

a film producer: networking, coordinating, and often personally funding projects which furthered the Society's primary goal of dissemination of palm knowledge. His energy level was incredible, his enthusiasm contagious. Volunteering for countless assignments, he always delighted in spreading the word on palms. It became almost like a crusade.

During his work in the Navy, and later in state and county civil service positions, Bill refined his skills as a writer and journalist. He authored a number of articles for *Principes* and *San Diego Home and Garden*. He spent many years organizing and editing the western United States' earliest palm periodical: a typed, mimeographed bulletin called *Western Chapter Newsletter*, which has evolved over the past 25 years into the *Palm Journal*, an excellent palm periodical which primarily serves western America.

Bill lobbied hard for a more balanced mixture of material in *Principes*. He reasoned that by appealing to a greater vari-

ety of palm lovers, the overall support for the Society would increase. He was right. Bill supported a large number of projects involving the planting of palms in public gardens, including the world-famous San Diego Zoo. "It needs to be done," he would say. "Palms need to be seen and they need to be protected. We can enjoy them now, but who will enjoy them later if they're gone?" Conservation and preservation were high on his list of priorities, as is evidenced by his work with Quail Botanical Gardens near San Diego and Isla Guadalupe in Mexico. His contributions towards the publication of several fine and well-known palm books are largely unknown but deeply appreciated. And his political skills were a key factor in the selection of southern California as the location for the 1986 biennial. He truly loved palms.

Bill Gunther passed away on Palm Sunday, 1992.

MIKE VITKIEVICZ

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James L. Degen, Long-Time Palm Society Member

James L. Degen, a long-time member of the International Palm Society and recently retired professor of ornamental horticulture at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, died March 22, 1992 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Jim, as he was known affectionately by his numerous friends and students, taught at Cal Poly for nearly 33 years and his students have made successful careers in every segment of the horticulture industry in California and elsewhere.

A loyal member of the International Palm Society for over 25 years, Jim was especially fond of palms and companion plants such as cycads. Among the many courses that he taught at Cal Poly was one

about subtropical plant material which included identification, growth habits, and cultural needs of nearly 200 species of palms and cycads suitable for the landscape in Southern California. Jim extended his enthusiasm for palms to his students by taking them to local Palm Society meetings, nurseries, and botanic gardens and arboreta which specialized in palms, cycads, and other tropical plant material. Many of these students became faithful members of the Palm Society.

During my first year of college at Cal Poly in 1971, I was one such student with whom Jim shared his enthusiasm while taking his class in palms and subtropicals. I remember distinctly Jim pointing to a fine specimen of *Brahea edulis* in full fruit during one of our on-campus walking labs to view plant material. He gave the name of this magnificent plant, and while

explaining fully its growth habit and uses, struck an undiscovered emotional nerve in me, awakening a latent affinity I had for the remarkable family of palms. So I owe it to Jim for introducing me to palms which have become a major component of my career and studies in horticulture.

During my college years Jim and I made numerous trips to San Diego and Santa Barbara to visit nurseries specializing in palms. I remember returning from many memorable all-day trips to these areas and the car trunk bulging with palms and cycads for our gardens. More recently, I had the pleasure of enjoying Jim's companionship when he accompanied me on trips to Florida and Costa Rica during the course of my work on *Chamaedorea*. In particular I recall an afternoon deep in the palm-rich lowland Pacific rain forest on the Osa Pen-

insula in Costa Rica. Jim had wandered down a trail and was staring in fascinated wonderment at the wide array of palms so close at hand, including *Asterogyne*, *Geonoma* spp., *Socratea*, *Bactris* spp., *Welfia*, *Neonicholsonia*, *Astrocaryum*, *Scheelea*, *Synechanthus*, *Cryosophila*, and *Chamaedorea*. With a sweeping gesture while looking straight ahead into the palms, Jim muttered, apparently to himself, "I have died and gone to heaven."

Jim is survived by his wife Cherie, his mother, three sisters, and a brother. Memorial contributions to the Jim Degen Scholarship Fund may be sent to Dr. Kent Kurtz, Ornamental Horticulture Dept., Cal Poly, Pomona, CA 91768.

DONALD R. HODEL

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CHAPTER NEWS AND EVENTS

We Appreciate the News! Keep it Coming!

Jim Cain of the IPS Chapter Committee would like to express appreciation to the many Palm Societies and IPS chapters throughout the world that are regularly contributing their newsletters or journals to him. With limited exceptions, these local chapter publications form the collective source for the Chapter News section in each issue of *Principes*. Although such news is not always timely, it nonetheless lets all IPS members worldwide know what activities individual active groups are undertaking and hopefully provides the entire readership with some measure of appreciation for the local involvement of the various societies. In addition, groups may get productive ideas from reading about the activities of others.

If your group isn't participating in this program, you are urgently encouraged to do so. To the large majority who do contribute, "Thanks again" for making my job that much easier!

JIM CAIN
IPS Chapter Committee

Sydney (Australia) Chapter News

The group met at the Maiden Theater, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, on Tuesday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m. Judy Marley from Marley's Ferns made a presentation on landscaping with ferns and their use with palms. Judy not only sells ferns at her nursery but also grows plants from spore that she has collected. Particularly interesting were ferns from Lord Howe Island. A number of ferns were available at the meeting.

The previous meeting had featured an informative slide show by Lynette Stewart on materials for her forthcoming book. The