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## The ELITE Awards



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## Sibelius is ALCC's Garvey Person of the Year



Photo courtesy Troy Sibelius

Troy Sibelius

What a year it was in 2020, the year for which Troy Sibelius is being honored with the John Garvey Person of the Year Award for his invaluable contributions to ALCC and its members. This award recognizes someone who goes the extra mile to serve others. Sibelius provided consistent guidance regarding insurance implications as we entered the pandemic. He wrote some articles related to COVID-19 challenges that ALCC shared on its resource page, and he made himself available to answer questions and help ALCC and members figure out how to safely navigate business while keeping employees and our communities safe. His commitment to service was also recognized in 2009 when he received ALCC's Stan Brown Award for distinguished service as an associate member.

Though we know Sibelius for his knowledge and expertise in the insurance industry, he studied environmental design at the University of Colorado, Boulder and obtained a degree in landscape architecture from Colorado State University. Since 1995 he has been an active member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and was selected as a Fellow in 2010. He has been an ALCC member since 1998.

Since 1995 he has also been an active member of Professional Independent Insurance Agents of Colorado, which honored him with Person of the Year this year. Sibelius pioneered a nationwide insurance program targeting landscape architects. He has continued to elevate his knowledge and credentials in the insurance industry with a focus on education, and applied the same passion for education to ALCC. He served as the founding board member chair of the ALCC Education Foundation in 2007.

Sibelius was born and raised in Denver. His family owns a ranch in Kremmling, where they spend many weekends enjoying outdoor activities.

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## Kim Douglas receives Stan Brown Award

The Stanley Brown Associate Member Distinguished Service Award is presented to an individual associate member who has helped make the industry more professional, is known for outstanding service and the contribution of ideas, programs and/or educational endeavors, and has been a loyal supporter of ALCC and Colorado's landscape industry. Kim Douglas of AEC Consultant Group received this year's award.

Douglas has always loved building and designing, and has a strong affection for the outdoors, which made landscape architecture her major at Iowa State University. After graduating, she moved to Colorado to start her career. She practiced as a landscape architect for 15 years on urban design projects and served a term as the Colorado ASLA president. In 2018, her passion for the industry hadn't changed, but her path within it did. She founded her marketing consulting firm, AEC Consultant Group—a rebrand of Rarity Consultants, the original name—and joined ALCC as an associate member. She feels her background as a landscape architect gives her unique problem-solving abilities. She understands the industry and since joining ALCC she has been a consistent resource for members. Douglas has helped clients solve branding issues, offered lunch-and-learns and other special events, written articles for *Colorado Green* magazine and *Colorado Green Now*, and has been a reliable presence at networking events. When she made the move back to Iowa during the pandemic, her business pivoted to online communications. She began offering Zoom meetings and webinars to not only stay connected to clients, but help clients stay connected to others during times of limited social contact.

Based on lessons learned from her business and her desire to serve, Douglas's tenet is: "Share your knowledge with everyone. Those who need your help will find you." When she is not working, she spends time with her extended family and explores nearby states and sites.



Photo courtesy Kim Douglas

Kim Douglas

## Chuy Medrano earns Lifetime Achievement Award



Photo courtesy: CoCal Landscape

Jesus 'Chuy' Medrano

The 2021 Bob Cannon Award Lifetime Achievement Award recipient was Jesus 'Chuy' Medrano, honoring his commitment and contribution to the landscape industry and ALCC, and to improving the professional image of the industry.

Medrano has long been recognized as a leader. Since the 1980s, he has been a tireless advocate for the landscape industry at the local, state and national levels. He was named to NALP's 2017 Leadership Class during the GIE+EXPO, an honor that recognizes individuals who "work hard to empower their colleagues and the industry to grow and succeed."

Medrano has been a public face of the Colorado landscape industry, sharing his company's story with the media, and answering consumer questions as volunteer with ALCC's Garden Line 9 project.

Beyond ALCC, he helped found the National Hispanic Landscape Alliance (NHLA). Nationally, Medrano has helped promote careers in the landscape industry and sheds light on the challenges the green industry faces. His struggles with the labor shortage were profiled in 2017 by *The Washington Post*.

Through CoCal, Medrano supports the future of the industry, encouraging his team to participate in the Landscape Career Pathways program and to visit local schools to help young people learn about career opportunities.

Medrano has mentored his children to become leaders as well. Mari Medrano Mejia is a leader of NALP's Latino Landscape Network (formerly NHLA). Sons Jody and Carlos complete "Team Medrano" and are leading the company with their father.

In the nearly three decades since Medrano co-founded CoCal Landscape—but later bought out his partner—it is clear that people are his priority. These 'people' include employees, customers, vendors, temporary workers and communities.

According to Medrano, the CoCal team has always believed in helping the community and others in need, whether in the neighborhood or across the border in Mexico. He once admitted to *Colorado Green*, "People are my thing. I care about relationships."

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## Jessi Burg receives Outlook Award

The Outlook Award for Emerging Leaders honors "up and comers" in the landscape industry and ALCC, who are not yet 40 years old and have made a significant contribution to the industry, their company and/or ALCC in a volunteer or leadership capacity.

This year's recipient, Jessi Burg, is passionate about sustainability and enthusiastic about educating clients. Burg had a busy year in 2020. In the first half, she was running Pears to Perennials, a full-service sustainable landscape company she founded in 2017. Later in the year, she sold her successful company to follow her passion for educating new business owners in trades and services. Her new venture, Outgrow Your Garage, fills the gap in business development support for small, recently formed companies. Having founded her landscape company just four years ago, Burg is familiar with the challenges and obstacles for startups and is certain she has something to offer. Outgrow Your Garage will help people build their businesses and grow their client base using short 20-minutes-at-a-time, bite-size, online learning chunks and offer coworking sessions.

At Pears to Perennials, Burg created a hiring process for seasonal workers—adding 8-11 jobs each year—that led to zero staff turnover. The company also diverted many tons of compostable waste from landfills. She actively advocates for trades and seasonal workers through ALCC and Good Business Colorado.

Burg is used to change. She grew up in Philadelphia, left for college at 18, and for eight years lived all around the U.S. and in a few different countries. She has a BA from St. Lawrence College, NY, and after landing in Colorado in 2010 to attend grad school, received a master's in environmental leadership from Naropa University. When she is not working, she enjoys traveling around the country with her husband and dog.

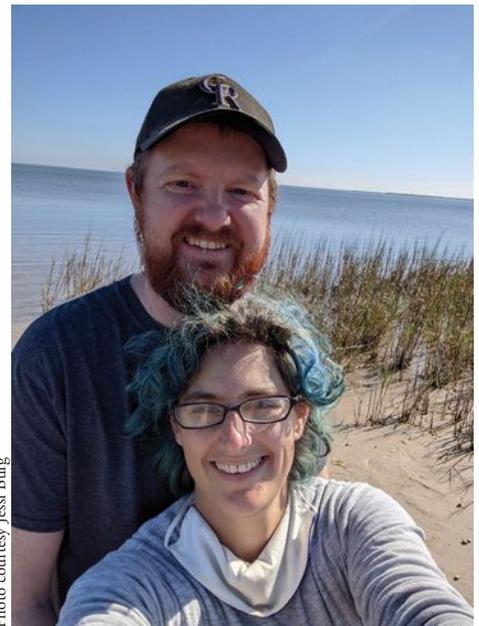


Photo courtesy: Jessi Burg

Jessi Burg