

In Memory: Alice Johnson Holland



It is my sad duty to report the passing of Alice Holland on January 16, 2013. One of the original founders of the Azalea Society of America (ASA), Alice served as Acting Secretary during the formative period of the ASA beginning in 1977. An active member in the Brookside

Gardens Chapter, she was elected to the position of National Secretary and served in that capacity for six years. In addition, she was a member of the Board of Governors from 1979 to 1986 and again from 1988 to 1990.

Alice earned a degree in Home Economics from the University of Maryland and was an avid birdwatcher and gardener. She had a special love for azaleas which she believes began in 1960 when they moved into their new house off Connecticut Avenue near Kensington, Maryland. In the concluding remarks of the article that she published in 1997 (see "How It All Began," *The Azalean*, Vol. 19, No. 4, December, 1997, pp. 64 - 65), she confessed that a source of considerable satisfaction was: "I'm the lady that started the Azalea Society of America."

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Correction

On page 73 and 74 of the Winter 2012 issue of *The Azalean* the images of Bob Hobbs appeared without photo credits. The photo on page 73 should have been credited to Barry Sperling. The photo on page 74 should have been credited to Harold Belcher.

Thank you to Barry Sperling for bringing this to our attention.

How It All Began

Alice Holland - Silver Spring, Maryland

Editor's Note: This piece originally appeared in the December, 1997 issue of The Azalean. It is reprinted in memory of Mrs. Alice Holland. Thank you to Audrey Stelloh for suggesting this article.

I didn't fall in love until a few years after we moved to our new house in 1960. We occasionally would drive down Kensington Parkway in Kensington, Maryland, where in the spring there was a house whose whole grounds were one glorious azalea garden. We'd pull over to the side and just enjoy. At the time I didn't know that I'd ever have anything like that. I didn't know enough about gardening but I sure wanted to learn. I asked a neighbor whose passion happened to be roses if he knew of a good garden club that I might join. He recommended the Silver Spring Garden Club. I joined and met many wonderful people; among them were Paul and Rebecca Stadler of Stadler Nurseries, where I bought my first five azaleas. Paul would walk me all around his grounds to see the azaleas, which I think were his first love also. In later years the Stadlers sold their grounds to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission to become a large part of Wheaton Regional Park, of which Brookside Gardens is a substantial portion.

Another kindred soul I met was Emile Deckert. In his postage-stamp sized back yard he was growing so many lovely azaleas. Emile started out as a hairdresser; I went to his home to have my hair done for years. When Brookside Gardens became an entity, Emile was responsible for the azalea gardens there. He made most of those old Glenn Dale azaleas from cuttings out of Stuart Armstrong's garden and set them out all over the hills under the pines with mulch around them; they dug no holes. When the Silver Spring Garden Club voted to give Barry Yinger \$1,000 toward his trip to Japan to bring back Satsukis, Emile grew those too, from cuttings, in a special garden below the Stadler house. We both used to bemoan the lack of information on azaleas, although Fred Lee's *Azalea Book* was our Bible. I occasionally attended an ARS meeting but gleaned very little on azaleas. One evening I was discussing this situation with my husband and he said, "So why don't you start an azalea club?" I told Emile what he'd said the