It is with sadness that I report the passing of Jane Kinzie on December 5, 2018, from a voracious form of metastatic cancer [See Fig.1]. Born on February 5, 1944 to Lowell E. and Emily L. Parrish in Salt Lake City, Utah, Emily Jane Parrish attended East High School and graduated in the class of 1962. She earned an undergraduate degree in English from Utah University and a graduate degree in English from the University of Oregon. On December 1, 1967, Jane wed Norman Kent Boyd and became Jane P. Boyd, but the marriage later ended in divorce. In 1968, Jane came East, where she began a career in satellite communications at COMSAT (Communications Satellite Corporation). COMSAT was created by the Communications Satellite Act of 1962, during the Kennedy administration, to develop a commercial and international satellite communications system. When the International Telecommunications Satellite Consortium (INTELSAT) was created, Jane became one of their first employees. On November 27, 1985, she married Robert W. (Bob) Kinzie, the president of the Communication Services Division at COMSAT. In 1995 after a remarkable career, she retired from INTELSAT having risen to the position of Director of Human Resources, to pursue her love of flowers. Even in retirement, however, Jane remained connected to her friends and colleagues at INTELSAT. She was a founding member of the INTELSAT Retirees and Alumni Association (IRAA) and served as its first secretary. She remained in that capacity for several decades. This effort included the publication of the IRAA newsletter that she faithfully managed for many years.

In retirement, Jane established Kinzie Farms Nursery, with 12 greenhouses, in Poolesville, Maryland, to produce azaleas and to provide a full array of horticultural design and construction services, including deer control...a significant local problem for which solutions are greatly in demand. While the nursery opted not to ship plants, it became an established source for “landscape size” (big) azaleas. For the most part, the local gardening community (i.e., garden centers, grocery stores, hardware stores, and box stores) offers plants up to three-gallons in size, which are often too small for landscape architect specifications and requirements. In 2000, Jane and Bob expanded their business in a new direction by establishing Kinzie Backup Generator Systems, which became the leading residential dealer for Cummins Onan generators on the East Coast.

In 1997, Jane joined the Azalea Society of America, and that would have been when our paths first crossed. I quickly became aware that Kinzie Farms produced a quality plant and had a good selection, which made it easy to recommend them as a good and reliable source. While she was never...
a regular participant in local chapter activities, she was nevertheless a major behind-the-scenes supporter. Jane was always approachable and happy to donate plants for the various chapter-sponsored activities. One could sense that she had a management background. She was very organized, communicated well, and had “people skills.” Occasionally, she would call me or send me an email. Often it was to see what I knew about a particular azalea cultivar. It was a two-way street, and I always learned something from our conversations.

When the Brookside Gardens Chapter co-sponsored the ARS/ASA National Meeting in May 2006, Jane and Bob’s 1.5-acre Bethesda home was on the tour [See Fig. 2]. That year was special because it was a nearly “perfect” spring, and we were looking at peak bloom. In any year, Jane’s magnificent garden would have been worth a visit, but that year the Kinzie garden was spectacular.

Another major contribution for which I will always be grateful, was that she did all the propagations for the formal introductions of the evergreen azaleas ‘Brookside Delight’ in 2002 [See Fig. 3] and ‘Bobbi Gail’ in 2008. By far, the greatest mistake one can make when introducing a new plant, is to create a demand for that new plant without creating a supply to meet the demand.

In July of 2009, I invited Jane to be a speaker at the Brookside Gardens Chapter’s annual meeting on December 6, 2009. She was initially reluctant and expressed concern that she wasn’t sure that what she had to say would be of interest. I still have my email response where I rattled off 17 wide ranging topics that I knew would be of a general interest to an azalea audience... from her “favorite” azaleas to her experiences in operating an azalea nursery. Her presentation, “Azaleas—A Local Grower’s Perspective,” described a little about her background but focused primarily on her extensive horticultural interests and activities. Her presentation was very revealing because few people are aware of the extent to which Maryland nursery operations are regulated by government. For her many contributions to the chapter and to the overall azalea community, Jane was awarded the 2009 Frederic P. Lee Commendation during the business portion of the meeting [See Fig. 4]. The Frederic P. Lee Commendation, established in 1982, was awarded annually for distinguished contributions to furthering the knowledge of propagation, care, and general appreciation of azaleas.

I had the opportunity to review some of the remembrances from Jane’s friends and former colleagues who were moved to share their feelings when they learned of her passing. They commented on “…her politeness and gentle voice,” that “her dedication and communication abilities were without equal,” that she “was gracious, generous, and incredibly diplomatic,” .... that she was “a friend and someone to whom you could turn for calm reassurance or helpful suggestions.” Jane touched a lot of lives over the years, and in doing so earned the respect and admiration of all who knew her. As for me, there is little that I can add, since their characterizations accurately reflected the person whose friendship I came to appreciate. I saw in Jane a quiet and gentle grace. She was a very nice person.

William C. Miller III is a recipient of the Brookside Gardens Chapter’s Frederic P. Lee Commendation (1988) and is twice the recipient of the ASA’s Distinguished Service Award (1995 and 2002). He was chairman of the ASA’s Glenn Dale Preservation Project, and a co-chairman of Dick West’s Ten Oaks Glenn Dale Project. He is past president of the Brookside Gardens Chapter, a former vice president of the ASA, a past member of the ASA board of directors, past co-chairman of the ASA’s membership committee, past chairman of the ASA’s public information committee, the longest serving member of the ASA’s Editorial Advisory Board, and a frequent contributor to The Azalean.

Fig. 4 — Jane Kinzie of Bethesda, Maryland, was presented the 2009 Frederic P. Lee Commendation at the Brookside Gardens Chapter annual meeting on Sunday, December 6, 2009.