**CJ Stephens**

Following successful insurance/financial related careers in my own private practice and corporate America I have followed my passion for trees and the value they bring to the environment.

In the late nineties I worked for several years for Buz Brenton, as Director of Outreach, for the Brenton Arboretum, and helped develop *a Knee-High Naturalist* Education Program for children K-3 that is still very successful.

Finding a need for reforesting the urban oak savannah in Waterbury, my own neighborhood, I spoke with Tivon Feeley, at that time an ISU Urban Forester. He challenged me to recruit four neighbors to participate in the ISU Tree Steward Program. Mission accomplished! We then set out to educate property owners and developed a process to do a complete inventory of both private and public property. With assistance from, and cooperation with the US Forestry, IDNR, ISU, Polk County, the City of Des Moines Forestry Division, The Arbor Day Foundation, and twenty one Waterbury Tree Stewards we were on our way. During this same time period Tivon conducted a Research Project to determine the health of Waterbury trees, and to educate property owners regarding life span, diversity and disease threats to our cherished oak savannah.The project were featured at the ISU Shade Tree Short Course. We held neighborhood meeting and completed the tree inventory of all 1,100 properties.

In addition to the above, I work with other neighborhoods throughout the City to develop aggressive reforesting plans.

Other accomplishments and ongoing involvement:

Recipient of Trees Forever 20th Anniversary Volunteer Award

Volunteer of the Year 2011 Iowa Urban Forestry Council

Worked to develop a Tree Ordinance for the City of Des Moines.

Organized Forestry Challenges and Opportunities for Des Moines Neighborhoods

Organized Arbor Day Celebrations for 10 consecutive years

Presented *Value of Trees* - Downtown School

Worked aggressively to slow the removal of forested areas in the City, including Recreational Trails

Created & Promoted “Walking, Talking Trees” Event

Wrote grants and organized ReForest Waterbury Pilot in partnership with Des Moines Public Works – Forestry

President, Waterbury Neighborhood Association, Emeritus

I am a certified ISU Community Tree Steward, and ISU Master Gardener with a focus on trees.

I currently serve as President of Tree Des Moines, Inc.Our Project #1 is to raise funds to complete an active data tree inventory of the Capitol City street trees and high impact park areas. I also serve on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Council and Des Moines Planning and Zoning Commission…

 Other Leadership & Recognition

Served as President of the General Agents & Managers Association, Des Moines, IA

Vice President IA State GAMA Association

Board of Directors Des Moines GA & Managers Association

Nominated for the Gene Hilton Award, the highest award presented by peers for service and support of the insurance industry

Served on various committees for the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce including “Bring Iowans Back to Iowa” and active support of small businesses

Board of Directors Cedar Rapids Association of Life Underwriters; Program, Membership, Legislative, Ethics, and Community Involvement

Co-Founder Professional Women’s Network, served as first Executive Director. This organization is still a strong voice (over 400 members) for women on important local and national issues.