

Sally's Train – A Tribute to Sally Ditton

Read by Janet Shultz

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I feel that there just cannot be enough said about Sally, her garden or joyous smile and giving personality. I wanted to use an analogy about gardening but could not come up with one I was comfortable with.

You all know I am a good copier so I am here to pay tribute to Sally by using an analogy my daughter used at another recent memorial.

Life is like a train ride. People get on and off, but some stay on; there are many stops along the way before their journey finally ends. We all know Sally's journey began in England where Bob came on board and has been at her side ever since. They transferred to the U.S. where their train took on many passengers.

As Sally's train traveled locally there were many stops along the way; the Ho-Ho-Kus Garden Club, the Wyckoff Area Garden Club, The Hosta Society, the Rock Garden Society, volunteering at McFaul Environmental Center, and on the decorating committee at Skylands.

In 2007, Sally received the Rutgers Master Gardener Association of Bergen County Award of Excellence.

All those who boarded her train were influenced by her upbeat attitude, her infectious smile, her great knowledge of gardening, and her willingness to share.

How many of you learned of Rhapsodia, a beautiful June blooming shrub that some of us now know and grow?

How many of you purchased and grow plants in your garden that Sally so generously donated to the various garden club plant sales?

I was only one of many to board Sally's train and she was a great influence to all who knew her. We shared many fun garden tours, trips, lectures, and symposiums together. More than once we left home at 5:30 am so we could be on time to register at the Hardy Plant Society Symposium at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

It was here with Sally that I first saw a painted tree and that led me to paint one of my own. We shared plants, recipes, and great times together, and many of you here have done the same.

It was a privilege to know and have Sally as a friend. Sally's journey may have come to an end; but we will all carry a part of her as our journeys continue.

This (McFaul) is just one of the places Sally volunteered. Here she worked to make this space one of beauty, a sanctuary, a place to come and enjoy nature in a garden setting. We dedicate this bench and tree in Sally's memory so we too can always remember how 'lovely' a friend she was to all.