

In Memory

In Memory: Roger Crowle Brown 1930 - 2013



It is with sadness that I report the passing of Roger Brown at his home in Fayetteville, PA, on January 15, 2013. A very important figure in the early days of the Azalea Society of America (ASA), he was born on January 6, 1930 in

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. A graduate of Central Technical School in Toronto, he served an apprenticeship (printing) at the Toronto Telegram where he was subsequently employed until 1966. He got a job with Judd & Detweiler, Inc. the famous Master Printers, in Washington, DC, and later joined the Washington Transit as an AA Mechanic.

Roger and his wife Marion made their home in New Carrollton, Maryland, about five minutes from Frank White's Azalea Acres Nursery in Lanham. Roger's interest in azaleas and his proximity to Frank White were largely responsible for the formation of the Ben Morrison Chapter in 1980. Roger served as chapter president from 1980 to 1984 and was an ex officio member of the ASA Board of Governors during that period. He was exceptionally good with his hands, and one of his passions was building model ships. His collection of highly detailed model ships was impressive and of museum quality. His fascination with azaleas led to his interest in asexual azalea propagation. He designed and constructed a "rooting chamber" to root cuttings in his basement. A hobbyist propagator, he was only interested in making enough money by the sale of plants to "keep him in pots and peat." He was always generous with the plants that he produced, and I managed to talk him into propagating several hundred small plants of 'Pocono Pink' for those who attended the 10th Annual ASA National Meeting in Bethesda, Maryland in 1988. I later learned that as a consequence of helping me, it

meant that he had to forgo producing plants for sale that year. Despite my protest, he declined any sort of compensation.

Roger's home in New Carrollton was also near the Plant Introduction Station at Glenn Dale, Maryland. Recognizing the historic importance of the USDA facility at Glenn Dale, Roger made arrangements to meet Dr. Howard Waterworth, the location leader at Glenn Dale. Over a three year period, Roger's efforts led to the creation of a national ASA activity that became known as the "Glenn Dale Preservation Program" (See *THE AZALEAN*, Vol 5, No. 3, September 1983, pp. 52-54). On June 17, 1982, authorization was granted by the USDA, under a revokable permit, for the ASA to commence restoration activities and to establish a germplasm resource area at the Glenn Dale station. Almost a year later, ASA members attending the 5th ASA National Meeting toured the historic Glenn Dale facility on April 30, 1983, and saw where the Glenn Dale azalea hybrids were developed. As a result of the cooperative effort at the Glenn Dale station, access to the historic files was granted and the analysis of original azalea working documents and files made possible the publication of "The Bell Book" and "The Glenn Dale Azaleas - Revised 1996," references for the study of the 454 Glenn Dale hybrid azaleas.

In 1998, Roger retired and they moved to Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, where he continued his interest in azaleas in a slightly more challenging climate. Knowing Roger, it proved to be only a minor adjustment. He could root a toothpick anywhere.

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