William J. Wolkoff

October 26, 1922 – November 4, 2026

It is with profound sadness and heavy hearts that we share the passing of William (Bill) Wolkoff.

Bill married his beloved wife in 1944, and together they raised four children. He became a widower in 1994 and was blessed with a large, loving family. Bill proudly served in the United States Army during World War II. He was also a Master Gardener and Master Carpenter, talents that would leave an extraordinary and lasting mark on our community.

Bill was instrumental in the resurgence of the Long Island Dahlia Society. His vision, creativity, and dedication led him to propose, design, and build our beautiful dahlia display garden at Bayard Cutting Arboretum in Great River, New York.

Over the following several decades, Bill continued to shape and enhance the garden. He designed meandering pathways, unique garden beds, and an impressive variety of hardscaping features. Among his many contributions was a grand trellis with built-in benches and colorful birdhouses, creating a beautiful backdrop at one end of the garden. He also designed and built large pergolas with seating, a tall purple martin birdhouse, and countless other features. There simply isn't enough room to list all the improvements and special touches Bill brought to our garden.

Bill was a familiar and beloved presence at the garden, often visiting three times a week. He helped plant dahlias, tie and trim the plants, design and build new beds and benches, and take care of whatever needed attention. His dedication never wavered.

Even after reaching the age of 100, Bill continued to visit and lend a helping hand whenever he could. He would often say, "I wish I could do more, but my physical body prevents me." Yet he still found ways to contribute through his knowledge, advice, and encouragement. He was always willing to answer questions and help fellow gardeners with their dahlias.

Bill always had a smile and was a generous contributor to our society. He was a true gentleman, a dear friend, and an inspiration to us all.

Over the years, large numbers of visitors come to enjoy our dahlia garden, and they are continually amazed by the beauty of the flowers and the surroundings. Bill was often there, happily sharing his knowledge and talking with visitors about the garden he helped create. Through his vision, craftsmanship, and generosity, Bill touched many lives and brought happiness to so many people.

Being his friends and fellow dahlia enthusiasts has been a great blessing to us all. We are grateful for the time we shared with him, the wisdom he imparted, and the extraordinary legacy he leaves behind.

Bill's vision, dedication, kindness, and love of gardening will live on in every corner of the garden he helped create and in the hearts of all who knew him.

He will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

Rest in peace dahlia friend.