GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Gordie Bailey

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Gordon “Gordie” Bailey, Jr., one of the third-generation leaders of well-known Bailey Nurseries in Minnesota, passed away January 29 at his home in Newport, Minnesota, at the age of 90 after a 70-year career with the family business. Gordie is said to have played a pivotal role in shaping the company’s growth, culture and long-term vision. Known for his humility, deep knowledge of plants and unwavering belief in people, his influence also extended well beyond the company to the broader horticulture industry.

“Gordie believed that success in this industry starts with people and plants,” said the Bailey family in Gordie’s obituary. “He cared deeply about creating opportunity for others, advancing innovation and growth within horticulture, and stewarding the land and communities he loved.”

During his long career, Gordie served as President of the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association and was inducted into the Hall of Fame for both MNLA and the American Nursery & Landscape Association. He also served as a trustee for the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Foundation, Saint John’s University and Carpenter Nature Center, among other organizations.

Gordie was also known for his philanthropic efforts and advocacy for horticultural research and education. He spearheaded “Tour de Hort,” cycling 2,100 miles across the U.S. to raise $1.25 million for the Horticultural Research Institute. He even climbed Mount Kilimanjaro at age 79 to help fund the construction of a girls’ school in Nairobi, Kenya.

A zealous plantsman, he was passionate about environmental stewardship, introduction of new genetics and growing great plants. His contributions include selecting notable varieties such as Frontyard Linden, Wildfire Winterberry and Shamrock Littleleaf Linden.

Gordie’s family added that he was a humble, thoughtful and hardworking man who lived a full life. In his memoir, “Filled with Gratitude,” Gordie shared his perspective that leaves us with words to live by now and into the future.

“I am filled with gratitude as I have looked back on my life in writing this. I have so much to be grateful for and so many to be grateful to. Gratitude is much like love in that it is never expressed enough.” **GT**