

This "Judges Profile" for Dick Wagner appeared in the January 2001 issue of the Score Sheet.



Dick Wagner - Orchdist of the Year - MOS - September 2014

Everything happens for a reason, at least that is what I've been told.

I had given up my teaching position of three years (physiology and biology) at Rogers High School in Toledo, Ohio to return to school to pursue a career in medicine. I had obtained an AB in Zoology and a BSEd from Miami University, attended National Science Institute and Graduate School at the University of Toledo and finished my training in medicine at Des Moines University. My residency was completed in a Detroit area hospital and I entered a grueling specialty - Emergency Medicine.

Since I still had ties in Toledo, I frequently returned to visit friends. A trip to Toledo, a detour and a car accident were responsible for my lifetime odyssey with orchids. The sign on old Telegraph Road (I-75 detour) coming through Monroe, Michigan said "Ilgenfritz Orchids". I came to a dead halt as the traffic was backed up being blocked by a bashed in Ford. Rather than wait around, I took a side street to the advertised greenhouse and met Margaret Ilgenfritz, toured her green-houses and purchased three orchid plants - Phal. stuartiana, Rhy. Blue Angel and Paph. Maudiae. At that time I did not realize it, but I was bitten hard by the proverbial orchid bug.

From those three plants and a time span of 28 years developed a greenhouse with over 3,000 plants.

I soon joined the Michigan Orchid Society, Study Group 2, and the AOS. The organizations

plus their terrific members provided the background to augment my skills as a grower, and introduced me to other 'sub specialty' groups to which I belong. These include the International Phalaenopsis Alliance, The Pleurothallid Alliance, The Slipper Alliance, The Cymbidium Society, Species Club of Southern California and the Orchid Digest Corporation. Currently I am Programs Chair for the MOS as well as the 2nd VP. I spend many enjoyable hours working for the AOS as a member of the Historical Committee, our most recent project being cataloging and packing the archival material for transportation to our new home in Delray Beach. I'm on the Board of Directors (elect) for the Orchid Digest Corporation.

I grew under lights for approximately 7 years, but by the time 1980 rolled around I was ready for a greenhouse. Better conditions yielded better results and in 1984 I received (proudly) my first AOS award - Aerangis Amado Vasques 'Maxelle' AM/AOS. This got my competitive type A juices flowing resulting in 20+ AOS awards. I began hybridizing and to date my toothpick has resulted in 50+ new clones, some of which have garnered AOS awards. My favorites are paphs and phrags, but recently my attention is shifting to the bulbophyllums with their wild diversity of color and form, and to the delicate beauty of the lycastes.

In 1995 my adventure continued after taking an early retirement. I left the Emergency Department of Providence Hospital in Southfield, Michigan after spending a record twenty-five years of full time practice in the front lines of medicine. The decision was difficult (for about ten minutes) when I realized I now had bought the most precious of all gifts, the freedom of time and the ability to spend it as I pleased. In all fairness, I could not have chosen a more rewarding career. Medicine was good to me, but now it was time to move on.

The following spring I applied to be a student in the AOS judging program. I was accepted and recently elevated to Probationary Judge in the fall of 1999. Participation in GLJC currently includes Plant Registration Chair and Liaison to the Matthaei Gardens.

My 'non-orchid' side includes computer surfing (two networked Macs running in unison), gourmet cooking (when the mood strikes), maintaining my acre in Farmington Hills (ably assisted by my two loveable mutts, Mac and Barney) as well as a 'get away' on Marco Island, Florida, and travel and more travel. Formerly an avid skier and a golfer, I now prefer a fireplace, a glass of port and good conversation. I began music lessons at age 35 with the goal of being able to play the Adagio from the Sonata Pathetique (L. Van Beethoven). The mission was accomplished.

What is the glue that binds this avocation? First and foremost are the people, the 'old guard' from the 70's are still very much in touch and new faces with similar interests are constantly becoming part of my life. Travel - Some of my fondest memories are associated with the World Orchid Congresses as living in the treetops at the Arianau Lodge on the Amazon River, shooting the rapids at Iguazu (Rio), touring the Scottish Highlands (Glasgow) or "bombing" the blue ice of the glaciers of northern British Columbia with a single engine puddle jumper (Vancouver). The third ingredient of the glue is the challenge of the future.

My hope is this adventure is just beginning. Good thing I happened to glance up at a sign some 28 years ago.

Paphanatics named one of their crosses after Dick...Paphiopedilum Dick Wagner (bellatulum x Fanaticum). Here are three different clones of this cross.





Dr. Richard Oscar Wagner, Jr.

09/25/1938 - 02/01/2015

Dr. Richard O. Wagner, Jr. passed away peacefully at home on February 1, 2015, after a brief illness. Dr. Wagner was born September 25, 1938. He was the son of the late Richard O. Wagner, Sr. and Ruth (Biele) Wagner. He was the step-son of Helen (Riedy) Wagner.

Dr. Wagner was a graduate of Sandusky High School, Miami University, and the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Des Moines, Iowa. He practiced emergency room medicine at Pontiac General and St. John's Providence Hospital in Southfield and Novi, Michigan. Dr. Wagner was an avid orchid grower, and was a noted American Orchid Society certified judge and long-term member of Michigan Orchid Society. He had numerous awarded orchids and traveled extensively judging orchid shows in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Wagner was also an avid art collector. He was a member of the North Star Sail Club and enjoyed sailing with his partner, Bob. Dr. Wagner is survived by his half-sister Tami Wagner Murray, half -brothers Reid (Nancy), Gary (Cindy), Jude, and Monte (Madeline), as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and grand-nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his mother, father, and sister, Carol, in infancy and his brother-in-law Michael T Murray.

Dr. Richard O. Wagner will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and cohorts. A memorial celebration will be held April 25, 2015 at 11am at McCabe Funeral Home, 31950 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society and Almost Home Animal Rescue, Southfield, MI.