

PATTERSON: Had a flair for identifying talent

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ground that included working at a radio station, heading a community weekly newspaper called the *Lebanon Express* and managing a Fred Meyer store.

Patterson started with the *East Oregonian* in 1984, working as *EO* general manager until 1993, before becoming the corporate general manager in Salem as well as the general manager of the *Capital Press* until 1996. He served as corporate general manager until his retirement in 2005.

Brown said Patterson was a fierce champion for his community. He served as Pendleton Chamber of Commerce president in 1991. He helped launch the Round-Up City Development Corporation.

“He always had Pendleton on his mind,” agreed Mike Short, a commercial lender with Bank of Eastern Oregon and current president of the RCDC. “He knew the players and knew the pulse of the community.”

Patterson had a flair for identifying talent. Marissa Williams, tapped by Patterson as general manager for the *Blue Mountain Eagle* at the tender age of 25, found a mentor in “the gentle giant.” Though she was far down the ladder as editorial assistant, he credited her for work experience in advertising at the *Bend Bulletin* and as a restaurant owner. He saw promise in the young woman. Patterson faced some pushback from board members concerned about her age, but he convinced them. Williams now serves as regional advertising director for the *East Oregonian* and the *Hermiston Herald* and as publisher of the *Wallowa County Chieftain* and the *Blue Mountain Eagle*. She said Patterson’s mentoring made the difference.

“It was important to make him proud,” she said.

East Oregonian Publisher Kathryn Brown described him as a “positive force” who loved Pendleton and wanted it to grow. She also credited Patterson’s stubborn belief in her for persuading her to work for her family’s newspaper business after her first career as a nurse practitioner. He had earlier convinced a then-college-age Brown to do a summer internship at the *EO* where she spent time in every department from the press room to the newsroom.

Former *EO* Editor Mike Forrester prized Patterson’s professionalism, eclectic work experience and his intelligence, but admitted he occasionally knocked heads with leaders of the family-held company.

“Pat had a strong personality and worked for a family of strong personalities so not every day was a love fest,” Forrester said. “I think we may have benefited more from that relationship than Pat did.”

Steve Brown (no relation to Kathryn) remembers Patterson getting out latent work tension as a member of the *EO*’s city league volleyball team, sometimes knocking his employees and fellow players down in his rush to get to the ball. Volleyball aside, Brown knew Patterson supported him and the other reporters. When the *EO* purchased some laptops, Brown remembers being upset that his superiors wouldn’t let him take the expensive machines out of the newsroom on assignment. He approached Patterson, who was then the company general manager.

“I told Patterson I felt like I was forced to use the equivalent of stone knives and bearskins,” Brown said.

Soon, his phone rang. It was Patterson with news about the laptops. He kept it short.

“That won’t be a problem for you anymore,” he said.

SCIENCE: Last subject in state to switch to Smarter Balanced

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create a life-sized replica of a blue heron’s nest, but he said the project he enjoyed most so far was one that involved heating glass and bending it.

“Science is my favorite subject,” he said.

In addition to hands-on labs, McElroy and the other science teachers also use silly YouTube videos, catchy songs, games, art and other methods to help the material sink in. The goal is to cater to a variety of learning styles, from restless “talented and gifted” students to those with learning disabilities or language barriers causing them to lag behind in their reading skills.

“For a long time, education has said that if you can’t read, you can’t learn, but we’ve shown that’s just not true,” McElroy said.

On Monday morning in Kent Barnes’ classroom, students in an engineering class were using Popsicle sticks and other craft items for an assignment to make skyscrapers with working elevators that can lift an army action figure at least 12 inches. The science state test has included a growing number of engineering questions in recent years.

Barnes, who has taught at Sandstone for 10 years, said each of the teachers has their own style of instruction, and his tends to be especially light-hearted.

“I always have funny pictures on my tests, just to get the kids to relax, because some kids are not test takers,” he said.

One of his favorite methods was creating timed competitions that helped the students have fun while also motivating them to make sure they learned the material so they could win.

“Get them to care, and once you get a kid to care they will do amazing things for you,” he said. “It doesn’t matter what level they’re at, they will succeed.”

Kimo Gabriel, who has taught science for Hermiston School District for 27 years, said the teachers always share state testing results with their students, right down to comparing them with other schools and breaking down scores by subgroup.

“I say, ‘Hispanic boys and girls passed at 91 percent this year,’ and you can see the pride on their



ABOVE: Seventh-grader Jocilyn Tusten constructs a Stellar’s jay nest in a science class Monday at Sandstone Middle School in Hermiston.



LEFT: Eighth-grader Aerio Allbee works on making a great blue heron nest during a science class.

Staff photos by E.J. Harris

teachers of other subjects willing to create crossover projects. As students begin studying the periodic table, for example, they will write reports in their language arts classes about the element they chose to research in science, while in social studies they will study the regions where their element is mined.

Science is the last subject in the state to switch from the OAKS test to the Smarter Balanced assessment, but the teachers said the OAKS test has become increasingly interactive to mirror Smarter Balanced.

When the switch comes, Gabriel said, the relationships the teachers have built with the students and their efforts to make learning fun will come through.

“It’s a human occupation,” he said. “The most important thing is relationships, and knowing how to teach 12- to 13-year-old kids.”

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CENTENNIAL: Post office employs nine city carriers, four rural carriers

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middle of the sorting floor.

Birdsell said a subterranean railroad ran from the current tracks to the Umatilla River, with trains stopping just underneath the cage to drop off mail.

While features like the rail service and the federal agencies are long gone, the building still holds federal court on the second floor and is an important mail hub for Eastern Oregon.

The post office’s role has diminished in recent years as the U.S. Postal Service has made the recent decision to move Pendleton’s processing capabilities to Portland.

“Do we like it?” Birdsell said. “Not really. But we still sort mail for 52 cities.”

The Pendleton post office employs nine city carriers and four rural carriers to transport mail to the masses.

Even when the carriers are



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Guests tour the federal courthouse during the 100 year anniversary of the John F. Kilkenny Post Office and Courthouse building on Monday in Pendleton.

off on Sunday or for a holiday, Birdsell said there’s someone working back at the office to continue handling the mail that comes through town.

“There’s not a time when

we’re not working,” she said.

Working many of those days for more than a third of the postal building’s lifespan was Craig Kosting, who retired from the postal service last year after a

39-year career.

Kosting, 60, started working for the post office in 1976 as a 20-year-old and fell in love with the work.

Talking near the area where he used to pick up mail for his routes, Kosting said he’s delivered mail to every house in Pendleton.

Kosting said the biggest change the post office has undergone is the move toward automation.

While he used to take pride in coming back to the office with no mail left in his truck, he said automated sorting means some misplaced mail will undoubtedly find its way into his bag.

But even then, Kosting said what kept him coming back all these years was the people on his routes, which became his family.

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