

## **Colin Walker**

### **2025 Inductee**

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

The North Central Washington Dahlia Society hereby nominates Colin Walker for induction into the Federation of NW Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame.

Colin has been an avid dahlia grower and exhibitor since he was 5 years old. He has shown exemplary dedication to the aims and goals of the Federation. When he was only 10 years old, he took on the responsibility for managing the ribbons at PSDA shows, where he fearlessly informed senior judges that since they were judging ball dahlias, they didn't need best-of-type ribbons. By the time he was 12, Les Connell assigned Colin the job of managing the judging of the head table at the Washington State DS, recognizing his keen understanding of what head-table entries were eligible to be judged.

Ever since Colin became an accredited judge, he and Roger have spent Labor Day weekend judging every unjudged entry in the Tacoma Trial Garden – sometimes as many as 30 varieties, although in 2024 they got off easy with 21. When Colin became a senior judge as a teenager, Les recommended that Colin replace him as a co-teacher with Roger. So began Colin's more than 25 years as a Federation dahlia judging instructor.

Colin has presented on a variety of topics at Federation workshops and is currently one of the co-chairs of the FNWDG Education Committee. He has been generous with his time, presenting dahlia culture programs at other Federation club meetings. Colin used his technical expertise to design both iterations of the Federation's website. He has always willingly assisted other clubs when asked. For example, after Phill Traff was unable to help his mom with judging teams and clerk sheets for the Grays Harbor show, Colin and Roger stepped up to help until someone from their own group was able to take on the task.

As a long-time member of the Puget Sound Dahlia Association, Colin has presented a range of cultural programs, creating slide shows and leading demonstrations. During those years, he has served as PSDA president two different times for a total of eight years. Following his graduation from Central Washington University, Colin took over the design and layout of PSDA's publication, *Dahlias of Today*. During the FNWDG's hosting of the ADS National Shows in 2004, 2014, and 2024, Colin has always played an integral role, taking on challenges that nobody else wanted to touch. His acute sense of how to lay out a successful show hall demonstrates his uncanny ability to anticipate numbers of entries, traffic patterns, award visibility as well as exhibitor challenges. He assesses and secures the technical support equipment necessary for workshops and programs. His focus is razor sharp as he manages his team of assistants at the head table as well as ribbon placement and award presentations. His detailed PowerPoint presentations are unique across the realm of national dahlia shows, with accuracy and flair that adds to the joy of what might otherwise feel like a long evening.

Colin's work on a national level has integrated his artistic and technical abilities in the areas of layout, publishing, and photography. A couple years ago, he did the design, layout and supplied photos for the updated ADS judging manual. He has assisted with numerous ADS strategies

and currently manages the design and layout of the ADS *Bulletin* and the *Classification and Handbook of Dahlias*.

Despite his relatively young age, Colin has been hybridizing dahlias for many years. He had a great friendship with Evie Gullikson, which led him to his appreciation of open-centered dahlias. Her mentorship influenced him so that following his graduation from college, Colin decided to focus on open-centered varieties grown only from the family's own seed. Evie was truly delighted whenever one of a very-young Colin's entries would beat hers for head table honors.

Colin has won innumerable dahlia awards, but he was especially pleased to have earned the first Les Connell medal to be awarded. His friendship with Les meant so much to him. In 2024, he received the Stanley Johnson medal for Kelsey Dwarf – only a year after 15-year-old Annie Walker won it for Lake Hills Creamsicle. On that subject, Annie also achieved her senior judging status at a younger age than Colin – a fitting testimonial to the results of the lifetime of mentoring provided her by her father and grandfather.

Colin Walker exemplifies all the characteristics that our northwest dahlia community seeks to honor. We are honored to place his name in nomination for induction into the Federation of NW Dahlia Growers Hall of Fame.

Submitted 2025

North Central Washington Dahlia Society