

Our Lily King May Be Gone, But He Will Never Be Forgotten

Barrie Strohman

Aug 12th, 1930 - July 23rd, 2010



The last time I saw Barrie Strohman was in 2008, when I travelled to Manitoba to attend a NALS Lily Judging School at which Barrie was an instructor. The day started with a lot of laughter, cajoling and plenty of fun as Barrie stood at the front of the room and gleefully proclaimed (more than once I might add) 'I am the LILY KING!' The title was quite fitting and deserving I thought, for Barrie and The Lily Nook must be the most well known lily personality and business in North America, if not the world. Little did I know there was a story behind his proclamation; I soon found out the show *Recreating Eden* was about to air, and the Manitoba Regional Lily Society

(MRLS) was in possession of an advance copy of it on DVD.

Some of you may have seen the episode which featured Barrie, it provided excellent insight into this man, his life, family and business, and of course his long standing love affair with lilies. It also detailed the start of the Neepawa Lily Festival, and his vision of Neepawa becoming the Lily Capital of The World. No surprise they would dub him the Lily King, for who but a true King can rally so many to support such a grand vision?

I cannot say I knew him well, but I met him occasionally over the years, at various lily events. I did not need to know him well to recognize the kind, humorous, fun-loving family man that he was. His humour was evident in every article, story or feature he penned, no doubt getting a chuckle or two even from the most serious of readers.

*Photo:
Barrie Strohman*

*Photo courtesy of
Nigel Strohman*

I have read many times since his passing that he left a legacy behind, and he surely did leave much for his family to be proud of. He generously shared his knowledge of lilies with anyone interested, and gave freely of his time during so many MRLS and NALS events over the years. This was recognized by NALS in June, when Barrie was presented with the prestigious Slate McDaniels Award. His presence will be dearly missed at future events, I suspect it will be cause for more than a little sadness by many who knew him and looked forward to seeing him each year. Our Lily King may be gone, but he will never be forgotten.

Lynnette Westfall