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**Faye Westfall named to SEPC board of governors**

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The [Southeast Produce Council](#) has named Faye Westfall, a longtime member of the fresh produce industry who has been directly involved with the council since its earliest days, to the SEPC board of governors.

She joins BOG Chairman Bobby Creel of L&M Cos. Inc., along with Garry Bergstrom (retired) of Publix Supermarkets, Mark Daniels of the Idaho Potato Commission, Gordon Hochberg of *The Produce News*, Andrew Scott of Nickey Gregory Co. and John Shuman of Shuman Farms. Al Finch of Florida Classic Growers had served as a governor until his death on June 21, 2022. Westfall officially joined the board of governors in September 2022.

"Faye is our biggest cheerleader," said David Sherrod, the council's president and chief executive officer. "She carries the SEPC banner wherever she goes. She seldom misses any event that we are involved with, and she is a mentor to so many of our younger members."

He added, "She is a remarkable woman who has worked hard so the younger generation doesn't have to struggle as much as she did in our industry. She leads by being a servant and a light for others to follow. I am always amazed at her tireless dedication to the SEPC and the people she loves."

Faye Westfall was born in Tampa, FL, and was raised in nearby Ruskin, FL. She graduated from East Bay High School in Gibsonton, FL, in 1964. As a teenager, she worked with her parents at Ruskin Packaging, "a company that was way ahead of its time with bagged salad, coleslaw and various greens," she said. That company later became Crews and Garcia.

After high school, she got married and moved to Rising Sun, MD, for about two-and-a-half years.

But the Sunshine State continued to exert a strong influence. "So I went back to my roots in Ruskin," she said. "I was in the trucking business for many years, hauling produce of course."

She worked at Stake Tomatoes in Ruskin, which is now DiMare Ruskin. After that, she worked for many years at J.C. Valenti Co., a tomato repack facility. That company "was purchased by Paul DiMare in 1991, and of course I stayed with DiMare," she stated. "I truly enjoyed all my years at DiMare, and they are like family to me. I always appreciated the time they allowed me to devote to SEPC and their involvement in the council as well."

In March 2020, she joined Southeast Produce Weekly as vice president, and she is also involved in the "Where the Food Comes From" television program.

She has four children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, and proudly declared, "My family is my world."

Westfall began serving on the Southeast Produce Council's board of directors in 2010, culminating in 2017-18 when she led that board as president (now called chairman).

She was instrumental in building the Southeast Training & Education Program for Upcoming Produce

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Professionals program into one of the council's premier and valuable programs. And out of respect and admiration for her ongoing dedication to the STEP-UPP program, the SEPC website lists her as "den mother."

She currently serves on five SEPC committees: Attendance Committee; Society of St. Andrew Committee; Paul Anderson Youth Home Committee; Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Committee; and, of course, STEP-UPP Committee.

BOG Chairman Creel has known Westfall for many years. "When you start thinking about what Faye's attributes are, there are many. And they're very broad," he said. "First, Faye is a giving and caring person. She has gained a lot of wisdom over the years. I'm pleased to have her serve on the board of governors. I'm sure she will apply that well-earned wisdom by providing guidance to the Southeast Produce Council."

He added, "She's been a leader in the produce business for a long time, and has served very faithfully at the SEPC. She spearheaded the STEP-UPP program, and continues to serve as a mom and mentor to many who came through that program."

He continued, "Faye will drop anything she's doing if she's needed somewhere, whether it's to drive hundreds of miles to volunteer for an SEPC event or to be involved with her church" or something else.

"I think Faye will be a good governor," he concluded. "She'll probably be a little quiet in the beginning, but she's got a lot to add, she has a lot to share and she is absolutely committed to the success of the Southeast Produce Council."

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