? (Being a woman) has its advantages and disadvantages. A lot of times, because of personality and being a woman, it will open doors for me and I'll be able to quell difficult clients. On the other hand, when you're dealing with suppliers and vendors and people who are used to dealing with a hundred males a day, when you walk in it's like "OK, what is she doing here?" I just take it as a challenge. It's been really rewarding to set foot in the industry as a female business owner.



You're also a real estate agent. Does that profession cross paths with the Green Industry? I started being a real estate agent 10 years ago, looking for my own home to buy and then people started looking for me. It was right at the boom of the real estate industry. My clients knew I had my real estate license and they started saying, "You service our lawn and, at the same time, you can list our home for sale." Throughout the years, it's something I've been able to keep side by side. It's worked out perfect.

What do you expect to be the main initiatives and topics of discussion in 2014 for the NHLA? We're dealing a lot with immigration reform. There are a lot of questions about that in the industry. (But) our biggest campaign is getting people to the GIE+EXPO. When I went three years ago, for the first time, most of the people I saw were American business owners. We know for a fact there are thousands of Hispanic business owners and they're not aware yet of the GIE, that there's training courses, resources for us to use. We're trying to build awareness to those types of events. We want people to go there.

OFF THE CLOCK

WHO MAKES UP YOUR FAMILY? I'm a single mom of three teenagers. A lot of my spare time is spent with them. They're wonderful kids.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST INDULGENCE? Volleyball. I love to play. I even coach kids. I steal time from work to sometimes get lost there.



DO YOU HAVE A DREAM VACATION SPOT? I would like to go to Paris.



WHAT TV SHOW DO YOU HAVE TO TUNE INTO EVERY WEEK? The only thing I watch is the serial killer show "Dexter."

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN YOUR CURRENT CAREER? Between the Green Industry and real estate, I wouldn't have it any other way.

