



SOCIETY OF
WOOD SCIENCE &
TECHNOLOGY



BARBARA WADE

WEYERHAEUSER COMPANY

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

United States

RESEARCH TOPIC

Oriented strandboard

DEGREES

Michigan Technological
University, 1978

CURRENT POSITION

Retired

You will not always be able to have mentors who look like or see the world as you do. Do not let that stop you. If you have a passion for working with a sustainable resource, you belong in this field and don't let anyone make you feel differently. Forge your own path and enjoy the journey.

I was the first woman to graduate from the wood science program at Michigan Technological University, and even though I was interested in research, there was no clear path for this in 1978 and I did not have the financial resources. My ultimate choice was to work in the industry. I was involved in the infancy and growth of oriented strandboard. During my 30 years with Weyerhaeuser I was involved with nine OSB mills across the U.S. and Canada. I worked on the start-up of several of these facilities and unfortunately the closure of too many of them. Late in my career I gained technical responsibility for three Timberstrand Facilities. Involvement in the manufacturing facilities was always an adventure with the only constants being hard hats and steel-toed boots. While I did not work in a traditional laboratory, these facilities were my labs. Over the course of my 30-year career I designed and ran countless trials. No publications resulted from this, however, I left behind many internal reports that are still referenced 10 years after my retirement. While I did not have close contact with students, I did, however, ensure that facilities hired technical staff with wood science degrees, and I was a constant proponent of women in the workforce; not just in technical, but also in manufacturing. In my early years with the US Forest Service I was subjected to gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and, based on current definitions, sexual assault. I made it my mission to ensure a workplace that was free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. I feel that this was one of my best contributions to the wood products industry.



WOMEN AMBASSADORS CREATING THE FUTURE OF WOOD SCIENCE