

Ruth Ann Holloway learned at an early age how proper skin can change a life. Growing up, she battled cystic acne, and it wasn't until meeting a dermatologist who took the time to help her understand the condition that she was able to alleviate its impact on her life.

"He scheduled my appointments at the end of the day so he would have enough time for my treatment and to talk to me," Holloway explains. "He had a European training background and was the one who first talked to me about estheticians."

Due to this experience, Holloway began a career in the esthetic industry, learning and gaining experience in several states in order to acquire as much information about the profession as she could. She worked in various capacities, from performing pedicures and treatments with a podiatrist to working in a plastic surgeon's office. However, her dreams weren't completely realized.

"As every esthetician knows, you need to find your niche," Holloway says. "The plastic surgeon I was working with, the late Dennis Everton, MD, sat me down one day and asked me, 'Where's your heart?'" When she realized that addressing acne and aging skin was truly what she loved, Holloway began working toward opening her own business. Dermal Dimensions Progressive Skin Therapy in Providence, Utah, opened its doors in 1991.

Now that she was pointed in the right direction on her desired path, Holloway began working on helping her fellow estheticians. She became more aware of an issue that was gaining momentum in the Utah state government for the licensing of cosmetologists and estheticians. As a former patient and current esthetician, she knew that the number of educational

training hours required of cosmetologists for licensure wouldn't be enough for some esthetic procedures.

"I saw a sign in a health food store advertising microdermabrasion. I was stunned," Holloway says. "I scheduled an appointment, and, needless to say, found the treatment to be less than professional." This incident further prompted her to get involved in the legislative movement, beginning to work with cosmetologists and fellow estheticians on developing licensing requirements that made sense for her and the skin care industry as a whole in 1995.

During the process, many discussions and meetings involving the cosmetologists and estheticians resulted in an inability to compromise about the requirement hours—the cosmetologists wanted fewer and the estheticians wanted more. Holloway was about halfway into the two-hour drive from Providence to Salt Lake City to attend a legislative meeting on the subject in 2000, when the answer came to her: a two-tiered system, with different requirement hours—600 for basic esthetics and 1,200 for master esthetics.

"While my husband drove, I spent about 40 minutes in the car outlining the basic requirements for both the levels," Holloway says. "I knew it was an innovative way to go about it, but Utah is known as a pioneering state, and I thought it would be wonderful to set an example and raise the standard."

Appointed to the Utah Cosmetology Board in 2001, she composed most of the scope of practice and regulation herself, as well as the master esthetician's licensing exam, allowing her to understand much



more about government and the legislative process. "If someone had told me when I was just starting out that I was going to do this, I would've thought, 'Me? Little me?'" Holloway laughs, but she found herself shaking hands with then Utah Governor Michael O. Leavitt when the regulations were signed into law during the first legislative session in 2001.

She also learned that dreams are easier to achieve with help and support from friends and family. "I sometimes think my husband Jim should get an honorary master esthetician's license," Holloway says. "He's been to nearly 16 years of meetings and is so supportive."

Now with the encouragement of her family and peers, Holloway continues to work for a better esthetic future. Besides running her own business and continuing to work for better regulations while serving as a member of the state's cosmetology board, Holloway also reviews esthetic books and advises other states, including Virginia, on implementing their own two-tier systems. And she still has plans for the future. "I'd love for esthetics to have its own stand alone boards," Holloway says. "It would be so good for esthetics to come together as an industry. We'd be able to accomplish so much more." ✂