

THE PETER BARR MEMORIAL CUP 2002

AWARDED TO MRS ELISE HAVENS



Elise Havens is the daughter of the late Grant E Mitsch whose name has been synonymous with daffodils since he started hybridizing in 1934 and supplying them to enthusiasts in 1945. Elise and her husband Richard have been running Grant Mitsch Novelty Daffodils since 1973, steadily building and enhancing the firm's reputation as the primary suppliers of top quality and novel daffodils in America. Elise (see Fig. 26) now proudly follows her illustrious father as the most recent winner of this most prestigious award - Grant Mitsch was awarded the Cup in 1973. She would also want to acknowledge the major contribution that Richard has made to their accomplishments.

With her father's encouragement Elise started making her own crosses at an early age, and some 15 cultivars were registered and catalogued between 1975 and 1979, perhaps the best known being 'Graduation' 2W-WWP and 'Pay Day' 1 YYW-W. There was then a break until the early 1990s, presumably because Elise had left to pursue another career. Since that time more than 100 cultivars have been registered, covering most divisions. Famous amongst these have been the break-through crosses in yellow/pink trumpets and large cups: 'American Heritage' 1YYW-P, 'American Dream' 1Y-P and 'Oregon Pioneer' 2Y-P; and the fertile Jonquilla hybrids which open a door to further progress and development of colours in the higher divisions. Meanwhile split-corona daffodils have been brought to a new level of refinement and acceptance. Numerous excellent daffodils of other types are also gracing show benches and the gardens of enthusiasts throughout the world.

Elise Havens does not regard competitive exhibition of daffodils as a high priority activity. However, her customers do this job so effectively for her that Havens cultivars are dominant in USA shows and are widely exhibited elsewhere.

Elise is a director of the American Daffodil Society, and is currently Chairman of the Standing Committee on Hybridizing. She has been a regular contributing speaker at ADS conventions and Chairman of the annual Hybridizers' Breakfast. She received the ADS Gold Medal in 1997.

Elise Havens has travelled widely, including to the United Kingdom, and has exhibited at the London Daffodil Show on at least two occasions. She is a wonderful ambassador for daffodils and her country. Deep thinking, charming and generous, the ever-smiling Elise has made a host of friends in daffodil circles throughout the world. She is "Queen of Daffodils" in her homeland, and she is arguably the world's most outstanding hybridizer, producing as she does, wonderful new daffodils in practically the whole range of daffodil divisions in the Classified List.

It was my pleasure to announce that Elise Havens was the recipient of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup for 2002 and to present a framed picture of the Cup to her at the American Daffodil Society Convention in Cincinnati.

The popularity of the RHS decision was illustrated by the standing ovation accorded to Elise.

Brian Duncan

Daffodil, Snowdrop and Tulip

