



Marion B. Hilliard

1928 – 2021

*Marion Hilliard*

October 7, 1928 ~ July 6, 2021 (age 92)

On Tuesday, July 6, 2021, Marion B. Hilliard, of Orange Park, FL, passed away peacefully in her sleep. She was 92.

The matriarch of her family, Marion came from humble beginnings. Born in the Bronx, NYC, on October 7, 1928, Marion was known for her advocacy and dedication to a variety of environmental and wildlife causes.

Closest to her heart was her involvement in the national, state and local garden clubs, where she held many positions including President of the Garden Club of Orange Park, President of Florida Federation of Garden Clubs (FFGC), and member of National Garden Clubs. She was a Flower Show Judge Emeritus, an Earth Stewart, a Guardian of Gardening, a Patron of the FFGC, recipient of the Pillar of Pride, and was honored in the FFGC Hall of Fame. She was credited for creating or serving on numerous initiatives including the Color Our Garden program, the First Edition Florida Series ornament design, the Scenic Florida Roadside Beautification Council, establishment of the Coreopsis named as Florida State Wildflower, Wekiva Springs Youth Camp, and the Youth School and Backyard Gardening program.

A tireless activist and leader, Marion was involved in numerous environmental clubs and initiatives, none of which she took lightly. Her main goal in belonging to these organizations was to be sure she did what she could to make this world a better place for those she left behind.

Marion was preceded in death by her husband, Alexander H. Hilliard Jr.; parents, Alfred and Louise Williams; brother, Alfred Williams Jr.; and grandson, Craig Newton.

She is survived by her four daughters, Susan Newton, Gale Lindquist, Debe Smith, and Liane Mihlebach; two stepsons, Alexander Hilliard III (Ham) and Christopher Hilliard; stepdaughter, Neva Hilliard; and their families, including 10 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Marion's family has asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to one of three charities: Wekiva Youth Camp, Jacksonville Orchid Society, or Hospice of Chattanooga Foundation.

A private celebration of life will be held in Ringgold, GA, and an interment service is being planned at Jacksonville National Cemetery in the fall.

FFGC History—Our 8th Decade 1995-2004

President **Marion B. Hilliard**, 1995 – 1997, chose as her theme “Caring for Creation Through Service, Stewardship and Sunshine.” In 1995, membership was 21,600 and in 1997 was 22,500. The Nell Coe two-year project was ‘Establishing Urban Wildlife Habitat Areas’. A new Membership Brochure was published for 1995-1997. Jess Connor’s Kuggerand with bezel and chain presented to FFGC by former NCSGC and



FFGC President Ellen Griffin in September 1995. President Hilliard represented FFGC at the 7th annual National Urban Forestry Conference in New York. Florida Forestry Council Urban Community Award received for our Hurricane Andrew Tree Project. Partnership plaques presented by Walt Disney World for FFGC participation in 1995 EPCOT International Flower and Garden Festival. A Floral Extravaganza at EPCOT was held featuring programs on Floral Design and a Mother’s Day flower show. Disney World 25th Community Service Award of \$3000 and Silver Anniversary Trophy were presented to Wekiva Youth Camp program. Wekiva campers: 1995-610, 1996-598. New Wekiva Canteen dedicated June 1995. SEEK conference held at UF with 70 students each summer.

We amended our standing rule for Precious Metal status to include clubs with 30, 40 and 50 years in FFGC. Book of Information was published in loose-leaf format. Scenic Highways/Greenways/Rails to Trails and School and Backyard Gardening chairmanships were added to the FFGC Board. Headquarters ‘Color Our Garden’ program was initiated to renovate and re-landscape our headquarters grounds. The project received over \$3,000 in donations. The first edition Florida Series Ornament design, the state with orange blossoms, was approved with profits to be shared 25% to General Operating Fund and 75% to Headquarters and Endowment Fund for Headquarters Renovation Projects.

The second edition Florida Series Ornament, featuring the Monarch Butterfly, the official FFGC Butterfly, was introduced at 1997 Convention. \$25,000 given to Scholarship Endowment Fund. Nine scholarships of \$1500 and one for \$3000 awarded in 1996. Ten scholarships given in 1997. ‘Tea and Croquet in the Park’ to kick off Miami’s Centennial Celebration. Two FFGC sponsored Legislative Days were held at the Capitol with Governor Lawton Chiles proclaiming the day “FFGC Legislative Day”. We had 5,560 Youth Gardeners registered in over 150 units. One youth flower show was held with 1,200 participants. We published a new Youth Manual for group leaders. A new VCR program on How to start a Youth Group was taped. Garden Club of Switzerland won National Gardening Association \$500 seed and tool grant in recognition of their multi-level youth program. 121 school Butterfly Sanctuaries were registered and 67 Butterfly Sanctuary Certificates were

presented to individuals, parks, hospitals, a prison and public areas and 8 Butterfly Gardens were certified. NCSGC/Shell Oil PETALS grant for I-10 Welcome center was co-sponsored by FDOT. NCSGC/Shell Oil PETALS grants were given to 15 clubs totaling \$6,725. Hazel Hodges, former FFGC President, received the first Highway Beautification Partnership Award from the ‘Keep Florida Beautiful’ Commission. Hazel Dunlap Memorial Plaque relocated at new I-95 Welcome Center and Memorial tree dedicated in 1985. Landscaping was completed at I-95 Welcome Center entrance and parking corridors designated as a Special Project of FFGC and FDOT. Native Wildflower Seed

Bank was active in collecting and sharing seeds throughout the state. 22,000 pounds of wildflower seeds were planted. The first FFGC sponsored Wildflower Conference: 'Whose Roadsides are They Anyway' held October 1996. Four Wildflower Education Information Display Boards were placed at I-10, I-75 and I-95 Welcome Centers. President Hilliard and Elizabeth Pate, Roadside Beautification Chairman, were appointed to the I-75 Tourism and Highway Beautification Task Force by the Florida Legislature. \$15,000 grant was presented to FFGC/FDOT from the Federal Highway Administration. Five FDOT Maintenance Units received Ella P. Wood 'Paths of Sunshine' Awards. President Hillard honored with a plaque for her commitment, support, and cooperation from FDOT. President Hilliard represented FFGC at the Governor's Council for Sustainable Florida, the Environmental Education Award dinner, dedication of Titusville Garden Club Garden Center and Specialty Gardens, the NE Florida Environmental Round Table, the Environmental Education Resource Council, Greenscapes annual meeting, and dedication of landscaping at Wekiva Youth Camp, winner of the Rucker Award for Landscape Design.

Four fall and spring Flower Show Schools Symposia were held (Tampa, Pensacola, Maitland, Jacksonville Beach). Four Flower Show Schools held, adding 22 judges. 26 Basic Floral Design Study Workshops with 100 Certificates awarded in 1997, 3 advanced series completed, and a 2-day refresher workshop for Floral Design Instructors was held in September, 1996. With Bob Thomas instructing, we introduced the Revised Floral Design Manual for instructors. Gardening Study Course was completed, four Short Courses were held, 2 at UF and 2 at West Palm Beach, and two Penal Therapy Horticulture shows held at Avon Park Correctional Institute. Two Horticulture Study Seminars were held in south Florida. Landscape Design School was held at headquarters. Two South Florida Tropical Horticulture shows were held with FFGC as co-sponsor. Two Blanche Covington Courses were held at Wekiwa Springs State Park. Our District Speakers Directory list was revised. A/V slide programs were reviewed, revised and new programs added. Monsanto Corporation donated 10 copies of A Natural Balance: restoring native habitats and Paradise Found: Protecting the Galapagos Archipelago. We published revised Bee a Winner booklet.

NGCSC 1996 Installation of Officers included Marion Hilliard, Phyllis Wood and Jean Villareal. Garden Clubs helped restore Hurricane Opal damage through contributions to Friends of Florida State Parks. A \$7,000 goal for roof restoration of greenhouses at Avon Park Penal Correctional Institute was achieved. Penal Therapy Fund initiated to establish the first Botanical Garden at Avon Park. The 1997 Arbor Day "Pull a Pepper, Plant a Tree" youth activity resulted in pulling 3,380 Brazilian Pepper and planting of 27 specimen trees. Plans, funding for Wedding/Special

Event Gazebo on Headquarters patio approved. Blue Star Memorial Marker originally dedicated at site on US 1, Fort Lauderdale, replaced during special ceremony.

FFGC won Emerald Award for Deep South project, 'Networking with the Birds'. 829,525 trees were planted for 'Millions of Trees for the Environment'. Approximately \$10,000 contributed to World Gardening. \$60,000 added to FFGC Scholarship Endowment Fund. Camellia Woodville, variety 'Marion Hilliard' presented by Anna Barfield, registered African Violet "Marion's Enchanted Trail" presented and Euphorbia milii variety 'Marion Hilliard' presented by Frances Hunter. 1996 Deep South Awards included: The Florida Gardener, Membership, High School Gardeners, Junior Garden Club Award, Intermediate Gardeners Award, club awards for Historical Preservation & Restoration and Butterfly Conservation. Youth awards included 'Keep America Beautiful', High School speech

contest, two youth poetry winners, three Smoky Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest winners. 1996 NCSGC awards included NCSGC Silver Seal, Bronze Seal for Floral Extravaganza at EPCOT, six certificates for publications, Silver Trophy for Conservation Education at Wekiva Youth Camp, 10 Flower Show Awards, Exxon Civic Development Award, 'Tell me about Energy' award and two Publicity Press Book awards. 1997 Deep South awards included High School Gardeners, Intermediate Gardeners Awards, and club awards, Historic Preservation, and Tree Planting. Youth Award included 'Our Strategy for Endangered Species Survival' High School Essay Contest and one poetry winner. 1997 NCSGC awards included 14 flower show awards, Silver trophy for Conservation Education for Junior Ranger Program at Wekiva, a special certificate for SEEK '96 High School level conference, and six state and club publications awards. Operation Wildflower Roadside award won first place and \$1,000, and PETALS State entry won cash award of \$500.

Resolutions adopted: Opposition to the proposed Highway Advertising Equity Act, support of retaining Chapman Field as Miami USDA Horticulture Research Station, opposition to Property Taking legislation, support of the Roadside Beautification Act, opposition to a Florida Vegetative Logo Program, support of strong clean water policy, support of Revitalization of Oklawaha River, opposition to Closure of Division of Forestry Miami Coconut Palm Orchard, support of Office of Environmental Education, support of Acquisition of Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie Preserve by CARL (Conservation and Recreation Lands) Program, support of consideration of Melaleuca mulch as an environmental alternative to Cypress mulch and support of Preservation 2000. We also supported the strengthening and protection of the Endangered Species Act, support of the Scenic Highway Protection Act, support of Clean Water Act, support of funding the Blueway Project (Indian River Lagoon) by the CARL program, support of revised land and resource management plan, and support of Blackwater Heritage Trail.

The 1996 Deep South Regional Convention 'Wings and Things of Wonder' was hosted by FFGC in Orlando with 298 attending. The 1996 FFGC convention, 'A Gardening Celebration on Florida's First Coast' held in Jacksonville, hosted by Garden Club of Orange Park and District IV, registered 502. Bylaws amended to increase individual dues to \$9; husband and wife dues to

\$10; and President to be Editor-in-chief of The Florida Gardener. Our 26th State Flower Show, "The Worlds of Gulliver", was hosted by the Judges Councils of Districts VI and IV, held in Daytona Beach in conjunction with 1997 Convention, 'Sea, Sand and Surf' hosted by District VI, registered 542.