

Mary Lou Gripshover

Peter Barr Memorial Trophy

BRIAN S DUNCAN

From whatever field of activity past winners of the Peter Barr Memorial Trophy have come they invariably share an early and all-consuming love and dedication to daffodils. This year's worthy recipient is no exception. Although her early family gardening influence was vegetables, Mary Lou Gripshover and her husband planted their first daffodils when they bought their first house in 1959. Four years later Mary Lou exhibited daffodils and tulips for the first time. She found that daffodils had a special appeal; they were easier than tulips in that the stems stayed straight and the bulbs increased instead of disappearing. She commenced hybridising in 1967 concentrating on miniature daffodils. (She plans to register her first two seedlings in 1993.)

In 1969 Mary Lou joined the American Daffodil Society and has since been a major influence within the Society at local and national level through her enthusiasm for growing and exhibiting daffodils and especially in her dedication and willingness to work for the general interest of the society, its members and for the promotion of daffodils. Because of these qualities, combined with a quiet, unassuming administrative flair, she has been called upon to occupy many key roles in the ADS including those of show reporter, Regional Vice-President, Nominating Committee Chairman and Convention Chairman. Between 1978 and 1986 she was Editor of the ADS Journal introducing colour to its pages and elevating the publication to a level which made it the best of its kind and the most sought-after by the world's daffodil fraternity.

In 1989, Mary Lou unselfishly gave up the opportunity to be President of the ADS and instead took on her present onerous role as Executive Director — which entails looking after the interests and needs of some 1,500 members. In this position she has had a major influence in forging links with daffodil growers around the world. In recognition of her services to the ADS she was awarded the prestigious Silver Medal in 1984. Mary Lou is now USA Registrant of daffodil names, liaising closely with Sally Kington at the RHS, and responsible for the maintenance and updating of the ADS's daffodil data bank.

Besides these activities, Mrs Gripshover is an accredited judge and an instructor at ADS judging schools. She was also largely instrumental in organising, assembling and setting up comprehensive daffodil exhibits at the Cincinnati Flower and Garden Society Shows which provided such an excellent platform to bring better daffodils to the attention of a much wider visiting public.

However, growing and showing of daffodils have remained her consuming passions and there is scarcely a major ADS award at local and national level which Mary Lou has not won at some time or other. Most important among these awards are the Gold Quinn Award for 24 standard daffodils and the Gold Watrous for a collection of miniatures — both at national shows; the Laurus Award for hybridising miniatures; the Link Award for cultivars raised by the



Mary Lou Gripshover receiving the Peter Barr Memorial Trophy from John Blanchard (photograph by George Tarry)

exhibitor, and the American Horticultural Society Gold Medal for 15 American-bred daffodils.

Daffodils in the Gripshover garden are beautifully blended into the landscaping of the property which backs onto open woodland — no sign here of regimental rectangular beds for exhibition only. The daffodils must be dual-purpose, and the method of growing and display provides a good test of the relative garden and exhibition merits of the many varieties grown.

It was fitting that the Peter Barr Memorial Trophy was awarded to Mary Lou Gripshover in a year when she was visiting the UK and a contingent of ADS colleagues were in London to witness and share in her pleasure during the presentation of the trophy by John Blanchard, Chairman of the Narcissus and Tulip Committee.

We wish Mary Lou continued success and enjoyment with her daffodil interests in the future.