

Eugene Boeke Tribute

by Harry Risetto

Eugene Boeke passed away Saturday, September 29, 2012.

The dahlia world has lost a powerful force that immediately creates a saddening void. Gene's personal influence shaped individuals as well as the entire American Dahlia Society. Gene Boeke was larger than life. He was self-assured and could tell a story in the manner of Mark Twain or Garrison Keillor. He brought those qualities to the American Dahlia Society to both challenge and enliven us. At times he was impatient when we failed to follow the business practices that had made him successful. When he saw a project that needed a boost he gave seed money or more. His objective, however, was to encourage the membership to join him. He never wanted to be a one-man band. He was devoted to his "Bo" originations and set up a fund to encourage us to grow and exhibit them. He was a dahlia-man through and through.

Gene saw the value of the ADS and encouraged his colleagues on the Board to pass on value to the local societies—the website fund and color chart are two examples.

Gene was very interested in dahlia virus. He was a member of the Dahlia Society of Georgia for some 60 years. For many years Gene headed up the judging effort in the southern societies and due primarily to his efforts, the Carolinas Society became part of the Southern States Dahlia Society. Most recently, Gene embraced the establishment of the dahlia archives at the Cherokee Garden Library in Atlanta. Unfortunately his illness deprived him of an opportunity to give it his personal touch. I am sure that he would appreciate memorial gifts to the ADS to support the archive project, which hopefully will ultimately bear his name. The ADS valued Gene's insights, his ability to share and teach, and of course, everyone loved his stories. He left us too soon.

Gene's wife, Joy, would appreciate a word of kindness.

Joy Boeke
11062 Big Canoe
Jasper, GA 30134