

TRIBUTE TO CECIL AND JIM WELLS

MIKE JOHNSON: As all of you should know, this meeting has been dedicated to Cecil and Jim Wells. Those of us here in our declining years among us know the Wells' family quite well; however, as I look about I see many young faces who may not know how important these people have been to the International Plant Propagators' Society.

Jim was one of the founding members of the Society and was its president the first 2 years of its existence. I think it is safe to say that without his perseverance, determination, and vision we might not be in this room today as there might not be an International Plant Propagators' Society.

When the time came for this Society to become international, Jim was very instrumental in helping the chapter in England and Ireland get started, as well as those in New Zealand and Australia. Cecil and Jim's vacation time from their nursery was taken with traveling to these far-off places to help the local nurserymen establish their chapters. The time and effort they gave to this Society is almost impossible for the rest of us to comprehend, and for this alone, they deserve our thanks.

However, it is not only this Society but the nursery industry in general that owes the Wells' a large amount of gratitude. For although Jim was an excellent nurseryman, I feel that it is through his research and educational abilities that he became the eminent plantsman that he is. I have never met another man in this industry so willing to share knowledge, and the fact that he did it in so many ways is unique.

He wrote a book on alpine plants many years ago and also a book on miniature daffodils quite recently. But it is his book, *Plant Propagation Practices*, first published in the 1950s and republished recently that is most notable. Every propagator should have a copy. It was my bible when I started in the business and is by far the most readable and practical book that I've come across.

In addition to the books, Jim has written countless articles on propagation and many other phases of the nursery industry. His nursery was a research center because he was never satisfied with what he accomplished. Some of the new methods he tried cost him dearly, but he never gave up the quest for 100% rooting and the perfect plant; and throughout it all, he was ready to share immediately everything he learned. Because of this, quite a few of us got to know Jim Wells.

However, those of us that were fortunate enough to know the Well's family realized that this was not a one-man show—Cecil has been with him all the way. During World War II when Jim was raising food crops in England, girls were conscripted to work on the farms since all the men were in the army or navy. It was Cecil who saw that these girls were taken care of, housed, and fed.

Later at Wells Nursery in New Jersey, she again became a surrogate mother. This time to the English horticulture students that came to work at the nursery—Jim being the educator here once again. Her vacation time was spent interviewing these students in England and seeing to it they were taken care of as with the girls in England during the war. As I mentioned before, she was with Jim when helping to get other chapters of this Society started.

Although we all can agree the life of a nursery wife is very often difficult, Cecil has met this challenge with grace and energy. I'm sure Jim will not mind my repeating what he said to me in a serious moment sometime ago, "without Cecil I never would have amounted to anything."

And so it is we honor two people today, two people who have meant so much to this Society, the nursery industry, and those of us who have known them throughout the years.

To commemorate this occasion, we have a plaque from the Plant Propagators' Society—Eastern Region for Jim and also another plaque which reads "A tribute to Cecil Wells—For her inspirational support in a very successful partnership, with grateful appreciation, from members of I.P.P.S. and other horticultural friends."

AWARDS PRESENTATIONS

PRESIDENT BEATTIE: It is my pleasure to make the next award. Will Darrel Apps come forward. I have know Darrel for a number of years and have enjoyed our friendship and enjoyed working with him. In fact I owe my job at Penn State to him. I enjoyed working with him when he was at Longwood Gardens and with the Perennial Plant Association. Darrel was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Eastern Region for 3 years. To show our appreciation as an organization, we have an original botanical print from about 1810 of a hand-colored daylily. I took a look at it earlier and it is amazing how vibrant the colors are after all these years.

FELLOW RECIPIENTS—EASTERN REGION

TIM BROTZMAN: This is the fifth year that Fellow recipients have been given. We have an outstanding group of individuals for you today. They are recognized for their contributions to the field of propagation, but also for their contribution to the Eastern Region at large. The recipients are the following:

- **Jack Alexander:** The first award goes to a person who has been a member for 18 years. Every year he moderates the New Plants presentation of our conference. He is a noted propagator and is always willing to share his knowledge if you call.
- **Darrel Apps:** You have heard earlier this morning about the contributions of our next recipient. He has been a solid supporter of I.P.P.S. and he is intent to flaunt his floral creations across the landscape of the U.S.
- **Dick Bir:** The next individual has only been a member for 10 years but has had a very productive time. He has participated every single year that I have been here. He could be a Southern Region member but because of the altitude that he lives probably feels more at home with us and makes the trip every year to our meeting.
- **Don Shadow:** Our next recipient can not be with us because he is preparing to speak at the Southern Region. He is a true southerner but feels a strong affinity for our region because of the plants he grows. He is also a past president of the Eastern Region and feels honored that we would give him an award. He sends his regrets that he could not be with us.
- **Robert Simpson:** Our last award goes to member who joined in 1952 which is 2 years after its founding. We know his name very well and also his plant contributions to the industry including hollies, crabapples, and hawthorns. He could not be with us today, however, his daughter Betsy has come to accept the award for him.