

Preeminent daffodil hybridizer and good friend, Dr. John Reed, died November 22, 2020, due to complications from the COVID virus. He had been back and forth from a physical rehab facility to the Memorial Hospital in South Bend, Indiana a few times after a fall on his hard tile floor on Oct. 9. As late as Tuesday, Nov. 17, he seemed to be recovering from a bout of bacterial pneumonia, albeit slowly, but took a severe turn for the worse the night of Wed., Nov 18, and was placed in hospice care on Saturday, Nov. 21.

Hosting "The Big Dig" for nearly 25 consecutive years, (May 2020 would have been his 25th year, but it was a victim of COVID, too) John was the best friend a daffodil society in the Midwest could have had. His digging day gave us a reason to get together on Memorial Day and his bulbs padded our show beds and our societies' treasuries. We all owe him a great deal, yet there is not a way to say a final goodbye or thank you since funerals have been all but banned and he won't be having one. I know beautiful photos of his flowers - from shows and gardens - submitted to Daffseek next Spring would give him the greatest joy, and I suggest we honor him in that way.

John started in daffodils in 1977 while still in Med School because he just loved daffodils, and had since childhood. It is not stretching the truth to say that until the last few years, his favorite topics of conversation were either about daffodils or about daffodil people.

His goal had always been to breed hardy healthy bulbs for the Midwest with the rich, pure colors previously only found in daffodils grown in Oregon and England. He succeeded beyond his goal with reds from pink breeding and red and orange trumpets, and has many more seedlings in the pipeline which will likely be named and introduced in the future.

Julie Martin, his longtime assistant at Oakwood, caregiver, and good friend, and her daughter, Christina Waggoner and their families might appreciate a condolence card for those so inclined.

Julie Martin

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John had achieved the most prestigious accolades of the Daffodil World, being awarded the Peter Barr Cup in 2019 and the ADS Gold Medal in 2010. His most long-term achievement, though, will be the daffodil bulbs he has shared, both here and overseas, and the people he has mentored and left behind who will no doubt move on to further his work. He will be sorely missed.