

NC Muscadine Grape Association Board of Directors Candidates

Nadia Hetzel is the winemaker at Cypress Bend Vineyards in Wagram, NC (Scotland County). She received engineering degree in enology and viticulture from the University of Geisenheim in Germany and has worked in many prestigious wineries in Germany including the renowned Riesling producer Schloss Johannisberg and the first certified organic winery in Germany, Weingut Sander. Returning to the United States in 2008, she worked at wineries in Texas and Iowa before coming to North Carolina, where she became the winemaker at Cypress Bend Vineyards in Wagram NC seven years ago. She just completed a two-year term on the board of the NC Winegrowers Association.

Besides producing award-winning wines on a consistent basis, she shares her expertise with others, as in her presentation during this conference and in NCMGA's Virtual Tastings this past summer.

Says Nadia, "My focus is on winemaking and anything I can do to help move the wine industry forward in NC with a particular emphasis on wine quality and wine production. From my perspective I am largely interested in understanding the Muscadine and its use in winemaking. We understand vinifera grapes infinitely better than muscadine. I am also greatly intrigued by all of the current research efforts to find out more about the muscadine's amazing medicinal uses."

As a board member, she would be interested in working to help projects involving raising the bar on Muscadine products with an emphasis on wine quality, as well as working together with the NCWA and NCMGA to highlight the importance of uniting the industry and working together towards common goals.

Ed Hunt grew up on a small farm in Southeast NC and currently operates 100 acres of row crop and forestry land in Robeson County. His educational career started at Southeastern Community College with degree in Forestry, then to Western Carolina with a degree in Natural Resources and finally to NC A&T with a Masters in Agriculture. Over the last 20 years, he has worked in the environmental/ agriculture area. He is currently the Sustainable Ag Director at UNC Pembroke, where he primarily works on getting new Agriculture businesses started. He is simultaneously pursuing a PhD in Educational Leadership at Coastal Carolina University

He says, "Using my skills in developing future opportunities in education, small business development, and improved production for NC are personal goals for me.

" Interests that I would focus on as a board member:

- Marketing/education to the general public that would improve muscadine sales.
- Creating more secondary educational opportunities for students to apprentice or intern at wineries.
- Working more closely with the land grant universities to improve research programs that could create new products from Muscadines.
- More importantly, focusing on more health benefits that are derived from muscadines."

Daryl Locklear owns and operates Charlie T Locklear Vineyard & Winery, Inc, in Maxton, NC (Robeson County). They started the business in 2006 and opened for business in 2009. They currently have 7 acres of Carlos and Noble grapes, which are used in the winery, and also

source grapes and fruit for the wines from other producers in the region. They sell their wine both at their on-farm store and to grocers and wine stores across North Carolina. Daryl had worked in Information Technology from 1995 to 2018 and has a MS in Computer Information systems. He worked his day job then proceeded to the winery to build and grow that business. The business continued to grow to the point he hung up his IT hat in 2018 to devote all his efforts to the winery. Now they distribute wine in more than 200 retail locations across the state.

Daryl joined the NCMGA board in 2018, becoming Vice President in 2019. He wanted to bring his knowledge of how technology can influence the public and his passion to build and grow a wine business from the ground up. He is currently serving as Acting President and is standing for his second term as a board member. His primary goal is to bring public awareness to the Muscadine industry and at the same time build a standard for growing and producing quality Muscadine grapes and wine. He feels that together we can build the best muscadine grape and wine industry in the Southeast, but we must work together to achieve this.

Alan Staton operates Cabin Creek Vineyards in Zirconia, NC (Henderson County) A NC native, Alan has an Industrial Engineering Technology degree from Western Carolina University in 1994. From 2000 to present he has been servicing, maintaining and building residential and commercial swimming pools. He started making wine 20 years ago, the first being muscadine and scuppernong. Since then he started growing grapes and currently has 3-4 acres of different varieties, including native, hybrid, some vinifera, and of course muscadine. He still makes wine from the 30 + year old muscadine and scuppernong vines that he first started with.

“I am a past president of the French Broad Vignerons, a WNC wine group of about 50 people who grow, make and drink wine. I am currently the V.P. of education and wine competition for the group. I oversee the annual wine competition for the French Broad Vignerons. I am in my last year of certification in the three-year certification course of the American Wine Society. I have judged in competitions in North Carolina and Tennessee judging amateur and commercial wines.

“I have run my own business for 20+ years and know what it takes to keep to a budget and what it takes to get things done. I have been a member of multiple boards and know what is required for that position and the responsibility that goes along with that.

“I am aware that there is more to muscadines than just wine. I have provided pomace in the past to a local lotion and make-up producer in small quantities. I know there is a market for muscadines in the vitamin/ pharmaceutical market but I currently don't have a lot of knowledge in that area.

“I would like to see more people educated on NC's first wine and would want to see more people gain that appreciation. I would like to see more wine judges expand on their knowledge of judging muscadine. I have judged with some judges that weren't familiar with the characteristics of muscadine or only see it as a sweet wine.”

Preston Williams, Jr., his wife, Clara, and their three sons established Seven Springs Vineyard on property in Norlina, NC (Warren County) that Preston Jr. and Clara purchased in 1987. The vineyard opened to the public in June 2020, and features a tasting room/store, events, and

pick-your-own grapes. Seven Springs started in 2017 with a 5-year plan. The first year consisted of planting five acres of 14 varieties of muscadine grapes. In the second year they built a tasting room with porch, a gazebo, and pergola; as well as a pond, stocked with fish and a dock. The third year included building a 16'x24' multi-purpose room and 26'x55' shelter. They are currently in year four of this plan, which includes cabins, an event center and completion of their winery. Seven Springs Vineyard will be the "Grower Spotlight" at this year's conference.

Besides the winery, Preston has worked in residential construction for 40 years and as a cattleman for 34 years. He feels he would bring a different perspective for event planning and a skill set that includes leadership abilities, agriculture experience over his life time, and people skills. He would like to see the muscadine association broaden its base with growers/producers and emphasize the business aspect of the vineyard more effectively, beyond just the grapes and the wine. As a board member, he would especially be interested in working with regional and local event planning.