

David and Betty Burton

2016 Inductees

Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame

The Puget Sound Dahlia Association places David and Betty Burton in nomination for the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame. Little did the young couple know that, when purchasing veteran dahlia grower Harold Miller's lakeside home, his passion would also become theirs. The home came with plenty of dahlias and a PSDA membership for the Burtons. They accepted the membership with gusto!

In short order, they became not only experts at growing dahlias, but they also developed into trusty and active members. The late Betty served as PSDA president for a term; David began offering regular culture features at monthly meetings. The two also initiated and managed the PSDA Country Store. That little enterprise eventually offered a variety of products specific for dahlia enthusiasts (and not incidentally, it also enriched the club coffers).

The Burtons also took to dahlia exhibiting with enthusiasm. They participated in judging workshops, presented programs on a variety of topics at Federation meetings, and they were essential to the nurturing of new members. After progressing through the Federation judging program to senior status, they were soon tapped to teach the important candidate judging class. Recognized as two of the top judging instructors in the country, their class was filmed and is on the ADS website. They had an active seedling program, introducing several Stillwater varieties. Because of their judging expertise, they were often called on to judge on the ADS Seedling Evaluation team at Federation shows; they also could be relied upon to judge at the Tacoma Trial Garden.

Betty loved watercolor painting and was encouraged by David to pursue her talent. She took classes, worked with other artists, and left a surprising trove of paintings covering a wide variety of subjects. Among her Federation colleagues, her best-known painting was the signature watercolor for the 2014 ADS National Show sponsored by the Federation.

The ever-friendly Burtons helped novice growers and the occasional lurker at our show booth and at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show with growing advice. Betty, a Master Gardener, also donated Saturdays to this educational program, usually at local garden centers. The Burtons also frequently gave seminars on dahlia growing to local garden clubs and other horticultural organizations. The Burton garden was its own laboratory, where the couple grew vegetables and more than 40 apple trees, along with berries, grapes, and several other fruits.

All this didn't prevent David from pursuing his passion for flying. Member of a local flying club, David took Betty on photography overflights of regional dahlia gardens. His professional work at the University of Washington Medical Center gave David the incentive to seek technical solutions applicable to dahlia growing. However, he could not best one aspect of his lakeside dahlia garden: frequent flooding courtesy of tenacious beavers. One image that *Dahlias of Today* readers will link with David is the one showing him in hip waders trying to 'dig' dahlias in a flooded November field.

Betty, a PACCAR employee in its accounting section until illness forced her retirement, was a reliable fiduciary, assisting at club board meetings dispassionately with the financial data required for effective decision making. Ever ready with a quip and a wink; Betty continued to participate in club activities until it became too taxing. She even participated in October 2015 at the PSDA annual vase donation to the Eastside Domestic Violence breakfast, dutifully arranging vases from her wheelchair. Since her passing, David has once again taken an active role in providing cultural advice for our club members.

For contributing so much of their time, talents, and initiative to the Federation and to nurturing dahlia culture in the Northwest, the PSDA seeks Hall of Fame recognition for David and Betty Burton.