

CAMA'S AGRI-MARKETER OF THE YEAR

You could call her a typical farm girl, if by that you mean to say that she is hard-working, practical, courageous, resourceful, resilient and the kind of person who shows her true colours in a calamity.

In fact, **Lorie Jocius** is a town girl who made her mark in agriculture over a 35-year-career, shaping the way farmers and agribusinesses present themselves to the Canadian public.

Lorie was raised in the town of Leamington and earned an arts degree at the **University of Guelph** where she met her husband **Ginty**.

In the late 1970s, she and Ginty saw that Canadian farm businesses needed an advertising and communications firm that could do more than simply write good ad copy.

Together they launched a full-service marketing organization that helped companies build sound strategy based on core strengths and market opportunities. Thirty-five years later, **GJA Communications** continues to serve that market.

In 1993, Lorie and Ginty were ready for a new challenge and they had a bold idea.

They decided that Canadian agriculture needed a showplace for the industry's new technology and it had to be in a location where farmers could test the new machinery for themselves in the field.

The result was **Canada's Outdoor Farm Show (COFS)**, and within five years the show's exhibitor list boasted all of the blue chip names in Canadian agribusiness and was attracting huge crowds.

Farmers came to see and drive the new tractors, walk through the test plots and discover for themselves how new robotic technology was transforming dairy barns.

During the early days of the agency and the COFS, Lorie established a role for herself behind the scenes, attending to the details, while Ginty took the high-profile route.

Ginty was the ambassador for the show, the fundraiser for the University of Guelph, a political campaign manager and advisor to many agricultural committees. And he always had new ideas and was starting new ventures.



Lorie Jocius

Lorie was the one who kept everything running smoothly backstage. It was a great partnership.

That all changed suddenly in the winter of 2006 when Ginty was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Lorie now had to be his primary caregiver and take on the daunting task of running single-handed the enterprises they had created.

When Ginty died in 2008, Lorie was left in charge of a formidable responsibility.

Some women in her position might have sold everything and moved someplace warm. But not Lorie. She knew that many people wondered about the show's future in the absence of its high-profile founder.

She threw herself into preparations for the 2008 COFS and

watched attendance and sales rise to new records.

COFS remains the nation's largest agricultural tradeshow and is respected worldwide as a leader in showcasing innovation.

Once the show's future was secured, Lorie explored a list of new ideas she thought should be part of the show.

She read through stacks of scientific manuals and interviewed industry people and brought an anaerobic digester to the site. It has become the focal point for a display of ideas in alternative energy.

She also supervised an overhaul of the dairy barn to take it beyond the traditional demonstration of robotics.

It now houses the only display in the world where competitive robotic milking systems operate side by side.

Since Ginty's death, Lorie organized a merger of the COFS to bring new skills and talent to the show and give her more time to explore her many interests.

She established a scholarship fund at the University of Guelph and raised over \$100,000 to help students network with agricultural students and faculty across North America.

She serves as a mentor to students, and sits on the board of **Agri-Food Education Inc.** which works to keep farms and food production visible in schools.

She used the show to bring national attention to **4-H** in its 10th anniversary, helping to bring young representatives from across the country to Woodstock, Ontario.

She may be a town girl, but Lorie has a farm girl's passion for food production and the work that farm families do.

That passion has taken her from the backroom to the platform as an industry leader and communicator. **AM**