

would have been available today without his involvement, a matter of Creech being at the right place at the right time. Both plants were introduced by Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman at the June 26, 1968, meeting of the American Institute of Architects in Portland, Oregon, to honor two distinguished Americans. It was on this occasion that Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson delivered the first B. Y. Morrison Memorial Lecture.

Not as familiar to the azalea community as the very popular 'Ben Morrison', 'Mrs LBJ' is described in the June 26, 1968, press release as "an evergreen azalea that grows 3 feet tall, with leaves that are medium green and shiny on new growth. Its flowers are described as "hose-in-hose" – a trumpet inside a trumpet, making almost a double flower. The flowers are white, with some frills on the edges, and are 2 to 3 inches across. The flowers grow in clusters of two or three. 'Mrs LBJ' blooms in late May and is hardy to Zone 7, which includes southern New Jersey, Delaware, most of eastern Maryland, northern Virginia, and Tennessee." [10] Subsequent research has shown that it was Clone D in a series of azaleas produced by Albert Close at Glenn Dale, which utilized 'Seattle White' as the seed parent. The recently introduced 'Brookside Delight' is a sister seedling. [11]

'Ben Morrison', which needs little introduction, was described as "grows to 3 feet tall. It has medium green, dull leaves and single flowers up to 3 inches across, 2 or 3 in a cluster. The flowers have rose centers and white borders, with blotches of darker rose. It blooms in middle to late May, and is also hardy in Zone 7." [10,12]

Conclusion

Thomas Jefferson, one of America's great early horticulturists and third President of the United States amongst his many other accomplishments, appreciated the rela-

tionship between mankind and the environment. By his actions, he supported conservation, agricultural education, and plant exploration and introduction. In a 1797 letter to M. Giraud, Jefferson put into context the importance of the search for new crops when he wrote: "One such service of this kind rendered to a nation is worth more to them than all the victories of the most splendid pages of their history, and becomes a source of exalted pleasure to those who have been instrumental in it." He later elaborated on that concept in an 1800 memorandum, when he wrote: "The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture." [13] Jefferson was expressing his own feelings of satisfaction for his many contributions to the world of agriculture. With more than five decades of dedicated service to his country, John Creech, patriot, planter explorer, and scientist identifies well with Jefferson's point of view as one of America's distinguished horticulturists.

Notes and Endnotes

1. Undated Background Statement distributed by the US National Arboretum when Dr. Creech assumed the position of Director in 1973.
2. Lee, Frederic P. 1965. *The Azalea Book*. 2nd Edition, D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1965.
3. "Bell Station" was the common name for the Glenn Dale Plant Introduction Station (or Plant Introduction Garden). "Bell" was actually the name of the interurban trolley line station that was adjacent to the property. That is also the explanation for "Bell Number," the working number assigned to crosses and to selections from crosses prior to naming and introduction.
4. October 19, 1959. Memorandum entitled "Species Crosses in Rhododendron" from J. L. Creech to C. O. Erlanson.

Brookside Gardens Chapter Support

Dr. Charles Evans (left), president of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, presented a check to David A. Vismara, director of Brookside Gardens, at the December 4, 2005, chapter meeting. The chapter's contribution supported the annual Green Matters Symposium Series, held in February 2006 that is sponsored by Brookside Gardens. The program focuses on environmental, ethical, and educational issues. (Photo by William C. Miller III)

