

# American ROSES



2006 Annual

# O Rose, Who Dares to Name Thee?

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*"I once had a rose named after me and I was very flattered. But I was not pleased to read the description in the catalogue: No good in a bed, but fine up against a wall." Eleanor Roosevelt*

It isn't certain whether these words, often ascribed to Eleanor Roosevelt, were actually written or spoken by the former first lady, but given how quickly the 'Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt' rose fell from popularity, it wouldn't appear that this 1933 orange sport of 'Talisman' was particularly fine, even up against a wall. In fact, R. Marion Hatton, then secretary of the American Rose Society, wrote in the *1936 Australian Rose Annual*: "Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt', an orange sport of 'Talisman', is a flop; most of the flowers are 'Talisman'." ("A Good Year in America" by R. Marion Hatton, *1936 Australian Rose Annual*)

How then, did a rose of dubious distinction come to be named for one of the greatest figures in American history? Or, to turn the question around, how was it that Eleanor Roosevelt did not have an outstanding rose bear her name? Though the answer to the first question is likely buried in history, it's clear from a cursory examination of roses named for famous personages that there's often little relationship between the quality of the rose and the impor-

ance or popularity of the person for whom it was named.

*O rose, who dares to name thee?*

*No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet,*

*But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubblewheat,*

*Kept seven years in a drawer, thy titles shame thee.*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning,  
"A Dead Rose"



*Eleanor Roosevelt and the 'Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt' rose.*

names for their new introductions based upon sales/marketing considerations, rose hybridizers may name their roses in honor or in memory of family members, friends, mentors, significant places or events, or for fellow hybridizers. I've often wondered how many a well-known rose breeder has been so honored only to find that the rose isn't particularly to her or his liking? And upon learning this, how many have had the heart to decline such an honor, bestowed by a good friend and colleague?

I'd wager very few, though the number will never be known.

## Rose Naming Programs in North America

An ever-increasing number of rose nurseries and breeders have established programs through which the right to name a rose may be purchased, with fees for this privilege running the gamut from quite modest to the Jackson & Perkins Custom Rose Program, where for \$75,000 the buyer gets to choose the name of the rose and receives 300 "exclusive custom roses" along with certificates featuring the chosen name. Think that's a bit high a price for 300 roses and certificates? According to a J&P press statement, "each Custom Rose Program participant and a companion will be flown first-class to Los Angeles where they will enjoy two nights in a five-star hotel, dining in the region's elite restaurants and several other surprises. During their visit they will travel to the Jackson & Perkins research facility near Camarillo, Calif., to choose their personal rose. Dr. Keith Zary, Jackson & Perkins' vice president of research and winner of the coveted Golden Rose of The Hague award for rose hybridizing, will be there to host the tour and explain the history and genealogy of their selection." And if you still think this program pricey, the participant will also receive a case of Dom Perignon champagne to mark the arrival of the selected rose.

J. Benjamin Williams, known as the father of the miniflora, has been breeding roses for more than four decades, resulting in the commercial introduction of over 200 varieties, ranging from miniatures and minifloras to hybrid teas, shrubs and climbers. For those seeking to name a rose, he has developed a comprehensive program

tailored to the needs and desires of the client from new and unusual roses for exclusive introduction to the nursery industry to custom rose naming programs to suit the needs of corporations, organizations or individuals. His website offers glimpses of a number of roses currently available under their program [www.jbwilliamsandassociates.com](http://www.jbwilliamsandassociates.com).

Hortico's John Vanderkruk offers his thoughts on the topic: "Indeed the 'naming of a rose' has become quite popular in the last decade. It has been our goal here at Hortico (Ontario, Canada) to formulate a way to have the naming of a rose available to people of all walks of life worldwide! Also, because of our wonderful relationships with hybridizers around the globe, we are able to offer an incredibly wide variety of shapes and colours that are truly unique to the marketplace. By linking persons with hybridizers around the world, we feel that this gives exciting and equal opportunity for new rose introductions. While this may take a greater effort on our part, we feel it is a small way we can help the industry keep a grass roots touch to the introduction of new varieties." Hortico's program is summarized at: [www.hortico.com/custom/custom\\_naming.html](http://www.hortico.com/custom/custom_naming.html).

Moving to Canada's west coast, another rose-naming program is offered by Brad Jalbert of Select Roses (British Columbia). In Jalbert's own words: "I have been asked countless times about naming of a rose and have decided to include the information on the website. If you need more detailed information about the process or if I have any roses up for naming at this time, please call the nursery or email me at [selectroses@shaw.ca](mailto:selectroses@shaw.ca). I spend some of my time, well too much of it hybridizing new roses! I love the work and love creating new and interesting roses. The honour of having a rose named after a person is something very rare and in the world of plants it is the pinnacle of honour. No other plant in the world is coveted in the way roses are. They are without equal in the public's eye and bring more joy to my life than I can express.... It's not possible to explain in words the passion and devotion that go into developing each rose variety. Each and every new variety is a work of

art and expresses my vision in roses. [My rose naming program is] a way of helping me fund the breeding program and continue with my work. To be blunt it's sometimes a basic need to pay the greenhouse heat bills."

Jalbert offered a few varieties for naming in 2006, a fragrant white hybrid tea for C\$8,000, a peach-colored hybrid tea with hints of pink with old garden type blooms similar to the Austin English roses, also for C\$8,000 and a peach-colored mini, also in the English style, for C\$3,000. At the time this article went to press, rights to the first and third had been sold. Jalbert continues: "I'm new to this art, and sell my roses for a reasonable but lower price. The price does not mean one rose is of higher or lower quality but has more to do with the difficulty in breeding that type of rose or colour combination." Jalbert applies for registration for the new name and provides the client with 10 own-root plants. The rose is then propagated at the nursery and sold to customers with the chosen name.

And a third Canadian rose-naming program is offered by noted hybridizer George Mander, who offers a limited number of roses from his breeding program for C\$3,000. Mander's Roses of Excellence website may be found at: <http://www3.telus.net/georgemanders/>.

Back in the U.S., respected rose authority and hybridizer Paul Barden notes that he periodically offers seedlings for sale, for fees ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000. For that fee, according to Barden, the purchaser gets the seedling named and a number of own-root plants of that variety. He goes on to say that he does not breed hybrid teas or floribundas, but has a wide and interesting selection of miniatures, shrubs and old garden types available. Anyone interested in his program may contact him by e-mail at: [paul@gmail.com](mailto:paul@gmail.com).

Another approach is that taken by Ashdown's Paul Zimmerman who notes that while Ashdown does not have a formal rose-naming program, they have acted as facilitator in bringing hybridizers together with parties interested in acquiring rose-naming rights. Ashdown's website: [www.ashdownroses.com](http://www.ashdownroses.com).

Steve Singer, of Wisconsin Roses,

has a very straightforward procedure for naming roses that's outlined on his website at [www.wiroses.com/hybridization.html](http://www.wiroses.com/hybridization.html)

Singer will provide digital images of seedlings for selection from which the seedling to be named is chosen. He then registers the selected name, propagates the variety and provides a specified number of plants. Naming rights under his program start at \$7,500.

And Robbie Tucker, national exhibitor and hybridizer, explained that while he has different programs for naming minis and minifloras depending upon the requirements of the person wishing to name the rose, he limits himself to just a few per year. So far knowledge of his programs has spread only by word of mouth. Prices range from \$5,000 for naming rights and a negotiated number of plants with no marketing, to \$15,000 for his premium program. An example of a recent release (September 2006) under his premium program is 'John Boy', named by a lady in Florida for her late husband. Tucker will register the rose and provide up to 40 plants in 5-1/2 inch pots, each with a special commemorative dedication tag, for her friends and family. He'll then actively market the rose through his Rosemania operation for a minimum of five years, thereby increasing the likelihood that the rose will continue as a living memorial.

### **The Name of the Rose**

Much has been written about the naming of roses, both in the *American Rose Annual* and elsewhere. The legendary Ralph S. Moore, who as of this writing is still actively involved in his hybridizing efforts even as his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday approaches, provided an overview of his approach to naming roses in the 1973 *American Rose Annual*, in an article entitled "To Name A Rose." Sean McCann, another beloved hybridizer and rose historian, has written several articles on the topic. In "Give A Rose A Good Name" (*Garden News*, May 13, 1998), he wrote:

"Selecting a rose name may seem a simple operation but it can have its own consequences. What about some of these for unhappy associations—'Nearly Wild', 'Anna de Diesbach', 'Adelaide Hoodless', 'Atombombe', 'Hein Muck', 'Little Pooh',



'Rhode Island Red' (and the eggs she laid come free!)? But if good names made great roses surely then we would still be talking great things about 'Blushing Beauty', 'Caress', 'Chastity', 'Chuckles', and even 'Champion of the World!' These were all names given to roses long forgotten."

And if it's a review of roses named for today's celebrities you're looking for, Susan Morgan has compiled a who's who group for the Home and Garden TV Channel, including the likes of 'Whoopi Goldberg', 'Dolly Parton', 'Chris Evert', 'Barbra Streisand' and more, and written them up in a series of articles which can be found at: [www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl\\_plants\\_roses/article/0,1785,HGTV\\_3612\\_4426662,00.html](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_plants_roses/article/0,1785,HGTV_3612_4426662,00.html)

The number of categories of rose names is seemingly endless, as roses have been named for most every conceivable reason. Roses have been named for corporations ('Selfridges'), corporate products ('Aspirin Rose'), newspapers ('International Herald Tribune'), places ('Alabama'), and there's even a rose named for an airplane (the '777 Rose').

In his book, *The Rose – an Encyclopedia of North American Roses, Rosarians, and Rose Lore*, Sean McCann wrote: "It has been estimated that almost a third of given rose names are for people, while another third are general descriptive names such as the sun-bright 'Rise 'n' Shine', the colorful 'Over the Rainbow', and the shattering little striped red, orange and yellow 'Earthquake' (named soon after a quake hit the town of Coalinga, California)."

The one-third named for people can be broken down into countless sub-groups: roses named for rulers and leaders past and present ('Charlemagne', 'General Washington'), those named for celebrities ('Ingrid Bergman'), for fictional people ('Robin Hood'), gods or goddesses ('Zeus') or cartoon characters ('Snow White'), or for family members ('Lilian Austin') friends or mentors — the list goes on.

Perhaps the most poignant of reasons for naming a rose is to honor the memory of a lost child. Here we find stories of roses named in memory of children, where the rose not only provides a living memorial but also serves as a focal point to raise awareness or to raise funds for important charities and as a rallying point for the parents to move forward with their lives. Illustrative of this is the rose 'Marijke Koopman'.

In 1979 Fryer's introduced an attractive pink hybrid tea that had won the Hague Gold Medal the year before. He named this rose 'Marijke Koopman', in memory of the daughter of one of his friends who died at a young age in a car accident. This much of the story is fairly well known. But in the course of doing research for this article, Gareth Fryer, managing director of Fryer's Roses (U.K.) shared additional information about the naming of this rose. Here,



*Top: the group anxiously awaits the arrival of Her Majesty the Queen, left to right: actor Michael Ball, Paul Gane, chairman of the Royal Theatrical, Elizabeth Coldicutt, Sir Donald Sinden, president of the Royal Theatrical Fund, Robert Harkness. Middle: Elizabeth Coldicutt and Sir Donald Sinden greet the Queen at the Chelsea Flower Show. Bottom: Coldicutt and Sinden present a bouquet 'Caroline Victoria' roses to the Queen.*

in Fryer's words, is "the rest of the story."

"Concerning rose naming stories, this is quite a moving one. We were asked by family acquaintances if we would name a rose in memory of their daughter who had been killed in a car accident. Mr. Koopman told me he wanted a "good one" and they left it to me to choose an appropriate variety. One day towards the end of the summer I was walking through the seedlings and spotted a few plants bearing a mass of beautifully formed pink blooms — I was sure we had something special and that evening cut a lovely bunch of them. That evening my wife and I drove over to their home. As they answered the door I held out the flowers and asked if this would do. They were both so over-

come with emotion — and it was some time before they regained their composure and told us that that day would have been Marijke's birthday!"

Fryer's Roses now has one of the more established programs for naming roses, details of which can be found on the Fryer's website at [www.fryers-roses.uk/roses/naming.html](http://www.fryers-roses.uk/roses/naming.html). Fryers typically introduces three to six new rose varieties each year, and in the process of evaluating candidates the firm inevitably identifies a number of roses that may be worthy of introduction, but for one reason or another failed to make the final cut. For a reasonable fee (currently £500), Fryer's will sell the right to name one of these roses and provide 12 plants. Other schemes are

available that include the ability to raise funds for charities or organizations. The very beautiful 'Halle' rose was named for the Halle Concerts Society and since November 2000 has raised over £2400 for the Halle appeal. Photos of roses currently available for naming are included on the Fryer's website.

### Three Perspectives on Naming a Rose

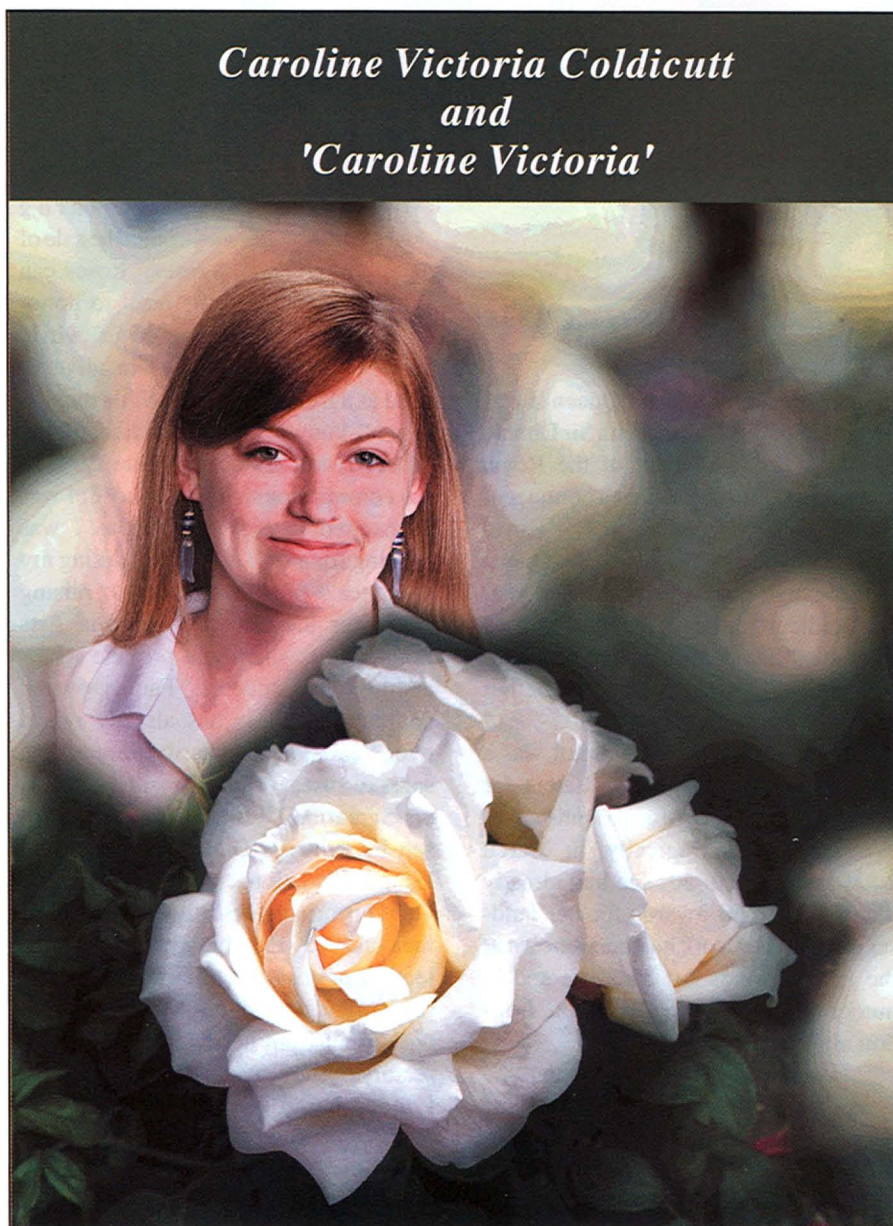
#### *The Person Wishing to Name a Rose — The 'Caroline Victoria' Rose*

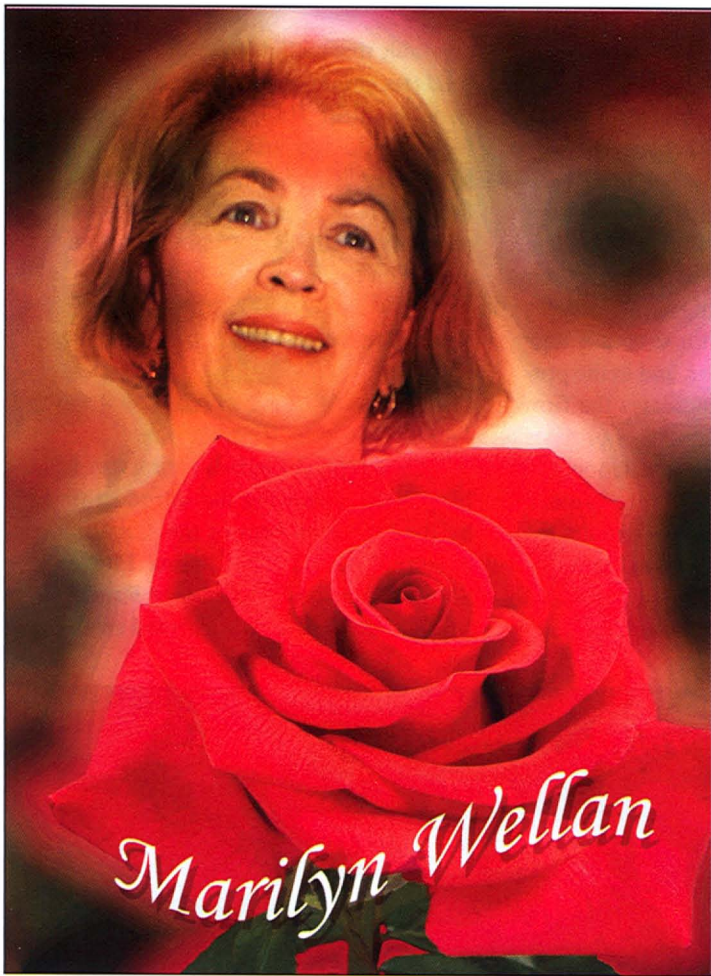
On a typical English spring day in May 2006, following the introduction by the Harkness firm of the 'Caroline Victoria' rose at the Chelsea Flower Show, Elizabeth Coldicutt, of Rancho Mirage, California, was granted an au-



*Caroline (right) with actress Jane Seymour at gallery in Palm Desert CA*

*Elizabeth Coldicutt stands behind an arrangement of 'Caroline Victoria' roses at the Chelsea Flower Show.*





*Marilyn Wellan and her hybrid tea, 'Marilyn Wellan'.*

dience with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, at which she, along with Sir Donald Sinden, CBE, president of the Royal Theatrical Fund, presented a bouquet of 'Caroline Victoria' roses to Her Royal Highness. Her meeting with the Queen was the high point in a whirlwind year for Coldicutt, during which she worked with steadfast determination to establish an appropriate memorial for her daughter, Caroline.

Caroline Victoria Coldicutt was a great lover of art and had a talent for depicting tranquil California landscapes. When she died, tragically, in March 2004 at the age of 17, she had already won regional art awards for her landscapes, and her work had been shown at the Palm Springs Art Museum and in numerous galleries in California, London and Paris.

Born in La Jolla, California, she began at an early age to sketch scenes of her family's summer home in Canada and her black standard poodle, Charlie. Determined to create a living memorial

used as a living memorial. If the person is well-known or if a portion of the proceeds are donated to charity, then the commission may be reduced. I was so excited to discover this as I was looking for a way of memorializing my daughter's life, in addition to raising funds for the Caroline Victoria Arts Foundation, which will provide scholarships for art students." Family-owned and run Harkness has already raised over \$250,000 for charity through the sales of roses, primarily with top earners 'Samaritan', 'Princess of Wales', chosen by Princess Diana for the British Lung Foundation, and 'Mountbatten'.

During a trip to London in the summer of 2005, Elizabeth reviewed a selection of roses that Harkness had already field tested for five years and, with input from her family and the directors of the Royal Theatrical Fund, a London-based charity, she chose an ivory-white hybrid tea.

"Our daughter's love of all things creative and artistic encompasses the

for her daughter and to raise funds for charities important to the arts, Elizabeth Coldicutt conducted an extensive search for a rose, preferably an English rose, that she felt would be appropriate to carry her daughter's name.

"I searched the internet and found one produced by Harkness Roses," she said. "At that time I also learned that Harkness, a family run business since 1879, had a long history of charitable fundraising through the sale of roses. Roses can be used to honor someone while they are alive or

beauty of this rose," she said. "Her passion was fine art and painting, and Thomas, Caroline's dad, and I felt that we had found the perfect rose to be associated with Caroline's name." With 'Audrey Hepburn' as its seed parent (its "mother") and 'New Zealand' as its pollen parent (its "father"), the 'Caroline Victoria' rose is ivory-white in color, produced by two well-loved light pink parents and the bloom has inherited its parents' serenity and grace. The high center of this hybrid tea rose takes on shades of gold as it opens, depending upon heat and light, and the bloom receives the highest marks for fragrance and disease resistance, both of which are outstanding. Its fragrance is strong and long-lasting, distinct and complex, with a foundation of tropical citrus with raspberry overtones infused by a hint of mint. The plant forms a well-branched bush, suitable for planting in beds, borders or as a low hedge. It is an excellent rose for the garden, and supreme as a cut flower for the vase. And it has the additional attribute of rapid rebloom.

Received with great enthusiasm at the Chelsea Flower Show and described by the London Times as "swirls of ice cream," the rose will be commercially introduced by Harkness first in the U.K. and then throughout Europe, with the hope that it will be available in North America soon. Proceeds of 10 percent to 30 percent from the sale of the rose will be donated to The Royal Theatrical Fund, a charity founded in 1839 by Charles Dickens and a group of actors. Elizabeth Coldicutt explains: "The 'Caroline Victoria' rose was commissioned to honor Caroline's passion for the arts. What better way to represent this passion than through a lovely rose used in support of the Royal Theatrical Fund which lends its efforts in assisting those in need in the theatrical arts and other creative media."

"We are extremely grateful to Caroline's mother for pledging the money raised by this beautiful rose to the RTF so that we can help people in need," said Sir Donald Sinden, CBE, the fund's president. "It will be a lasting reminder of Caroline's beautiful work as well as being a practical help for many people."

To help celebrate the Queen's offi-

cial 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in June 2006, two 'Caroline Victoria' were to be planted at Buckingham Palace rose gardens as a fitting tribute to a loving monarch whose great-great grandmother reigned as Queen Victoria and to honor a young woman named Caroline. So Shakespeare's "rose by any other name would smell as sweet" bears particular meaning for this lovely hybrid tea.

For more information about the 'Caroline Victoria' rose or to follow its progress, visit the Caroline Victoria Arts Foundation website at [www.cvcartsfoundation.org](http://www.cvcartsfoundation.org).

### *The Person For Whom A Rose is Named — 'Marilyn Wellan'*

Marilyn Wellan, immediate past president of the American Rose Society, has had not one, but two roses named for her. Here, in her own words, are her impressions:

"Through the years, it has been interesting for me to think about the many roses named for people, imagining how the hybridizer might have been inspired to name a rose for a spouse, a dear friend, a colleague in rose horticulture, a notable person in history. The ultimate honor for a dedicated rosarian is to have a rose named for him, and I am humbly grateful to have not one, but two roses named for me. When Washington hybridizer Mitchie Moe, who has created many beautiful roses, asked for permission to name her light pink miniature 'Marilyn Wellan' (2001), I thought it should be the other way around — I should be begging her for a rose of my own! Seeing my rose name in print — first in the rose registration records, and then in the *Handbook for Selecting Roses* was gratifying. Then, at the 2005 ARS Fall National Convention at Memphis, Mississippi hybridizer Eddie Edwards gave me a birthday gift I will not forget. Convention-goers were at the Memphis Zoo, having dinner with the pandas, when Eddie announced the naming of a second 'Marilyn Wellan' (2005). This medium red hybrid tea, formerly known as 'Fatal Attraction', has incredible parents: 'Hot Princess' and 'Veterans' Honor', and promises to be a great exhibition rose. Now, I am certain my place in rose history is secure. Years from now, rosarians will be

thumbing through old rose books and records, and they may come across the names of two roses named 'Marilyn Wellan.' "Hmmm," they will muse, "I wonder who ...."

### *The Hybridizer Honoring a Friend — 'Mrs Robinson'*

I recently had the pleasure and distinct honor of naming and registering the first of my seedlings, 'Mrs Robinson', in honor of my dear friend Ramona Robinson, who was solely responsible for my introduction and subsequent addiction to roses.

I had always known that should I be so fortunate as to produce a seedling worthy of commercial introduction, the first seedling would surely be named for Ramona, who had just turned 80 when she generously and patiently condensed a lifetime of growing roses into a crash course for her next-door neighbor. Together we chose my first rose order and carefully prepared a rosebed in the form of a semi-circle, located half-way between our homes. Some of the roses in that very first order, including the wonderful 'Papa Meilland', remain to this day among my favorites. I'm sure that it was her years of growing roses in the cold, harsh climates of South Dakota and Iowa that instilled in Ramona the tenacity to grow outstanding roses in the hot desert climate of

Palm Springs, California. And she left no detail to chance as the mentor tutored her pupil in the preparation of the rosebed, the planting of the rosebush, feeding, irrigating, pruning, deadheading, talking to the roses and listening to them in return and much, much more. So there could be no greater honor for this novice breeder than to name my first rose 'Mrs Robinson', only hoping that the rose is worthy of carrying her name. The seedling that was to become 'Mrs Robinson' had already tentatively been selected but that choice was cemented when the seedling won the award for Best Seedling at the 2005 Pacific Southwest District Rose Show. 'Mrs Robinson' will be soon be introduced by Ashdown Roses.

*"In real life, unlike in Shakespeare, the sweetness of the rose depends upon the name it bears. Things are not only what they are. They are, in very important respects, what they seem to be."* Hubert H. Humphrey



*Editor's Note: Noted hybridizer J. Benjamin Williams died on November 1, 2006 at the age of 93. His son, Benjamin R. Williams, and grandsons, Scott B. and Van C. Williams, intend to continue hybridizing based upon Ben's work.*

*Ramona Robinson and 'Mrs Robinson', the rose.*

