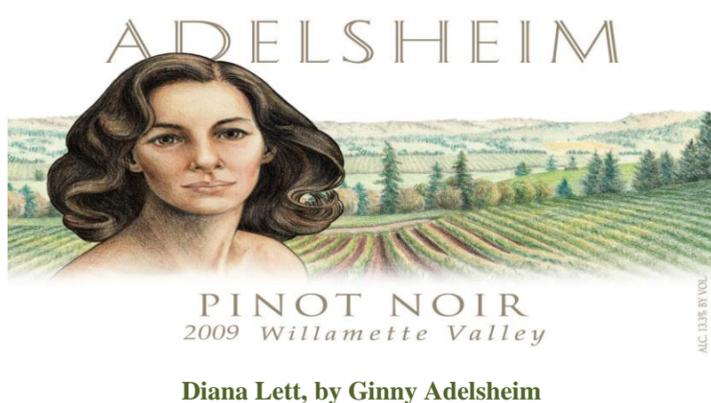


## Pinot Pioneer: Diana Lett

Diana Lett grew up in the American south and attended the University of Dallas in Texas as an English Lit major. Her dream job was to move to San Francisco, California, and become an editor for a publishing company. After graduation, Diana got a job at Scott Foresman Publishing and within a few days was off to Chicago for a conference where she met David Lett. They married and moved to Oregon in 1966 to start a vineyard. David's enthusiasm for winemaking came from studying viticulture and enology at U.C. Davis. For the first two years, Diana spent most of her time at the vineyard clipping and bundling vines before she had their first child, Jim, in 1968. A year later, they had Jason. Diana then became very "house-centric" after a visit to OHSU where Jim was diagnosed with autism. *"I got to do some pioneering in that field because nobody knew about autism at that time"* (Diana Lett, July 2012).



Diana co-founded the Oregon chapter of the American Society for Autism in the 1970s and served as its President throughout the decade. She coordinated conversations between the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services and Children's Protective Services to create programs and services for people with developmental disabilities.



Her many skills in writing not only transferred well into organizing projects, but also proved invaluable in running the vineyard. Considered to be the house secretary and marketing liaison, Diana wrote a great deal of the publicity for Eyrie Vineyards including: newspaper articles, letters, brochures, menus, magazine articles, wine labels and more. During afternoon trips to Portland for Jim to attend a children with disabilities program, Diana and Jason would travel to restaurants delivering wine. Outside of the Willamette Valley wine community, the thought of a woman even talking about wine was not greatly accepted at this time. This was of no concern to the vineyard and their production continued to thrive. *"If this is something that you would love to do, you should have the opportunity do it whether you are a man or a woman"* (Diana Lett, July 2012).

Diana is still active in the McMinnville community, working on housing projects with the goal of creating safe, affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. Currently, Jason Lett has taken responsibility for Eyrie Vineyards and has produced wines under his own label, Black Cap Winery, as well. Jason refers to his mother as the "Director of Ephemera," when she assists on specific events and projects throughout the year. She makes herself available to offer advice regarding the vineyard's business and is always available to lend a hand.