

## MARILU JOHNSON 1928 - 2000

This year our Association has respectfully chosen to dedicate the 2001 issue of the Membership Directory in the honor of our dearly departed friend, Marilu Johnson.

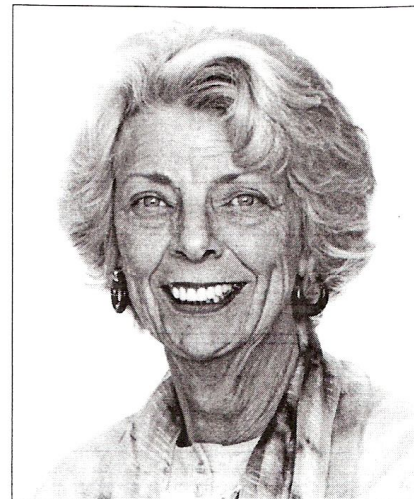
Marilu served as executive secretary of the San Diego County Flower and Plant Association for twenty years. During those years, Marilu fully developed her position as not only our secretary, but also as the liaison between the flower and plant industry and the rest of the world. Her warm, caring personality and her beautiful smile made Marilu the perfect person to handle all facets of the association for the good of its members.

Over the years, Marilu encountered many changes. From the day she was hired by David Thompson in 1975 the Association moved her office all over the area. First in an ancient packing shed in Encinitas, to an old house on Chino Greenhouses property, then upstairs at Thornton Wholesale Flowers, followed by the Weston Trucking building, and finally to the Floral Trade Center, Marilu just kept smiling. Throughout these changes her only concern was that she had a window in her office. Marilu loved the outdoors and everything that existed there, especially the flowers and the birds. Looking out her office window allowed Marilu maintain the connection to nature she loved so much.

During her tenure, Marilu assumed the management of many other floral groups to help strengthen the industry and share office costs. In addition to SDCF&P Association, Marilu also served as secretary for The Living Plant Growers Association, Southern California Nisei Farmers League, California Floral Council, and California Ornamental Research Federation (CORF). As the Association grew and local grower issues became more abundant, Marilu's priority once again focused on our association. Her dedication was unparalleled.

Not surprisingly, Marilu received numerous awards for her steadfast dedication and hard work. In 1984 she received The Outstanding Person of the Year Award from the SDCF&P Association. Appropriately Marilu's plaque read **"FOR HER UNTIRING EFFORTS TO MAKE SAN DIEGO FLOWER AND PLANT ASSOCIATION THE FINEST FLORAL ASSOCIATION IN THE INDUSTRY."** During her retirement party in 1995, she received the Horticultural Hall of Fame Award, which boldly stated **"FOR HER INNOVATIVE AND SELFLESS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FLORICULTURE INDUSTRY."** Other organizations such as the San Diego Department of Agriculture, University of California Extension Service, Encinitas Chamber of Commerce, Cal State San Marcos, Children's Hospital, and Quail Botanical Gardens, all praised Marilu for the relationships she developed with them over the years.

Everyone who worked with Marilu developed their own special friendship. She was once described as our own Mary Poppins and Mother Teresa all wrapped in one. To many she was a very good friend, always ready to listen; to others she was considered a second mother, willing to talk and give advice with unconditional love and compassion. For the five years after her retirement, Marilu returned regularly and helped the Association. In her own words, she considered all of us part of her family. Not enough can ever be said about Marilu's impact on the floral industry and the individuals within it. A verse from a poem Marilu chose for her service may best express how she felt about us: "If my parting has left a void, then fill it with remembered joy. A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss, ah, yes, these things too I will miss."



*Submitted with love by*

*Dave Pruitt, Sea Coast Greenhouses*