

Elsie and Bill Dungan
2012 Inductees
Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame

Volunteers are the backbone of any social organization; few have contributed more and received less attention than the Dungans. Over the course of 25 years, they readily offered their home and garden to the Puget Sound Dahlia Association (PSDA). They also helped set up and take down show exhibits, supplied club evenings with snacks, and assisted judging of shows. The avuncular Bill, a *Seattle Times* pressman in his day, also placed 'pro bono' tuber sale ads in Seattle's leading newspaper.

For years, Elsie managed the arrangements and instructed novice flower arrangers in her beloved art. A leading member of Western Washington floral societies and garden clubs, gracious Elsie also competed effectively with much younger exhibitors well into her Eighties. As a keen judge of dahlias, she also promoted waterlilies and novelties: her efforts not only led to the Northwest's appreciation of these artful forms, but they also encouraged raisers to develop new color breaks and seek broader acceptance of unusual dahlias.

Their home in the Wedgwood neighborhood of Seattle displayed many of Elsie's exhibition awards next to the vases and staging materials needed by the artist. Apart from gardening, Elsie also spent years quilting and sewing women's vests or traveling jackets for the fashion trade. Outside, their small urban garden held the plants necessary for floral design — not only dahlias, but also statice, baby's breath, lilies, and colorful annuals. One dahlia stood out after Bill passed away: WILLIAM D, a white collarette, was a fitting tribute to her husband, who in his own, quiet way was a stalwart helpmate to spouse and our club.

The Dungans offered their residence for many PSDA board meetings, and while their living room often was standing-room crowded, the couple found space for refreshments. By tradition (or maybe due to Phil Traff's Spartan food choices) these always included sliced apples, cookies, cheese and crackers. When the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers was organized, several of the early organizational meetings also took place in the Dungan's home. Their friendship with the Snells was instrumental in promoting the Vancouver Dahlia Society. Elsie continued to be active in our club (now transported by her daughter) until her recent death. As an example of the volunteer spirit, Bill and Elsie Dungan deserve to be in the Federation's Hall of Fame.