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Eleanor Bullock passes down her coordinator crown

By

Maggie Hanna

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While every National Watermelon Queen's reign must come to an end after a year, Eleanor Bullock has managed to keep her title as the NWA Promotions Coordinator for nearly 40 years, and while she's truly cherished the relationships she's built and memories she's made, alas it is finally time to pass down her coordinator crown.

Bullock will be retiring after the upcoming 2023 [National Watermelon Convention](#), taking place Feb. 22-26 at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, NC.

"The thing I've enjoyed the most about my time as promotions coordinator is the relationships I've formed with all of the girls," Bullock shared with ***The Produce News***. "I've been the coordinator for 37 national queens and three Georgia queens."

As part of her duties as promotions coordinator, Bullock helps to set up the promotions and secure all the travel arrangements for the current Watermelon Queen, as well as put together the program for the national convention and assemble video presentations and scrapbooks of the Queen's year.

"In the old days, we did scrapbooks but now we do a digital kind," she noted. "Everything has changed so much over the years, including the marketing and varieties. When I first started, some watermelon was even delivered by rail and there were no bins."

The most rewarding part about her job, Bullock noted, is the relationships she's formed with her past and present titleholders.

"I stay in touch with them and a few years ago we had a reunion down at Amelia Island," she said. "A lot of the young ladies have stayed in the business."

Bullock noted that the National Watermelon Queen Program is not so much of a beauty pageant as it is a PR job. "Seventy percent of their score comes from communication skills," she said. Those communication skills are judged during the interview phase of competition, as well as a written, impromptu, evening gown and promotional wear phases of competition.

"It's such a growing experience," Bullock added. "A lot of the winners go on to get job offers in the industry and that's worked out well for a lot of them."

Considering all the time Bullock gets to spend with the contestants and titleholders, it's no surprise that she said the thing she'll miss the most about her job is the people.

"I will miss the people, it really is like family," she shared. "It's kind of like you become a second mother... you're their companion, you set everything up, you travel with them."

“I’ve enjoyed every year and every one of the girls,” she continued. “We have wonderful state coordinators and we all work well together. It’s the cream of the crop as far as I’m concerned.”

As for the legacy she hopes to leave behind, Bullock said she’d like to be remembered as someone that loved the industry, its people and this program.

“I hope I’ve made a positive contribution in the success of this Watermelon Promotion Program,” she shared. “I also hope I have been a positive influence on the lives of the 40 young ladies I’ve had the privilege of working with.”

Bullock said that Kerri Wiggins from Texas will be her successor as NWA Promotions Coordinator, adding that she will do a “fantastic job.”

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