



# THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

Feb. 2023

NEWSLETTER

## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1

Aloha from Hawaii and the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Palm Society Bien-nial. We begin our newsletter reporting with a two-part survey of the public gardens visited on Oahu and the Big Island. This month, in part one, we'll recap some of the highlights and share memorable moments from the Lyon Arboretum and Foster Botanical Garden.

### The Lyon Arboretum, Oahu

The American Public Gardens Association recognized The Lyon Arboretum as the largest public palm collection in North America. The Lyon Arboretum is also home to the world's most massive breadfruit tree, not pictured, about 70 feet in height.



Arriving in Honolulu, IPS President Robert Blenker (far left) and biennial committee chairman Andrew Street (left) receive their ceremonial leis.

# Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1

The IPS made the University of Hawaii news: “The size of Lyon Arboretum’s palm collection attracted the attention of the International Palm Society (IPS), which visited the arboretum for its 2022 biennial tour. Over 80 members from the U.S., Brazil, Denmark and Puerto Rico toured the arboretum in October. ... ‘This IPS tour was special because we got a chance to show off our wonderful collection of palms to a group of enthusiastic people who truly appreciated and valued these plants and the work we put in taking care of them,’ said Liloa Dunn, Lyon Arboretum grounds and collections manager. ‘I feel strongly that the connections we made with this group of people, although short, will last a lifetime. I look forward to the future collaborations and plant exchanges which will help increase our palm diversity and the conservation of value of this great collection of palms.’”



Above left: Directors R. Haresh and Horace Hobbs starting the Biennial with their t-shirts from the 1990 Hawaii Biennial, which still fit! Above right: Dedication plaque for garden namesake Harold Lyon. Below: The Biennial gang all together with endemic *Pritchardia afinis* providing a perfect backdrop. Photo by Keith Santner.



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Deep in the Mānoa Valley, yet only 5 miles from Waikiki, the 194-acre Lyon Arboretum (administered by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa) provided a great start for our Biennial tour. Here we encountered an incredibly well maintained (despite the rugged terrain) array of rare palms, enriched by over 150 inches of rainfall annually. Legendary manager Raymond F. Baker (for whom *Pritchardia bakeri* is named) was the driving force behind this palm collection for nearly four decades. Liloa Dunn (Grounds and Collections Manager) and Jesse Adams (Senior Research Associate in the Grounds and Collections Department) met us at the entrance and provided an inspired introduction to the garden's rich history and mission. They then guided us on a memorable trek through this wet forest on a strangely, and thankfully, dry day.

Please read this heartfelt tribute to Ray Baker, from PALMS 55(1): 50–51.

PALMS

Knecht: Ray Baker Obituary

Vol. 55(1) 2011

## Raymond F. Baker (1945–2010)

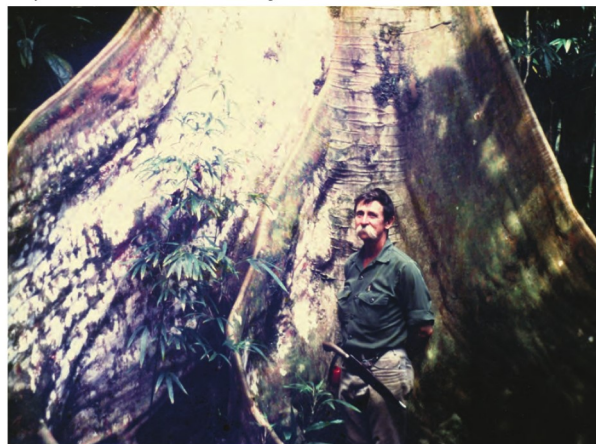
It is with great sadness that we report the loss of Raymond F. Baker, who died on 29 November 2010 of respiratory failure after a five-year battle with pulmonary fibrosis. He dedicated 38 years of his life to the Harold L. Lyon Arboretum and is chiefly responsible for creating its world-class palm collection of more than 800 species. Ray was driven to increase the diversity of plants at the Lyon and was passionate about making it accessible to the community.

Ray was born in September 1945 in Passaic, New Jersey. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a BS in Geology after which he enlisted in the US Marine Corps, eventually becoming a Captain. After returning from service in Vietnam, he was based in Kane'ohe, Hawai'i, for two years. It was there that his interest in plants blossomed. After six years in the Marines he resigned his commission and entered graduate school at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He took a job as a helper at Lyon Arboretum, the only university botanical garden located in a tropical rainforest in the

United States, and quickly became deeply enamored with it. Because Ray wanted a full-time position at the Arboretum so badly, he prolonged his graduate studies for seven years until there was a job opening.

Seated in 194 acres of wet tropical rainforest spread over challenging terrain with an average rainfall of 4190 mm (165 inches), Lyon Arboretum is a unique and exacting place in which to work. Working in the forest is far from glamorous or leisurely. Ray took the rugged terrain, voracious mosquitoes and frequent rainfall all in his stride. Though the weeds at Lyon are truly a force to be reckoned with, Ray never gave up against the constant and overwhelming onslaught. During much of his tenure there he worked ten-hour days, seven days a week. He inspired Arboretum staff and colleagues by his constant, steadfast nature. No matter how bad he may have felt on any one day, one would never have known from his attitude. He seemed to see the good side of all things, especially in the face of unexpected setbacks.

1. Ray Baker at the base of his favorite *Ficus variegata*.



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Ray came to memorize the exact location and even the accession number of each plant in the Arboretum, thus becoming intimately acquainted with over 5000 species. He studied their morphology and phenology, sharing his findings with researchers around the world. He was fascinated by botanical diversity and was unceasingly curious to learn new things about plants. Ray was an invaluable resource to researchers, making himself available to accompany visiting scientists and was very generous with material and data. He had a talent for facilitating the movement of information and strengthening the ties among botanists, horticulturists and members of the community at large. Ray also designed much of the network of trails and pathways to make the collections more accessible to visitors, and chose the location of each new plant with an artist's eye.

One of Ray's great loves was palms. His goal was to have all the palm taxa represented, and today the Arboretum holds approximately 167 genera and 801 species. He personally collected 34 different accessions of palms from the wild, from Costa Rica, Ecuador and Venezuela, and worked with Bob Hirano to bring in many more. Ray cultivated relationships of trust and reciprocity with commercial palm growers and seed collectors such as Jeff Marcus, Rolf Kyburz and De Armand Hull, resulting in the addition of over 700 accessions to the Arboretum. With Ray as the driving force, Lyon Arboretum staff became heavily involved in the IPS Seed Bank in the early 1990s. Thousands of seeds were collected from Lyon's mature fruiting trees, cleaned, and shipped around the world. As fruit of this participation 133 more palm accessions were integrated into the garden. In 2009, Don Hodel named *Pritchardia bakeri*, a species from the Ko'olau Mountains on O'ahu, to honor Ray.

Ray served on the Boards of both the International Palm Society and Heliconia Society International (HSI). He was a founding member of HSI in 1985 and worked to make the Arboretum a major repository in Hawai'i for most of the world's species from this group (the Zingiberales). His intensive work with this group helped him become an international expert on Zingiberales. He also worked closely with other botanists to care for and study the many accessions of rare and endangered gingers brought to the Arboretum.

Education was very important to Ray. He was always willing to reach out to individuals and help them identify palms. He began teaching classes on palms, gingers, heliconias, aroids, and Ficus at Lyon as early as 1982 and continued doing so until 2010. He also led many upper-Arboretum hikes for visitors. He organized the activities for volunteers and community groups at Lyon and spent weekends working with them to chip away at the herbaceous and woody weeds. His knowledge and supervision was essential when it came to making sure that less knowledgeable volunteers did not unwittingly pull up or chop down rare plants.

Ray's deteriorating health forced him to retire in September 2010. That same month it was announced that he had taken the extraordinary decision to create a fund to support the grounds and living collections of the Arboretum with a gift of \$50,000 to start. Ray leaves an incredible legacy in what he cultivated and in the countless lives that he has inspired through his work, but with this generous endowment his dedication to the collections is immortalized. It is hard to imagine how a person like Ray could have been any more dedicated to and deeply invested in a cause. Ray's ashes were deposited at the buttressed base of his favorite *Ficus variegata* at the arboretum. In the words of his wife Joyce, "His spirit lives on in all the plantings, all the rocks and streams, in the very air of his beloved Arboretum." We will miss you, Ray.

Contributions to the Ray Baker Fund at Lyon Arboretum can be made in two ways. Funds for immediate needs can be made at: [www.uhfoundation.org/RayBaker](http://www.uhfoundation.org/RayBaker). Funds in support of the permanent endowment can be made at: [www.uhfoundation.org/RayBakerEndowed](http://www.uhfoundation.org/RayBakerEndowed). For further information, please contact Emily Fay at the University of Hawai'i Foundation (808) 956-5665 or e-mail [emily.fay@uhfoundation.org](mailto:emily.fay@uhfoundation.org).

The author thanks Joyce Baker, Liz Huppman, Karen Shigematsu, David Orr, David Lorence and John Mood for their help in composing this obituary.

JACOB KNECHT  
Berkeley, California

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## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



A ubiquitous sight during IPS travel, marching into a palm-rich jungle. This is about the time Vice President Jeff Brusseau eagerly exclaimed, "Let the hot mess begin!" Photo by David Davenport.

*Clinostigma samoense* with colorful companion tropical plants.



A gorgeous peach-colored new leaf of *Verschoffeltia splendida*.

A young *Corypha umbraculifera* (Talipot), and the nearby remains of a once massive individual after flowering (inset)



## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



The spiny crownshaft of *Acanthophoenix rubra* from Reunion Island (site of the IPS “mini-Biennial” in November).

*Beccariophoenix madagascariensis* emerging from the forest.



*Calyptrogyne ghiesbreghtiana* (pollinated by bats hence called the "vampire palm") with its upright inflorescence.

This handsome *Chrysalidocarpus* crownshaft sparked a debate concerning the species.



## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



A palm presented as *Chrysalidocarpus bejofo* but certainly not that species. If anyone can correctly name this palm, please contact the editor.



*Chrysalidocarpus saintelupei*, an endangered palm that is harvested to fabricate traps to catch lobsters for the local hotel industry in Madagascar.

*Dypsis nodifera*.



*Chrysalidocarpus lastellianus* photo by Jeff Brusseau.

## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



*Sommieria leucophylla* with Cindy Adair providing scale (above left and right) and *Pelagodoxa henryana* with Arlene Hurwitz providing scale (below left and right). Note fruits, despite a significant size differential, have a similar warty appearance. Not surprisingly, these genera are closely related.



# Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



*Chamaedorea deckeriana* at Lyon Arboretum.

The IPS was warmly greeted at Foster by Caroline Bond Davis (pictured with Tiffany Street at left), of the Honolulu Botanical Gardens, with welcome gifts (Hawaiian dragonfruit-guava granola bars)! Note the gorgeous Licualas in background.



## FOSTER BOTANICAL GARDEN

Our next stop was the historic Foster Botanical Garden right smack in the center of bustling Honolulu, on land purchased from Queen Kalama. This 14-acre garden was first established in about 1850 by Dr. William Hillebrand, a physician trained in Germany. Among his many accomplishments, he was appointed personal physician to King Kamehameha IV, served as the only doctor at Queens Hospital (1860–1871), founded the Hawaii Medical Association (1856), was fluent in the Hawaiian language, and found time to become an esteemed botanist. After returning to Germany in 1871, he eventually sold his property to Captain Thomas Foster and his wife Mary, who previously lived on adjacent lot. In 1930, Mary Foster bequeathed the land to the city of Honolulu, and the gates to the Foster Botanical Garden swung open in 1930.

HBG Curator and horticulturalist, Talia Portner, along with botanist Naomi Hoffman, served as our superb and enthusiastic scientific guides.

Another plaque dedicated to Harold Lyon, this time at the Foster Botanical Garden.





## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



*Pritchardia lowreyana*, an "exceptional tree" (above left), with fruits (above right). This tree was planted in approximately 1855 by Dr. William Hillebrand, likely collected in the wild from a population in the Nu‘uanu Valley, that was recently rediscovered by Don Hodel, PALMS 53(4) 2009. The species is endemic to Oahu and Molokai.

This female double coconut was planted in 1935. In nature, it has been observed that when the Seychelles bronze gecko (*Ailuronyx seychellensis*) begin licking the female flowers, they are ready for pollination. (All black and white photographs are the same trees as published in an article by Warren Dolby in *Principes* 1968).



## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



Botanists have successfully pollinated the flowers and obtained fertile seeds. In 2017, the Garden planted several seedlings raised from seeds produced on site (upper right).

A very tall and very old *Deckenia nobilis* with Dr. Laz Priegues providing scale (lower right, the same trees photographed for *Principes* in 1968).



## Aloha Edition – Public Gardens, pt. 1



The oldest *Hyphaene thebaica* in the USA (above left), pictured to demonstrate the entire "wingspan" of multiple branches. Photo by Andrew Street. Photo at right is the same palm in 1968.

## Upcoming Travel with the IPS

### **2023 IPS mid-term Board of Directors meeting, London:**

Sunday, May 21 though Thursday, May 25

Including RBG Kew, RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Wakehurst Place

**SOLD OUT.** Waiting list: [info@palms.org](mailto:info@palms.org)

### **2023 IPS Premium Travel: Reunion Island (West Indian Ocean)**

Hosted by the Palmeraie-Union

Sunday, October 29 through Monday, November 6

Capacity 25.

**SOLD OUT.** Waiting list: [info@palms.org](mailto:info@palms.org)

### **2024 The International Palm Society's 33rd Biennial: New Caledonia**

(Southwestern Pacific Ocean)

Sunday, September 22 though Monday, September 30

Capacity 150. Expected to sell out. Registration opens August 2023.

### **2025 IPS mid-term Board of Directors meeting: Peru.**

### **2026 The International Palm Society's 34th Biennial: Thailand**

## Save the Species 2022

### ***Pritchardia woodii* in partnership with the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG)**

The International Palm Society is thrilled to announce that our 2022 campaign yielded sufficient donations to fund two helicopter flights to the Waiho'i drainage. Principal NTBG investigator Mike DeMotta will begin collecting leaf samples, from the two populations of plants, for DNA analysis. Of course, mature seed collecting will be accomplished and Mr. DeMotta will be ready with wire mesh bags to protect any immature seed (typically consumed by predators) for subsequent retrieval upon his second visit. Follow up reports will be available in these pages as well as our journal, PALMS.

The IPS thanks all donors, regardless of the gift amount, for their kindness and dedication toward palm species preservation. Additionally, we wish to recognize our hero level donors.

### **Pritchardia Superhero (\$5000)**

**Ms. Glenn Franklin**

### **Pritchardia Heroes (\$1000-\$4999)**

<b>Cindy Adair</b>	<b>Andy Hurwitz</b>
<b>Jeffry Brusseau</b>	<b>Tom Jackson</b>
<b>Eric Gage</b>	<b>Leland Lai</b>
<b>Gregg Hamann</b>	<b>Peter Mayotte</b>
<b>Hawaii Island Palm Society (HIPS)</b>	<b>Susan McFarland</b>
<b>R. Haresh</b>	<b>Colin Wilson</b>

## New IPS Benefactor

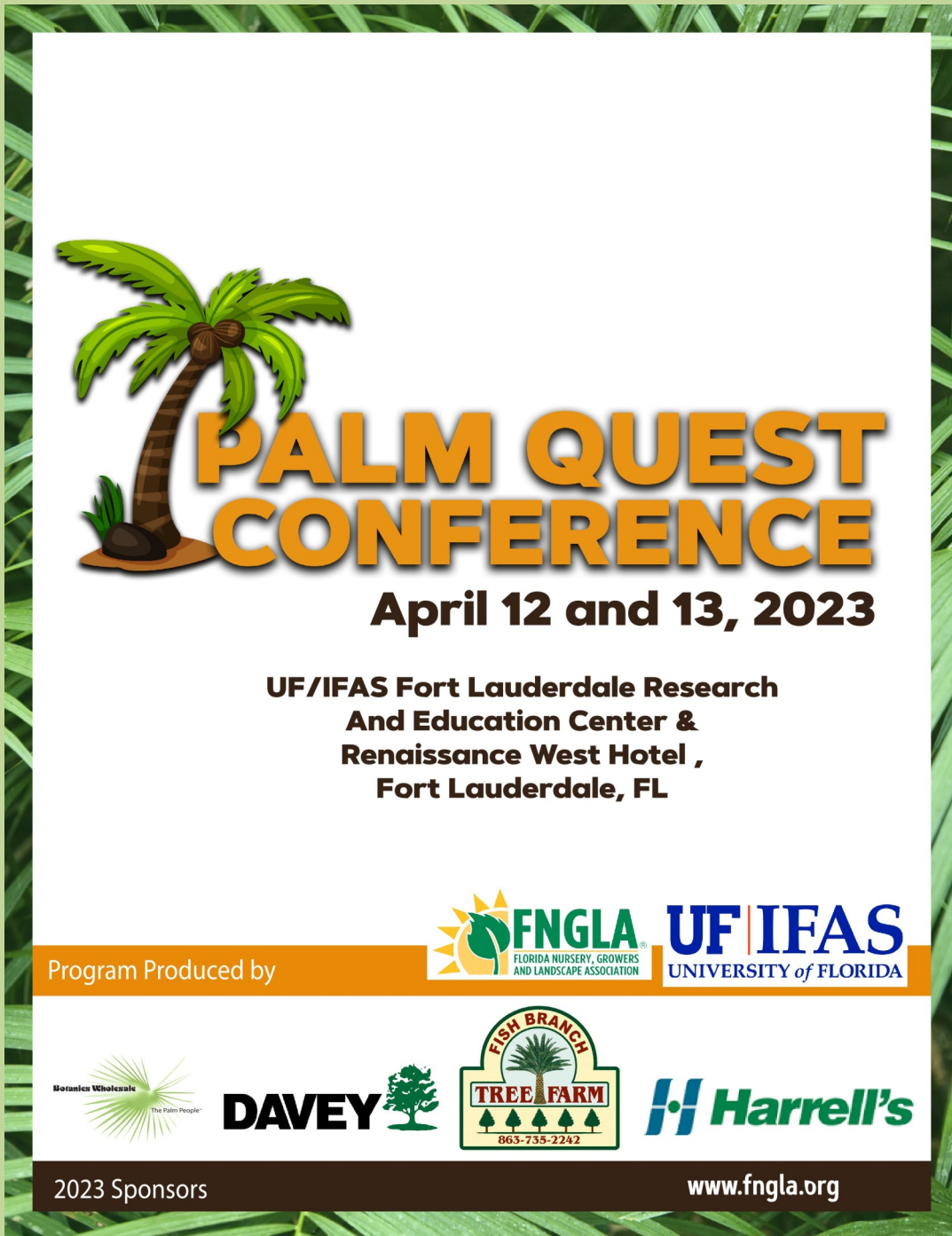
On behalf of our 100% volunteer Board of Directors, I would like to recognize and thank our newest IPS Benefactor:

**Duane Kolterman**



# Upcoming Palm Conference

The Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association is organizing a two-day conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Two of our IPS Directors will be speaking at the conference, Drs. John Dransfield and Larry Noblick. An outdoor demonstration area, hosted by the UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center, will provide hands-on opportunities to see emerging production and landscaping techniques. More information can be found at [www.fngla.org](http://www.fngla.org).



The poster features a central white rectangle with a green border of palm fronds. On the left is a cartoon palm tree with a brown trunk and green fronds. To its right, the text 'PALM QUEST CONFERENCE' is written in large, bold, orange letters with a drop shadow. Below this, the dates 'April 12 and 13, 2023' are in bold black. The venue information 'UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research And Education Center & Renaissance West Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL' is centered in bold black. At the bottom, there is an orange bar with 'Program Produced by' on the left, and logos for 'FNGLA FLORIDA NURSERY, GROWERS AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION' and 'UF IFAS UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA' on the right. Below the orange bar are logos for 'Botanics Wholesale The Palm People', 'DAVEY' with a tree icon, 'FISH BRANCH TREE FARM 863-735-2242' with a tree icon, and 'Harrell's' with a stylized 'H' logo. A dark brown bar at the very bottom contains '2023 Sponsors' on the left and 'www.fngla.org' on the right.

**PALM QUEST CONFERENCE**  
**April 12 and 13, 2023**

**UF/IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research  
And Education Center &  
Renaissance West Hotel ,  
Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Program Produced by

**FNGLA**  
FLORIDA NURSERY, GROWERS  
AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

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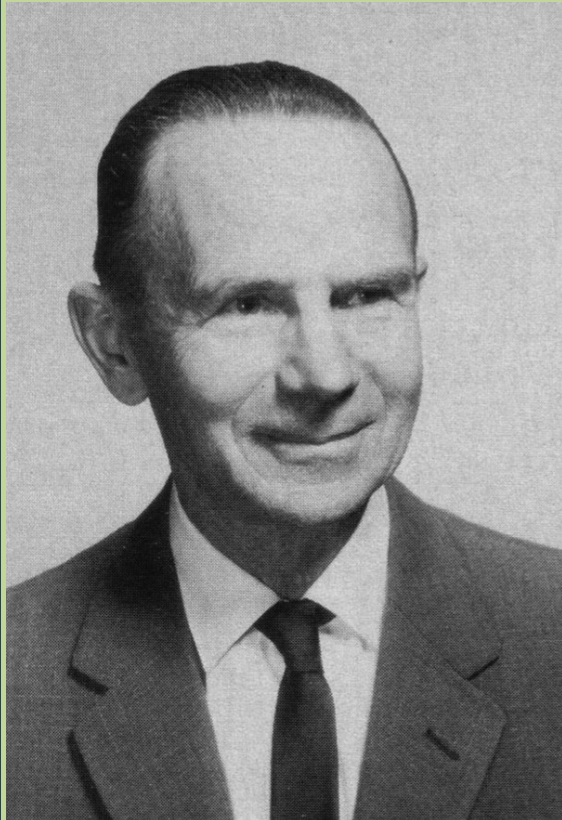
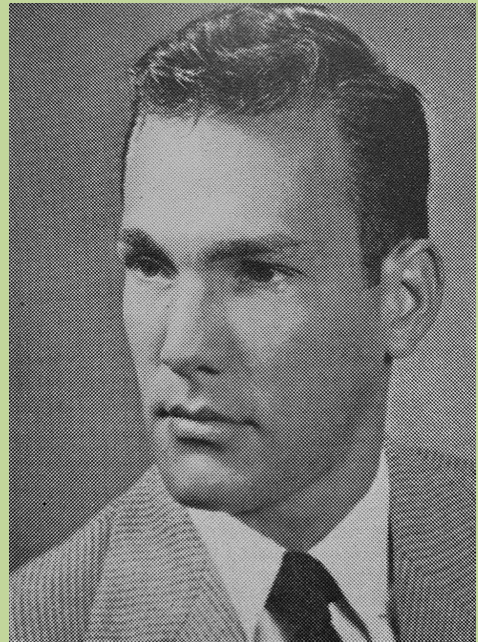
[www.fngla.org](http://www.fngla.org)

## Past Presidents of the IPS: 1964–1972

This is the second of a six-part series recognizing the 24 former presidents of the International Palm Society. Each entry will include a portrait with an accompanying vignette. These will be compiled on our webpage at [palms.org](http://palms.org) for future reference.

1964–1966 Nat DeLeon, Florida

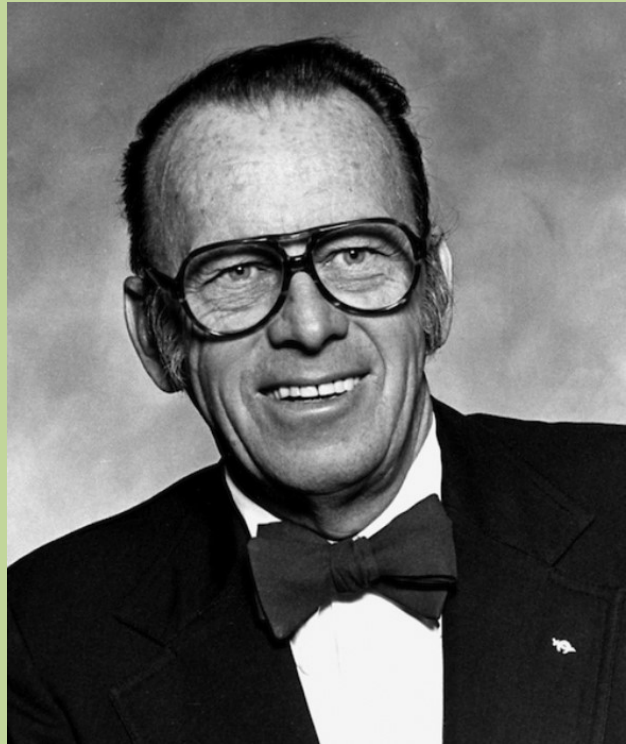
Tasked with transforming Miami's Parrot Jungle (now Pinecrest Gardens) into a magnificent tropical showplace, Nathan J. DeLeon immersed himself in the world of palms and tropical plants. He conceived the IPS seedbank, successfully managed by Lucita Wait and, later, by Lois Rossten. A graduate of the University of Miami, Mr. DeLeon worked as a horticulturist and established a thriving bromeliad nursery. Several years after serving as the fifth IPS president, he became the president of the Bromeliad Society International, and gained considerable fame for bromeliad hybridization.



1966–1968 Otto Martens, California

Born in Germany, Otto Martens came to California and found work in an orange packing plant. Eventually he became a highly respected nurseryman, specializing in the use of palms in landscaping. Educated in Hamburg, Mr. Martens worked as a horticulturist for Diegaard Nurseries, where he hosted a portion of the 1964 biennial. Madame Ganna Walksa dedicated a plaque in his honor, now found amongst the palms at Lotusland in Monteceito, California. Additionally, the Madame donated \$10,000 to the IPS Seedbank upon his memorial.

## Past Presidents of the IPS: 1964–1972



1968–1970 Dr. Jerome P. Keuper, Florida

Jerry Keuper, a rocket scientist, founded the Brevard Engineering College (now the Florida Institute of Technology) where he established a robust botanical garden featuring palms (this was the site of the 1970 biennial, and attendees stayed in the campus dormitory). He honored his friend and mentor, IPS founder Dent Smith, with the Dent Smith Trail, which winds through the palm-rich landscape. Dr. Keuper earned a PhD in nuclear physics from the University of Virginia, as well as degrees from MIT and Stanford.

1970–1972 Dr. John Popenoe, Florida

Born into a family with deep botanical interests (his grandfather owned an avocado nursery in Pasadena), John Popenoe developed an early passion for plants. After graduating with a B.S. in horticulture from UCLA, he earned a masters as well as a PhD from the University of Maryland. Dr. Popenoe served for 28 years as the Director of Fairchild Tropical Garden (succeeding early IPS stalwart Nixon Smiley). Even as a nonagenarian, Dr. Popenoe continued to volunteer at local botanical gardens. The Bahamian tree legume *Ateleia popenoei* is named in his honor.



## Parting Shot

Diamond head at dawn, with palms skirting Waikiki beach, Honolulu.

