

## Association Service Award Winners

### Dr. Richard W. Lighty and Sally Lighty

**D**r. Richard (Dick) W. Lighty is truly one of the most influential people in public horticulture. Not only has he shown selfless service to the American Public Gardens Association as a former Board member, he has contributed greatly to some of our most prestigious member institutions, enriching their research programs, collections, and serving as a mentor to many staff and students. His lovely wife, Sally Lighty, (whom he met at the tender age of four years) has worked alongside Dr. Lighty since they were married in 1961, providing invaluable support and guidance.

After graduating from Cornell University with a Ph.D in plant genetics, Dick accepted a position at Longwood Gardens where he forwarded their research and breeding programs from 1960 to 1966. In 1966, he began coordinating the Longwood Graduate Program where he mentored several truly great leaders in public horticulture, including this year's Honorary Life Member Award recipient, Jane Pepper.

In 1983, Dick accepted a position as Director at Mt. Cuba Center where he directed the garden's focus on native piedmont flora and established the property as a public garden. After serving as their Director for 15 years, Dick "retired"— though he has continued to significantly contribute professionally for the decades since this time.

Sally Lighty has reinforced Dick's accomplishments through her own great successes and skills while also serving the industry in her own right. More than just Dick's childhood sweetheart, Sally is equally worthy of acknowledgement when celebrating his many achievements. She has served as Dick's plant record keeper, administrator, speechwriter, ghost-writer, editor, a teacher, a champion of childhood education,



a mentor, and a host to generations of graduate students. Her support has been steadfast and notable.

Dick Lighty's vast service to the Association has not been without previous recognition. In 1983, he received our Honorary Life Member Award, but the magnitude and breadth of his continuous service since this time warrants further recognition. Through the 1970s and 1980s he inspired much change and evolution as Board Vice President (1976-1977) and President (1978-1979). During the 2000s, he went on to serve on the NAPCC (now Plant Collections Network) Task force. Executive Director Casey Sclar shared, "Dick spoke then to the vision of what the NAPCC program could aspire to be and has

become now as the Plant Collections Network." Dick's most recent contributions have been that of publication historian. He was consulted many times for our 75th Anniversary issue of *Public Garden* and contributed the article "Making Public Gardens Indispensable", a piece that complemented another comparable article he wrote for *Public Garden's* 50th Anniversary issue.

The American Public Gardens Association is not the only organization that has benefitted from the Lighty's guidance. Dick has also held or holds board positions for the Center for Plant Conservation, Longwood Gardens, Williamson College of the Trades, and the Garden Conservancy.

We congratulate both Dick and Sally on this prestigious award. Their contributions to our Association and the industry have been tireless, selfless and of the highest rank. Thank you for everything you have done for us.