

Williamson-White Medal-MTB
History written by Clarence Mahan

This medal is restricted to miniature tall bearded (MTB) irises. It is named in honor of E. B. Williamson (1877-1933), his daughter Mary Williamson (1909-1987) and Alice White (1886- 1969). Edward Bruce Williamson was born in Marion, Indiana in 1877, and grew up in Bluffton, Indiana, where his father was a bank president. His friends called him Bruce, but he is known to the iris and zoological worlds as "E. B. Williamson." After graduating from Ohio State University, Williamson worked as Assistant Curator of Insects in the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh. Succeeding his father as bank president in 1928, he continued to study and conduct research on insects, particularly dragonflies.

He was later appointed Research Associate in the Museum of Zoology at the University of Michigan. He wrote many monographs and articles, and was recognized as a world-class authority on dragonflies. Williamson began growing irises in the early 1900s, and collected many different species, which he then grew from seed. He grew thousands of seedlings, frequently used mixed pollen, and kept few records. He established Longfield Iris Farm in Bluffton, and it became a mecca for iris lovers. His 'Lent A. Williamson' (1918, TB) and 'Dolly Madison' (1927, TB) were considered masterpieces, and are to be found in the pedigrees of nearly all modern tall bearded irises.

He introduced many outstanding cultivars including 'Cinnabar' (1928, TB), 'Dorothy Dietz' (1929, TB), and 'Amigo' (1934, TB). The TB 'Wabash,' which won the Dykes Medal in 1940, was hybridized and introduced by his daughter Mary in 1936 after his death. His beautiful Louisiana iris hybrid 'Dorothea K. Williamson,' introduced in 1918, tends to breed true to form, and it has the distinction of now being naturalized in some areas of the eastern U.S. where *Hexagonae* species are not indigenous. Although others had introduced irises that fit into the miniature tall bearded iris class before Williamson, he and his daughter were the first to breed them as cultivars in a distinctive class of irises. They were apparently byproducts of breeding for tall bearded irises. Thura Hires and Ethel Peckham were the first to sort them out of the Williamson's seedling beds.

They recognized that these smaller irises had great potential as garden plants and for use in floral designs. Mrs. Peckham gave them the name "table irises." The first of these table irises to be introduced (Ed.: before the MTB classification was established in 1958 so they were registered as intermediate irises) were 'Siskin' (1934, IB), and 'Pewee' (1934, IB) which later became the "type" when the MTB classification was formalized. 'Chewink' (1937, IB) and 'Daystar' (selected clone) followed. Mary Williamson produced 'Widget' (1943) and 'Nambe' (1946). Although table irises had a number of proponents such as Mrs. Hires, Mrs. Peckham, and Charles Gersdorff, they languished

in the shadow of tall bearded irises for many years. In the early 1950's, Alice White of Hemet, California began a crusade to gain recognition of the assets of these wonderful smaller irises. She organized table iris rosters and wrote many articles for the AIS Bulletin and gardening magazines promoting their virtues. She encouraged iris hybridizers to breed these irises to obtain new and finer cultivars. She led the campaign to have a separate class established for table irises. When the class was finally approved, Alice White graciously accepted the name "miniature tall bearded" irises, although she always preferred to call them table irises.

Winners: WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL Miniature Tall Bearded (MTB)

2019 GESUNDHEIT (Charles Bunnell)
2018 HOLIDAY IN MEXICO (Riley Probst)
2017 TIC TAC TOE (Thomas Johnson)
2016 SARI'S DANCE (Ginny Spoon)
2015 HOT NEWS (Stephanie Markham)
2014 RAYOS ADENTRO (Carol Morgan)
2013 PEEBEE AND JAY (Barbara and David Schmieder)
2012 PLUM QUIRKY (Riley Probst)
2011 DIVIDING LINE (Charles Bunnell)
2010 SAILOR'S DREAM (Kenneth Fisher)
2009 SOMEWHAT QUIRKY (Riley Probst)
2008 MASLON (Donald Spoon)
2007 Madam President (Hugh Thurman)
2006 Baubles and Beads (Lynda Miller)
2005 Ace (Lynda Miller)
2004 Merit (Kenneth Fisher)
2003 Apricot Drops (Terry Aitken)
2002 Reminiscence (Clarence Mahan)
2001 Bangles (Lynda Miller)
2000 Pardner (Kenneth Fisher)
1999-T Billie the Brownie (John Burton)
 T Pretty Quirky (Ann Probst)
1998 Striped Pants (Kenneth Fisher)
1997 Zula (Kenneth Fisher)
1996 Petite Monet (Katharine Steele)
1995 Frosted Velvet (Kenneth Fisher)
1994-M Rosemary's Dream (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1993-M Bumblebee Deelite (Jack and Glenda Norrick)
1992 Welch's Reward (Walter Welch by Earl Hall)

1991 Crystal Ruffles (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1990-A Bumblebee Deelite (Jack and Glenda Norrick)
1989 Little Paul (Kenneth Fisher)
1988 Aachen Elf (Lois Kennedy)
1987 Abridged Version (Ben Hager)
1986-A Rosemary's Dream (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1985 Consummation (Walter Welch)
1984 Chickee 9Mary Louise Dunderman)
1983 Disco Jewel (Dorothy Guild)
1982 Doll Ribbons (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1981 Spanish Coins (Jean Witt)
1980 Panda (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1979 White Canary (Earl Roberts)
1978 Quirk (Alta Brown)
1977 Cedar Waxwing (Earl Roberts)
1976 New Idea (Ben Hager)
1975 Bit o' Afton (Dorothy Guild)
1974 Carolyn Rose (Mary Louise Dunderman)
1973 Ice Fairy (Jean Witt)
1972 Dainty Dove (Alta Brown)
1971 Dainty Damsel (Alta Brown)
1970 Mockingbird (Earl Roberts)
1969 Dainty Dancer (Alta Brown)
1968 Pewee (Bruce Williamson)

The Median Iris Society sponsors the annual awarding of four medals by AIS to medians in each of the recognized classifications: SDB, IB, MTB, and BB. Note that most classifications within the AIS Awards System began with Award of Merit (AM) equivalent Awards, later elevated to Medal status. At this transition, previous Award winners from a specified period of time re-competed for the higher Medal honors. Thus there are some duplicate entries. They are designated with an "A" beside the date on which they won the AM-equivalent, and an "M" on Medal status. "T" designates a tie. Any year omitted is a year in which no award was made.