

20 July 2009

## Australian rosarian receives international award



Acclaimed Australian rose identity Mr David Ruston of Renmark has been honoured on the international stage for his significant contribution to the worldwide rose community.

Mr Ruston received the prestigious President Emeritus Award for his work with the World Federation of Rose societies at an international conference in Vancouver, Canada, recently.

It is one of many awards he has received including the World Federation Gold Medal for services to the Society and the Rose in 2004. This followed the Society's award of the Silver Pin in 1994. Another major award was the Dean Hole Medal presented by the Royal National Rose Society of England in 1994 which is seldom awarded to anyone outside the U.K. This society was founded in 1876 by the Reverend Dean Hole, Bishop of Rochester and is the oldest Rose Society in the world.

Mr Ruston has attended 13 of the 15 World Federation conferences held across the world and has demonstrated and lectured at most. He was also World Federation president from 1991 to 1994.

The President Emeritus Award was initially given to past Royal National Rose Society and World Federation of Rose Societies president Richard Balfour.

Mr Balfour died earlier this year at the age of 93 and the award was transferred to Mr Ruston.

Another Australian Mr Walter Duncan of Watervale, South Australia, received the World Federation's Rose Award for his contribution to the rose community at the Vancouver conference.

The World Federation of Rose Societies ( W.F.R.S.) was formed in London in 1968 by the Baroness Lily de Gerlashe de Gomery of Belgium. It was decided at this inaugural meeting to hold a conference every three years in member countries which have increased over the years to forty one.

To honour the Baroness's work over many years the President Emeritus Award was bestowed on her in 2000. The Baroness, who lives near Brussels, is now 86 years old, nearly blind and in poor health, but still vitally interested in Rose activities.

Her daughter who was at the World Conference in Vancouver rang her each day to report on the activities. Roses are in her blood as her father was the President of the Belgium Rose Society before her.

When David was presented with his award he received an immediate standing ovation and the event rendered him speechless for the first time in his life. He said that he was quite emotionally overcome; it was an honour that he never imagined he would receive.

# Background on David Ruston

David Ruston is known throughout the rose world, and indeed, much of the horticultural and floricultural world, for his great genius and generosity with everything associated with flowers and especially roses.

From his teenage years he has been a passionate exponent of roses, beginning with extending his father's rose plantings of 500 bushes to 3,000 bushes by 1968 and the eventual 50,000 bushes covering 11 hectares. This world acclaimed garden, the largest private collection of roses in the southern hemisphere, has been officially recognised as "The National Rose Collection of Australia". Its custodianship is now in the hands of Anne Ruston, David's niece, and Richard Fewster, her husband.

David has lectured and demonstrated flower arranging at Rose Conferences for many years throughout the world - in Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, U.S.A., Bermuda, South Africa, N.Z. and Europe. He is a talented artist when arranging flowers, specialising in flower arrangements in the style of the old Flemish, Dutch and French painters. His knowledge of the history of art is portrayed in his book "The Joy of Roses" which he wrote in conjunction with James Young in 2004.

He has also performed unstintingly in many Australian cities and towns donating his time and flowers for a variety of charities. His unique style of arranging magnificent displays in memorable containers at breakneck speed while entertaining the audience with a continuous flow of knowledgeable comments, hilarious asides and repartee have made him a much sought after keynote speaker.

David has created arrangements for a variety of celebrations and occasions throughout the world – for the opening of Carrick Hill in Adelaide and Chateau Barrosa in the Barossa Valley by H.M. Queen Elizabeth, for the Sandringham Flower Show attended by the late Queen Mother, in the Great Hall at Sydney University for the Rose Convention in 1988, for festivals in St Peter's Cathedral Adelaide, for National Trust demonstrations at Ayers House in Adelaide, at David Jones in Melbourne, Hex Castle in Belgium, a demonstration at the World Heritage Rose Conference in Cambridge as well three demonstrations for Rose Conferences in the Huntington Botanic Gardens, Los Angeles.

David has been a member of many rose societies and garden clubs world wide and is highly respected by his peers. He joined his first rose society, the Rose Society of Victoria, in 1948 at the age of 18 and began exhibiting roses at shows soon after this. He became the inaugural president of Heritage Roses in Australia in 1986 and the president of the World Federation of Rose Societies from 1991 to 1994.

He has been granted Life membership to the National Rose Society of Australia, the Rose Society of South Australia, the Royal National Rose Society, the American Rose Society, the Indian Rose Society, Heritage Roses of Australia, Garden Clubs of Australia, the Renmark Garden Club and the Renmark Agricultural and Horticultural Society.

David has achieved worldwide recognition with rose awards including the T.A. Stewart Memorial award 1966, the Australian Rose award 1982, the World Federation of Rose Societies Silver Pin 1988 and Gold Medal 2004, the Dean Ross Memorial award 1997 and the most prestigious rose award of all, the Dean Hole Medal in 1994 from the Royal National Rose Society.

In 1984 David received an Order of Australia for Services to Horticulture.

David is uniquely brilliant in his field, using his knowledge, skills, creativity and generosity to support local, national and international communities and organisations. His enthusiasm to impart his specialist knowledge without obligation has been the hallmark of his life.

In 2006 the idea to recognise David Ruston's unique contribution to the Rose world and floriculture generally was mooted in Renmark, the town where David has lived all his life.

Renmark is situated on the River Murray in the Riverland of South Australia with a population of 9000 people. It is acclaimed for its horticultural and viticultural quality and diversity. Renmark was the first irrigation settlement in South Australia established by the Chaffey brothers in 1887.

The community runs an annual Rose Festival which includes the viewing of public and private gardens, food and wine events, performances and visual arts presentations. Ruston's Roses has been a major sponsor of this festival since its inception with David Ruston providing passion, motivation and leadership to the event. The recognition of Renmark as the rose centre of Australia has been enhanced by this ongoing annual rose festival, but the primary driver for this recognition has been the decades of commitment to roses by David Ruston.

A small support group was formed in Renmark which met with the Renmark & Paringa Local Council to promote the idea of a David Ruston Sculpture. It became clear that raising money for the project would involve grants from Government bodies as well as private fund raising and so it was decided to engage a professional, Margaret Worth, a public places art and design consultant. She is working with a small steering committee to employ and liaise with a suitable artist and to organise sufficient funds from government bodies, businesses and private sources.

The artwork is to be a permanent public installation that honours David's achievements and skills, reflects his personality and refers to his distinguishing qualities. In addition to having meaning for the residents of Renmark and the Riverland, it is intended that the artwork will be memorable to visitors who come from interstate and overseas. To achieve such an ambitious structure it is anticipated that an amount of approximately \$100,000 will be needed.

The auspicing body to which donations can be sent is Renmark Paringa Council,  
P.O. Box 730  
Renmark  
South Australia, 5341.

Cheques can be made payable to David Ruston Sculpture Appeal.

For further information, email [davidrustonsculpture@riverland.net.au](mailto:davidrustonsculpture@riverland.net.au)

It is hoped that the sculpture will be completed in time to be officially opened at the Renmark Rose Festival in October 2010.

***David Ruston Sculpture Steering Committee***

*Chairman Kelvin Trimper.*