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## Brookwood's Biddle is 'every woman's woman'

Top 10 Business Women in Birmingham

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It is difficult to picture Neeysa Biddle, so trim and neat in her business suit, covered in bug spray with dirty hands and knees. Yet, she truly is happiest when caring for something, whether it's the people in the hospital where she works, or her beloved zinnias at the family farm.

As chief operating officer at Brookwood Medical Center, she is responsible for everything, from its 30,000 annual surgeries - the most in the state - to facilities management. Relaxing at home in Albertville, she cares for beds of roses and beds for her grandchildren.

Her love of gardening came from nurturing the horticulture interest of a new daughter-in-law, who was convinced she could transform Biddle from someone who "killed grass when I walked past it." And as Biddle was taught the finer points of gardening, she now continues to encourage and even train other women in their interests and leadership.

A graduate of the inaugural class of Momentum, a training program for women leaders, she serves on the board of the group, now in its third year.

"We want to improve the status of women in the state by growing women as leaders. With more women participating, the state can become more progressive," says Biddle. Momentum is patterned after the International Women's Leadership Program.

The one-year training program begins with what Biddle describes as "a humbling experience. Your peers and co-workers provide an evaluation on how you can improve yourself. Everyone should do this 360 evaluation once. It is quite revealing."

Biddle, despite her affable personality, does not suffer fools gladly and made an action plan to improve communications. Some would say she has mastered these skills.

"Neeysa can think like a man, act like a lady, and work like a dog. She is every woman's woman," says Denene Cofield, administrative director of surgical services at Medical Center East, where Biddle worked before joining Brookwood. "She knows how to take any task, organize it and make it work. We called her the 'vice president of lost causes,' because we gave her all of our struggling programs and she would make them work."

Education is a focus for Biddle, who serves as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Health-Related Professions, where she also is on the dean's advisory board.

Sensitive to her own lengthy daily commute from Albertville, she facilitated category 2 accreditation classes for her peers through the Regional Healthcare Executive Forum.

"We were the first local chapter of the accrediting body, the American College of Healthcare Executives. It provides a great resource for healthcare workers in the city and saves the costs of travel," Biddle says.

She aids the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, where she served two terms as secretary. At the Hewett Methodist Church, she sings in the choir and helps monitor funds as chairwoman of the finance committee.

*Verna Gates is a freelance writer based in Birmingham.*