

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

1/1/2024

In Memoriam: Rick Schoellhorn

Chris Beytes



I'm very sorry to have to report the passing of Rick Schoellhorn on November 25 after a two-year battle with lung cancer. Rick was just 66. You know Rick from his time at the University of Florida, or with Proven Winners, or both. I've never met a person who didn't think he was exceedingly likeable. Jen Zurko called him "a good egg." He was certainly that!

Born in California, Rick discovered horticulture at a young age, but put off his formal education until his late 20s. He earned a BS in Horticulture from Colorado State University in 1989 and his Ph.D. from the University of Florida in 1995, after which he became a UF professor.

He spent about a decade in academia as a well-known speaker, garden consultant, television host and community volunteer before moving into the private sector, joining Proven Winners in 2005 as Director of New Products, which gave Rick the opportunity to do what he truly loved: sharing his love for horticulture with professional colleagues, plant breeders and growers across the world.

Alas, a congenital heart condition limited his ability to travel, preventing him from doing the long-distance travel required in that position, so in 2012 he semi-retired, doing writing and social media work part-time for the company.

In addition, he focused on cultivating begonias, and also met and interviewed numerous begonia breeders for a book on the history of begonia cultivation. He was also active in the American Begonia Society.

To honor Rick, Proven Winners has just renamed their annual \$5,000 scholarship "The Rick Schoellhorn-Proven Winners Grower Excellence Scholarship." **GT**