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## AMERICAN DAFFODIL SOCIETY (ADS) 2023 SILVER MEDAL RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED!

**Atlanta, GA** – Dianne Mrak of Dover, NH, was awarded the 2023 American Daffodil Society Silver Medal on March 10, 2023, at the American Daffodil Society Spring Convention in Atlanta, GA.

The American Daffodil Society Silver Medal may be awarded to an individual deemed by the Honors Committee as being worthy of recognition for outstanding service to the American Daffodil Society.



In 2023 the Silver Medal is being awarded to someone whose service is remarkable in length as well as breadth and depth. Dianne Mrak has served key roles at the local, regional, and national levels by mentoring new members, organizing local shows, and serving on numerous committees. She has fostered long-standing friendships with hybridizers both in the United States and internationally.

Dianne's daffodil journey began in 1970 when a dear friend took her to the Maryland Daffodil Society's Show to see pink daffodils. From that humble beginning, pink daffodils took over her heart and life. Since then, she has learned to love all daffodils although she still has a fondness for pink ones! Dianne joined the American Daffodil Society in 1974, and attended her first convention in Williamsburg, VA. During the late 1970's Dianne moved to the Atlanta, GA, area and joined the Georgia Daffodil Society. She became a full-fledged ADS Judge, expanded her daffodil collection to 100 varieties, and won her first 'Best in Show' with a pretty pink trumpet called 'Patricia Reynolds'.



During the 1980's Dianne moved her family to Connecticut and then New Hampshire. She dutifully dug, re-planted, and cared for her daffodils and continued to show her blooms at local daffodil shows in Dublin, NH, and then Peterborough, NH.

In 1987 Dianne moved to Pittsburgh, PA, in an area called Upper St. Clair. She was disappointed there wasn't a daffodil society or club in the area. Through her association with other local plant societies, she was encouraged to start a daffodil and hosta group. So, Dianne became a Founding member of the *Daffodil and Hosta Society of Western Pennsylvania*, along with a young man named Steve Hampson. Throughout her time in Pittsburgh, she served as an ADS Regional VP a couple of times, an ADS Regional director in alternate years, chaired and ran the very first Daffodil Show for her local society, and then moved the show over to Phipps Conservancy after the first year because it had grown so much. In 1999, the *Daffodil and Hosta Society of Western Pennsylvania* hosted the ADS National Convention. With Dianne Mrak as Convention Chair, and

Steve Hampson being her Horticulture chair as well as her right-hand man, this annual event was one of the largest attended ADS conventions having more than 300 attendees.

While living in Pittsburgh, Dianne started having annual 'Daffodil Open Gardens' to educate the general public about the different types of daffodils. At Fall daffodil meetings she would hand out her excess bulbs to new members as well as established members. She gave lectures to garden clubs and also

donated daffodil bulbs to them. During her last year in Pittsburgh, she became an ADS Judges' Instructor, and she started an ADS Judges' School.

During the Fall of 2000, Dianne moved back to New Hampshire, where she pretty much settled down for good. When she moved back, she brought her collection of bulbs which had swollen to over 1000 different varieties and estimates to have added another 400-500 more since that move. While in New Hampshire she continued to volunteer to be the ADS Regional VP and Regional Director, as well as chairing the ADS Nominating Committee a couple of years. She took over the Seven States Daffodil Show at Tower Hill Botanical Gardens early in the 2000's. And up until this year, she organized the many details for this local daffodil show. Dianne also continued to have her annual 'Daffodil Open Gardens' event and gave programs to garden clubs.

From 1970 to the present, Dianne still mentors' people about the different types of daffodils and has tried to make her garden an educational one for people to learn from. At every place she has lived, she has always given away bulbs to friends and acquaintances so they can enjoy daffodils long after she is gone. She still hears from people when their daffodils start blooming, and so, they still keep in touch.

Along the way, one of the most satisfying things that daffodils have given her is meeting and becoming wonderful friends with many daffodil people as well as hybridizers. She's been able to travel to England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, and our beautiful United States to attend daffodil shows and World Conventions as well as our Conventions held most years. This past August and September, she was able to travel to Australia and New Zealand and visit with many different daffodil people and hybridizers, some for the last time. Daffodils have so enriched her life and she is so very thankful that it all began because of a friend telling her about pink daffodils!

Some comments from her nominations include,

*"She very early on gifted me 'Show Bulbs' that I would never have had access to and has always checked in to see how I am doing in my daffodil beds. This interest I have come to know as "The ADS way."...she is a wonderful ADS ambassador."*

*"(Her) keen interest in promoting access to 'quality Show Bulbs,' has broadened New England's awareness of the exciting bulbs from Australia and New Zealand."*

*"Her involvement has elevated our community's Daffodil experience. Her presence is felt at every Daffodil Show in New England...she is a giant in the Daffodil world."*

We have only named a few of Dianne's acts of service to the American Daffodil Society. She has served the ADS with grace, insight, and leadership since 1974, and has been a mentor to many daffodil friends around the world. Ms. Mrak joins a prestigious group of individuals who have given, and continue to donate, their exceptional service to the American Daffodil Society.