

## **Richard and Patty Matthies**

### **2012 Inductees**

### **Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame**

Richard and Patty Matthies were the consummate dahlia couple of the Northwest in the last half of the 20th century. As judges, exhibitors, and leaders of local dahlia societies, they led the way for much of what we have in today's dahlia world. A chemical engineer, Dick was deeply involved in the secret work at Oak Ridge, TN during World War II. After the war Dick and his wife Patty returned to the Northwest where he worked in the construction industry. Living in Anacortes, Washington on Fidalgo Island, Dick and Patty developed a love of flowers that they shared through the years. They were early members of the Master Gardener program in Washington and involved in hybridizing dahlias, rhododendrons, azaleas, and fuchsias.

Dahlias were always a big part of their gardens and they chose Fidalgo as the prefix for their introductions. One of their first successes in raising new varieties was Dark Desire an A-sized dark red decorative with very dark, almost black, foliage. Apparently lost now, this would be a great addition for those hybridizing to extend the number of dark foliage varieties. This was followed by the entire series of Fidalgo varieties covering nearly all types of the dahlia. The last variety, Fidalgo Goblin, was released in 2000 and the first was developed in the sixties. Fidalgo Julie, Fidalgo Splash, Fidalgo Olympus, and Fidalgo Magic are just a few examples of the new forms and colors the Matthies breeding program established.

Dick was a great teacher of all aspects of dahlia growing. For many years he was the mentor for the new growers in the Snohomish County Dahlia Society. He taught us how to grow and show dahlias, but most of all he instilled the love of growing seedlings in a generation of raisers of new dahlias. The Kenora, Camano, Snoho, and other series of dahlias owe much to what Dick taught about selecting and evaluating new varieties. One of his main lessons when selecting a seedling was to look for something new and better. The Matthies' sharing of knowledge, seeds, and tubers were a key component in the strong dahlia community in the Northwest.

Because of their great love and knowledge of dahlias, Dick and Patty could and did talk all day and into the night about growing and showing dahlias. The esteem with which they were held in the dahlia world was one of the main reasons that the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers got off to a successful start. They were part of the group whose vision created the Federation and many of their suggestions were adopted into the bylaws. Dick and Patty were among the original signers of the bylaws for the new organization.

The Skagit Valley Dahlia Society nominates Dick and Patty Matthies for the Federation of Northwest Dahlia Growers hall of fame.