

## WSU R&D

Research on dahlias has been underway at WSU for 20 plus years based at least in part on a \$125,000 donation from Evie Gullikson and matching funds from the ADS generated through the efforts of then Research Committee Chairman Bill McClaren and other officers of the ADS. Much of the early research efforts focused on improving our ability to detect dahlia viruses in the laboratory. Significant progress was made on that objective and traces of virus were found in virtually all the dahlias that were studied.

Professor Hanu Pappu took over as the Sam Smith Distinguished Professor of Dahlia Research in the Fall of 2002 and published extensively on virus in dahlias and several food crops. Professor Carl Chuey, Professor of Biology at Youngstown State University and dahlia grower, followed Professor Pappu's progress with great interest. He became convinced that the work at WSU had the potential to solve the problem of virus in dahlias. Unfortunately, Carl passed away in the spring of 2014, but not before he had convinced his brother, Jim Chuey, of the importance of the research at WSU.

Fortunately for the ADS and thousands of dahlia growers, Jim and Carl had the wherewithal in their Scheetz-Chuey Foundation to convert their enthusiasm for the work at WSU into concrete action. In the Fall of 2014, Jim announced a donation of \$350,000 to WSU to create the Carl F. Chuey Dahlia Research Fund. That donation breathed new life into the dahlia projects at WSU and led to the development of a "Clean Dahlia Center" there. That facility made it possible for all dahlia growers in the United States to have the dahlias in their gardens tested for virus. The facility also served as the basis for an ADS team to study the distribution and occurrence of virus in our dahlia gardens across the USA. (We are in the process of expanding access to the project to our ADS members in Canada.)

As a result of the successes that are evolving from the 2014 investment, Mr. Chuey sought to further accelerate progress on the dahlia projects at WSU. ADS representatives met with the faculty and staff in Pullman, WA, in the spring of 2017 and concluded that there was, indeed, an approach that would yield great benefits for dahlia growers. Dr. Ron Mittelhammer, the Dean of the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences at WSU, told us that his College was perfectly suited to provide the broad technical agricultural support we were seeking. He said "Groundbreaking contributions to plant research can be elusive, and hard-won, often achieved after decades of intellectual dedication in service to the science. However, this is exactly what the partnership between the American Dahlia Society and Washington State University will continue to achieve. Carl and Jim Chuey, through their generous support and commitment to Dr. Hanu Pappu's research, have made ongoing and impactful dahlia virus reduction a reality for Dahlia growers everywhere."

The key to that progress was to add sufficient funding to the project to make it eligible for an official University Chair. With Professor Pappu already actively involved in the work of the chair, a portion of the funding could be made available to create a Dahlia Resource Center with the core task of making sure that ADS members were informed on how best to take advantage of the knowledge and the developments at WSU in our dahlia gardens. The new funding of \$805,000 achieves the balance of \$1,500,000 required to achieve a Chair at the University. The activities of the Chair will focus on the needs and the requirements of the American Dahlia Society in perpetuity. The new and improved technology will provide the Resource Center with the basis for improvements in our dahlia gardens. The

full breadth of the agricultural knowledge of the University will be accessible to the Resource Center for that transfer to our gardens!

The near-term activities of Professor Pappu, holder of the new Carl F. and James J. Chuey Endowed Chair for Dahlia Research and Development, will continue to focus on the resolution of virus in dahlias and the development and staffing of the Dahlia Resource Center. Intermediate-term objectives will include study of the approaches to making clean dahlias commercially available in the North American dahlia market. The long-term activities will be tailored to the needs of our ADS dahlia growers.

Ron Miner  
ADS Trustee and Past President