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For Immediate Release

The ONLA Announces 2015 ONLA Educator and Public Service Award

January 20, 2015 -- Westerville, Ohio -- The Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association (ONLA) is pleased to announce the 2015 Educator and Public Service Award Recipient, Denny McKeown. The award was presented during the Central Environmental Trade Show (CENTS) at the ONLA Luncheon & Business Meeting held January 7, 2015 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio.

Denny's first love of gardening began at age 5 when his parents bought a new house and had it landscaped. The landscapers let Denny dig holes and ride in the truck. He attributes the majority of his success in this industry to one person, Mr. Mert Natorp. Mr. Natorp believed in him and provided him with the opportunity to work in many positions in the Natorp Company. Working for the Natorp Company meant he was afforded the opportunity to work with the best and the brightest in the Green Industry.

In 1981 a local radio station called him about a new concept in AM radio. They were going to introduce an all talk radio format and would he be interested in filling a Saturday morning time slot. He jumped at the opportunity. Radio listeners discovered his personality, willingness to listen and more importantly to help them solve their gardening problems was outstanding.

With the radio show in high gear he was approached by a publisher in 1985 and he wrote a book "Denny McKeown's Complete Guild to Midwest Gardens." Followed in 2000, by the "Gardening Book for Ohio" he also wrote a complementary book for Kentucky. In 1992, he filled another lifelong dream when he started Bloomin Garden Centre and Denny McKeown Landscape.

He has also worked with many TV stations as well as other media outlets in the Tri-State and on a national basis. He still writes a weekly column for the Cincinnati Enquirer as well as a weekly email blast. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Bob Hope House in Cincinnati, the Jaycee's in Cincinnati, and Denny was instrumental in the first haunted house in the United States which was in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Denny was elected a Sycamore Township Trustee. His commitment to the horticulture industry goes far beyond Ohio. He was very active in the American Nursery and Landscape Association (now American Hort.)

Today, he is still involved with the business he started, which is being run by his son Chris. He also has two daughters, and 7 grandchildren.

The ONLA Educator & Public Service Award recognizes outstanding educators and/or public service employees. Candidates are those who have given their time and/or talents to benefit the Green Industry in one or more of the following ways: outstanding classroom teachers who have also served the adult community through outreach programs; researchers who have worked in areas of major industry needs; extension personnel who have consistently taken an active role in Green Industry activities; garden writers and radio and television personnel who have been complimentary to the objectives of the industry; government employees who have assisted the industry in preventing or solving potential problems, and arboreta and botanic garden employees who have served the industry in a variety of ways.

The ONLA's annual convention, the Central Environmental Nursery Trade Show (CENTS), is scheduled for January 13-15, 2016, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus. The trade show is open to persons in the nursery and landscape industry.

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About ONLA

The Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association (ONLA) leads, promotes and facilitates the success and growth of green industry businesses. ONLA is a non-profit trade association, incorporated in the State of Ohio, representing the interests of the state's nursery, garden center and landscape industry. Membership is comprised of nursery stock growers, landscape contractors and maintenance firms, garden centers, arborists and allied suppliers. With over 1,300 members, ONLA seeks to enhance the environment and quality of life for all.