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NEWS OF THE SOCIETY

The IPS Loses a President

Ed McGehee, an avid gardener who was recently elected president of The International Palm Society for a second consecutive term, died Sunday, October 16, after collapsing in his garden in Fort Lauderdale. He was 66.

Mr. McGehee had just returned from The Society's Biennial meeting in Australia, where he was ailing, his wife, Peggy, said. He had previously been diagnosed as having a heart problem. Mr. McGehee became interested in The Society almost 20 years ago when he was living in Chicago. Back then he was raising roses, gladiolus, and other flowers.

"He was a research man," his wife said. "He liked to read as much about plants as work with them and had a huge library of all types of garden books."

Mr. McGehee was born in Pittsburgh. He met his wife in the seventh grade. They married on Christmas Day in 1946. Two years later Mr. McGehee received a degree in engineering management from Carnegie-Mellon University, although he later attended graduate school and taught English. He served as director of the cooperating colleges program at the University of Chicago, which linked many of the university's programs with more than 20 other colleges.

In 1970 the couple moved to Fort Lauderdale and three years later Mr. McGehee decided to pursue a law career. He attended the University of Florida, commuting on weekends to hold the family together.

Until his death, Mr. McGehee practiced real-estate law in Lighthouse Point, never neglecting his garden. "He took a special interest in it," his wife said. "It was real relaxation for him." On the couple's two-thirds-acre plot on the Intracoastal Waterway is planted a cornucopia of palms.

In addition to his wife, Mr. McGehee is survived by his daughters, Luvia Sniffen of Readfield, Maine, and Anne McGehee of Fort Lauderdale; sons, Peter of Durham, Conn., and James of Absarokee, Mont.; and three grandsons.

Revised from an article by
MARA DONAHUE, *The Miami Herald*
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Ed McGehee

I shall never forget the first time I saw Ed and Peggy McGehee. Ed, with a rather large head, topped by a safari type straw hat (see Fig. 1), on a broad-shouldered stocky body, slightly stooped, was hurrying toward us. Sara Colvetto and I were attending a meeting of the South Florida Division of The International Palm Society held that day at the Jennings' Estate in Coconut Grove, Fla. It was his first Palm Society Meeting. He never missed another unless he was out of the state . . . and many of those trips were to attend a meeting of another Palm Society Chapter.

Soon, he was elected to our board, became the president, and then its treasurer. He served as chairman or co-chairman of the two yearly sales sponsored by the South Florida Chapter. This task in itself was tremendous. All the while he had a leaky heart valve and should have been taking it leisurely. One year his back bothered him so much that he couldn't go to bed, rather he slept for a few hours in his chair. He never complained. This I learned from Peggy.

He was one of the few members who volunteered for the Metro Zoo palm project in Miami. He was one of eleven who volunteered to plant palms at Heritage Park in Ft. Lauderdale.

I think he rather envied those of us who have been in IPS from its beginning. He constantly asked questions concerning our early days, where we'd had our meetings and our trips, about early members or their



1. Edward M. McGehee, with a smile familiar to many of us, talks to Maxwell Stuart at the San Diego Zoo, during the 1986 Biennial Meeting of IPS. Photo by C. Graff.

contributions. He did not talk about himself and his many accomplishments.

He was a collector of palms and palm seeds. He left 55 packages of germinating palm seeds—more seeds arrived from the seed bank the day after his death; over 150 palms in containers and 140 species in the ground on his $\frac{2}{3}$ acre plot where he and Peggy lived on the Waterway in Ft. Lauderdale. He collected heliconias, bamboos, aroids, cycads, and miscellaneous plants. He joined their respective societies so that he could read their literature. He loved books and among his many books were all the new books about palms. (He owned two volumes of “Genera Palmarum,” a leather bound and the regular edition.) His thirst for learning was insatiable. He amassed gardening tools of every

description . . . not just one of each but several. His last big requisition was a folding garden cart which he planned on using at F.T.G. Member’s day and future palm sales. It would take up less room in his van and thus leave more space for plant buys.

Ed did not employ a gardener to plant or care for his treasures. He, with Peggy’s help, did it all. He did condescend to have a man mow the lawn and trim the hedges . . . the man must have forgotten the hedges and Ed, just two weeks back from the arduous trip to “down under” where he’d been troubled by shortness of breath, was clipping the hedges on his last afternoon.

Death was instantaneous. He was but 66. He’d had a full life.

GERTUDE COLE