

Jean Knutson
2015 Inductee
Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame

Puget Sound Dahlia Association is proud to nominate one of their own, “a fierce competitor” and dahlia enthusiast, Jean Knutson for the Federation Hall of Fame. Jean was a native Washingtonian, growing up in Stanwood. She was small, but full of energy, probably from all the sugar and sweets she ate. She was the original “let’s eat the cake first girl!”

She worked her dahlias with her husband Bill’s help, but he was more the worker bee while she was the exhibitor. What she did best was grow really good dahlias and boy, did she like to compete! She was always on the head table and very often on the top, with Best in Show — numerous times in any given season. She was thrilled to win the first Phil Traff Silver Metal in 1992 for the Best Medium in Show. She also introduced a very nice lacinated lavender dahlia of her own in 1993 called “Tiffany Jean,” that is still being grown.

While she never held a formal position within the Federation, she was a staunch supporter of the Federation and the dahlia. She was always ready with a quip or a smile, and with praise and encouragement for newer growers and showers. No one could grow and exhibit “Camano Cloud” quite like Jean could. She willingly shared her skill, experience, and judging expertise with all in the 30+ years we had her will us, all this time as a Federation member.

As a longtime member of PSDA, she held many jobs such as Program Coordinator and Show Chairman. She was instrumental in the success of the first Seattle Flower Show. As a senior judge, she helped mentor many of those coming up in the ranks; you could always look forward to a good learning experience judging with Jean. She took on the task of distributing our publication, *Dahlias of Today*, throughout the world for many years. She stored boxes of DOTs in her basement and she’d lug them up and down the stairs by herself and ship them out as they sold. She did this job the only way she could – full force. She’d write letters to all the clubs throughout the United States, Canada, and the world inviting them to order DOT and telling them what surprises each issue contained. She soon had many dahlia friends throughout the world and the communications became more personal. She attended many ADS National Shows and traveled abroad, visiting dahlia gardens and making more new friends. She became an “unofficial” ambassador to the dahlia world.

After Bill’s death, Jean slowed down a bit and we’d see her at fewer shows, but she maintained her membership to the end. We lost her in April 2014; she passed peacefully sitting in the sun in her back yard, most likely envisioning the blooms yet to come.