

The Massie Medal Award for Distinguished Achievement

By Jocelyn Connors, The Massie Medal Award Committee Chairman,
The Lynchburg Garden Club



Mary Lou Seilheimer with her husband Charlie and son, Charles.

Photo: Linda Consolvo

Mary Lou Seilheimer was awarded the 2008 Massie Medal Award for Distinguished Achievement at the Annual Meeting of The Garden Club of Virginia which was held at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond on May 14th. Mary Lou's outstanding work in horticulture and gardening and her steadfast service to The GCV over the years have eminently qualified her for this prestigious award.

Mary Lou has been an active member of The Warrenton Garden Club for over thirty years, holding every major office, serving as Chairman of Historic Garden Week and the 1992 Board of Governor's Meeting, as well as twice chairing the Horticulture Committee of her club. She has been equally engaged with The GCV, serving as Corresponding Secretary, Second Vice President, Chairman of the Finance Committee, Co-chairman of the Capital Campaign for the Kent-Valentine House renovation, and Chairman of the Horticulture Committee. She is presently the Chairman of the Restoration Committee.

Leeton Forest, her previous home in Warrenton, was open numerous times for Historic Garden Week. The Seilheimers have continued to support the work of The GCV and other groups by graciously opening the garden at their current home, Mount Sharon Farm in Orange. Visitors to their homes have commented upon the wonderful diversity, elegance and charm of their gardens, most especially their exquisite roses. GCV Rose Shows have been graced with Mary Lou's outstanding horticulture exhibits and artistic arrangements, and she has received numerous awards and trophies in other flower shows, as well.

A friend used these words to describe Mary Lou, *"It is a talented, wise, articulate and persuasive woman who can carry out so many responsibilities with so great an effect. Mary Lou is such a woman. Throughout her decades of service, one particular quality she brings to each job stands out: insightfulness. Ever mindful of others' sensibilities, Mary Lou has an unsurpassed ability to understand a problem or issue, assess the options and adopt a fair, far-sighted and effective plan of achievement. Then she gets down to work, with grace, enthusiasm and good humor.....[an] active, loyal, uncompromising and gentle woman."*

Mary Lou Seilheimer is truly an inspiration to us all.

The 2008 de Lacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation

By Marsha Merrell, GCV Conservation Chairman
The James River Garden Club



Eve Fout of the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club was posthumously awarded the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation. Her daughter Nina Fout accepted the award at the Annual Meeting of The Garden Club of Virginia.

Eve was a most effective leader in land conservation, land use policy and protection of Virginia's most precious natural, historic, cultural and scenic resources. She led the Piedmont Environmental Council for ten years as chair of its Board of Directors. During her tenure over 200,000 acres were placed in permanent conservation easements. The PEC has provided training for hundreds of real estate professionals, lawyers, appraisers and financial advisors enabling them to assist landowners in land conservation. Her vision for promoting land conservation led to improved national and state incentives for the donation of conservation easements. Efforts by the PEC led to the 1997 enactment of the American Farm and Ranch Protection Act. In Virginia, the Land Preservation Tax Credit was established. The results of this legislation are most impressive: Protection of nearly 300,000 acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, 165,000 acres of prime farmland and many historic sites.

As a founding member of Scenic Virginia, she promoted billboard control and the protection of our beautiful vistas and sites. Eve promoted and assisted in the listing of historic districts throughout the Piedmont. She initiated the *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* project to bring national recognition to the Route 15 corridor from Gettysburg to Charlottesville.

An individual who led by example, Eve and her family placed over a thousand acres of their land under conservation easement. As a member of the Orange County Hunt, she encouraged others to do the same. She truly exemplified the spirit of the deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation and has left a legacy that continues to reflect her dedication.