

IN MEMORIAM

Jennifer Reimer Quigley

1946–1994

It is with deep regret and sadness that we record the death of Jennifer Reimer Quigley on 30 March 1994, after a three-month battle with cancer. Known to many as Jennifer Hicks, Jennie joined the staff of the Arnold Arboretum on 29 March 1976 as Horticultural Secretary, a position she held until she took charge of the plants records office in March of 1979.

It was in this latter position that Jennie truly found her niche at the Arboretum, a position that utilized her numerous talents and skills of organization, cartography, calligraphy, and her great attention to detail. To the position she also brought her considerable knowledge of botany and horticulture and botanical nomenclature, not to mention her great persistence in seeing enormous tasks to completion. Literally thousands of zinc records labels were created by Jennie on the now-antiquated addressograph machine, and the vast majority of records in our computer database were her entries.

Jennie was also instrumental in evoking change in the fundamental ways in which the records, labeling, and mapping office operated to insure the proper curation of the Arboretum's living collections and to make information readily available to all who needed it. It was during Jennie's tenure that the Arboretum staff began the initial computerization of the living collections files under her direction, an attempt that was doomed by virtue of hardware failure, but one that led to the development of BG-Base and the establishment of a computer network at the Arboretum. Working as Kerry Walter's chief Arboretum consultant, Jennifer's imprint is present throughout the plant records side of BG-Base, the computer software that is now used at the Arnold Arboretum and at botanical gardens and arboreta worldwide.

Over her eighteen years at the Arboretum Jennifer was also responsible for training and supervising a cadre of horticultural interns, many of whom have gone on to career positions at other botanical gardens and arboreta. It was a recurring and familiar event when one of these former interns would return to the Arboretum, specifically to seek out their former mentor in her basement office, which prior to the renovation of the Hunnewell Building served as the nerve center for the living collections department. While deeply involved with the curation of the woody plant collections of the Arboretum during working hours, Jennie spent untold time in her own garden during late afternoons and evenings and on weekends. An active member of the New England Chapter of the Rock Garden Society, Jennie served that society in various capacities including board member and chapter chairperson from 1991 to 1993. In the plant world her true love focused on small herbaceous perennials suitable for cultivation in the rock garden, and her knowledge of these plants was encyclopedic. During the winter months, moreover, Jennie's free time was usually spent reading about plants, seeking sources for new unusual ones, and coaxing seeds received from fellow enthusiasts to germinate in the warmth of her comfortable, cat-inhabited home.

Ever helpful in providing needed information to both staff and the steady stream of visitors that came to study and utilize the collections at the Arboretum as well as her many friends on various computer networks, Jennifer Quigley will be sorely missed by all her friends. We have lost not only her efficiency and knowledge but also her humor, her straightforward approach to problem solving, her kindness, and her devotion to plants and the Arnold Arboretum.

—S. A. Spongberg



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