

Society News

Jenkins, Schild honored at annual meeting

By Allen Owings—Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Two Distinguished Service Awards were conferred during the ASA annual convention in March.

Ms. Margie Y. Jenkins of Amite, Louisiana, was recognized for her lifetime contributions to the landscape and nursery industry.



▲ Margie Y. Jenkins

Ms. Jenkins'

generous efforts to promote the proper use of azaleas and their companion plants to home gardeners and, more importantly, the commercial horticulture industry have had a significant impact on the industry.

The increased use of azalea hybrid groups (such as the Robin Hill cultivars) not commonly available in significant numbers several years ago in the southeastern United States can be attributed to her interest in growing and distributing the plants prior to other wholesale producers. She has inspired and educated countless numbers of green-industry professionals by unselfishly sharing her love and knowledge of azaleas and other interesting plants.

Friends everywhere know of Ms. Jenkins' desire to seek new plant information and her generosity in sharing plants. She has contributed greatly to numerous nursery and landscape associations such as the International Plant Propagators Association, Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, Southern Nursery Association, and the American Nursery and Landscape Association.

Ms. Jenkins has been instrumental in distributing and promoting many plants used in the industry today. We value her contributions to the Azalea Society of America.

A Distinguished Service Award was also presented to nurseryman, hybridizer, highly respected lecturer and author **Joseph E. Schild, Jr.**

Schild's lifetime of outstanding achievements merited the special award.



▲ Joe Schild, Jr.

Through his countless presentations to plant enthusiast groups and his plant explorations of the Appalachian gorges, plateaus and mountaintops, new selections, seed, and desirable natural hybrids have been introduced widely into aza-

lea cultivation. He has ensured a broader appreciation and knowledge of the value of these living jewels among our membership and supporters. He provided an extensive exposure to and knowledge of the uniqueness and value of native azaleas and their interspecific hybrids.

As part of his azalea education mission, Schild has been a dedicated supporter of the Azalea Society of America, authoring many articles for the journal. His leadership to develop the new Azalea City official accreditation for communities across the nation is a superb example of his dedication. In addition, establishing and organizing the Tennessee Valley Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society shows his great devotion toward ericaceous plants.

Schild's missionary work continues to include a project to establish as complete a collection of the Glenn Dale azaleas as may be possible for a public display garden at Reflection Riding Arboretum in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

ASA members have benefited from his inexhaustible support and work on behalf of the society. This special recognition acknowledges his tireless work of promoting azaleas, particularly our native azaleas found in the southeastern United States.

Letters to the Editor

I was delighted to see a photo of 'Spirit of Valdosta' on the cover of the Summer 2007 issue of *The Azalean*. However, I was disappointed there was no recognition given to the plant hybridizer and donor which, by the way, is one in the same.

I'd like to rectify that omission because I was somewhat involved during the whole process, and I know some of the players who deserve recognition. Joe Klimavicz, a long time member of the North Virginia Chapter, was the hybridizer and donor. The plant is Joe's hybrid LP 93-3 which is a cross of 'Elsie Lee' x 'Gay Paree'.

But recognition shouldn't stop here. Joe's wife and daughter, Caitlin, attended the Valdosta Azalea Festival to present the 'Spirit of Valdosta'. Caitlin spoke about the plant and the hybridization process at the dedication ceremony. The speech was broadcast by several radio stations across the south. You might remember Caitlin from her (high tech) article in the Fall 2005 issue of *The Azalean*.

This brings me to my final point. Joe did something that should be incorporated into the ASA Azalea City program. We should engage our member hybridizers to provide plants to be registered in the name of future Azalea Cities. Hey, why not make it retroactive?

We have a treasure in our hybridizers and, at the very least, we should recognize them. They are hard to come by these days.

James Thornton
Conyers, Georgia