



# DENT SMITH FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

*Raising Funds to Support the Mission of the IPS:  
Palm Research, Education & Conservation*

## THE FOUNDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL PALM SOCIETY

WRITTEN BY ANDY HURWITZ

The International Palm Society was founded by Dent Smith in 1956, marking 2021 as our 65th anniversary. Sixty-five may be retirement age for some, but not for us! Quite the contrary, in fact, we have big plans for research, education and conservation.

IPS founder, Dent Smith was born in 1897 in Staunton Virginia and lead a rather “itinerant lifestyle“ which included stints in Mexico and New York City. Eventually he settled in Daytona Beach Florida and began his beloved palm garden. He also battled the local meteorologists, or “boobs”, holding them accountable for inaccurate forecasts which resulted in loss of plants.

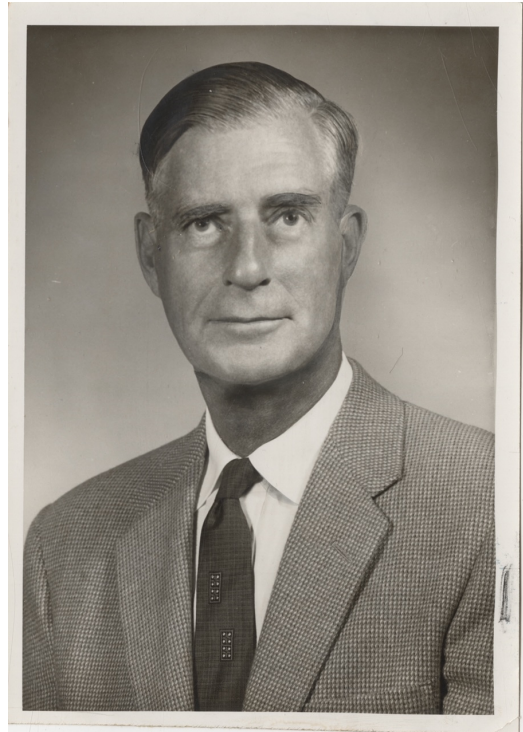
By March 1955, he envisioned establishing a palm society and the first meeting was held at the Fairchild Tropical (preceding the “Botanical” addition) Gardens on April 17, 1956. Pioneer members included famed names like Fairchild, Montgomery, and Langlois, along with passionate hobbyists such as Lucita Wait (*Ptychosperma waitianum*). The last surviving inaugural member, Stanley Kiem passed away last year (see IPS newsletter October 2020.)

The International Palm Society exists 65 years later, stronger than ever, with an endowment directed toward research, education and conservation. We take our mission very seriously. Mr. Smith’s correspondence from 1955 decries “The society is not intended to be yet another garden club...” ([linked below](#)). If he could only see us now.

### *Related Links*

Mr. Smith's original memo

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*International Palm Society  
Founder, Dent Smith*