

KEN AND MARILYN WALTON

2017 Inductees

Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame

In the decades the Waltons have devoted to raising dahlias, their spacious garden (within eyesight of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge) has given visitors a spectacular waterfront viewpoint. For Ken and Marilyn, the display ties the knot between their avocation and their personal blessings. After moving from a shady domicile, the couple found a new home with tons of sunlight not far away. Plus, there was the view . . .

The Waltons joined the Washington State Dahlia Society in 1991 and vowed to become active members. Soon after, they also signed on with the Federation. And from those beginnings, the busy pair took out time from their food distribution business to support shows, club, and Federation activities. They started exhibiting with early success, and had major responsibilities at Federation-sponsored ADS national shows. For the 2014 National Ken was treasurer, and together they were responsible for a houseful of goody bags prepared for show visitors.

Marilyn took over the Tacoma Trial Garden and made it the standout attraction in Point Defiance Park. A diligent and energetic gardener, Marilyn has tended the plantings throughout the growing season, often assisted by her (now-retired) husband.

Federation members particularly appreciate their annual organization and sponsorship of trial garden judging classes. Exhibitors can count on astute and instructive assessment as Ken and Marilyn handle their judging assignments in shows. They can often be found at an ADS National Show, wherever it may be held. Highly esteemed by the membership, the Waltons also have held several positions in their own club, including Ken's service as Washington State Dahlia Society Federation representative.

For the past decade, the couple also has made a name for themselves in the hybridization of exhibition dahlias. Starting with Narrows Tricia, that yellow bombshell, the Narrows lineup lists more than a dozen introductions. Having a close, ongoing function as trial garden director gives Marilyn valuable insights into what makes for a winning dahlia. Not given to mass introductions, the Walton approach is deliberate and has a keen focus on perfection. The dahlia world - and particularly the Federation - is blessed by having two people who spare neither time nor expense in supporting these activities.