

How the Wister Medal Came About

Each year the accredited judges of the American Iris Society (AIS), on an official AIS Ballot, cast their votes for the AIS garden awards and from this balloting, the AIS garden awards are decided. The John C. Wister Memorial Medal recognizes tall bearded iris with the most votes from the AIS judges. Three medals are awarded each year. An iris receiving this medal becomes eligible for the American Dykes Medal.

At the November 1991 AIS Board of Directors meeting a proposal by the Committee to Study the Awards Structure included the following: "A Tall Bearded Section medal shall be established and called the "John Wister Memorial Medal"". The proposal was passed with implementation to be in 1993.

In the July 1992 Bulletin it was announced that AIS Region One was commissioned by AIS to arrange for the design and casting of the new John Wister Memorial Medal and a national competition would determine the medal design.

LET'S DESIGN A MEDAL !!

Region One has the great honor of being commissioned by AIS to arrange for the design and casting of the new JOHN WISTER MEMORIAL MEDAL for tall bearded irises! The medal award will be voted for the first time in 1993, and the medal will be presented for the first time at the 1994 National Convention. We want this medal to be really outstanding, so we are launching a NATIONAL COMPETITION for its design and inviting all members to participate. PLEASE DO!

The design should feature a tall bearded iris, which will be cast in relief on the face of the medal. It should express the elegance of this most dramatic of the bearded irises, but do bear in mind the space limitations of a three inch diameter medal which must also accommodate lettering around the edges. Less may well be more!

The initial evaluation of the entries will be done by a panel of Region One judges who are tall bearded iris growers and/or breeders. Their selections will be presented to the full AIS Board of Directors at the 1993 National Convention for a final decision. The designer of the winning entry will receive a LIFE MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY.

In order to give the judges ample time to study the entries, we must ask that they be mailed no later than December 1, 1992 to:

Lynn F. Markham, Chairman
Wister Medal Committee
61 Upland Avenue—P.O. Box 154
Lunenburg, Massachusetts 01462

There is no limit on entries—the more we have, the more beautiful this very important medal will be. COME ONE, COME ALL!

THE GENUS IRIS

By Wm. R. Dykes
Cambridge University Press, 1913

The Greater Kansas City Iris Society will sell a single copy of this rare book to the highest bidder. To bid and for more information write to: Dr. James W. Waddick, 3233 McGee, Kansas City, MO 64111 (816) 531-2373. Bids will close Midnight Sept. 1, 1992. Shipping extra.

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On May 15, 1993, the final meeting of the Wister Medal design judges was held and the winning designer, Nancy S. Harkins of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was selected. She was to be awarded an AIS life

Doug Chyz, November 22, 2021

membership. James W. Waddick of Kansas City Missouri was runner up to be given a gift certificate for irises of his choice.



Figure II

An iris plant just beginning to be infected with Southern Blight. Note that the larger roots are dying and the fungus will soon invade the rhizome at which time, it cannot be saved.

WISTER MEDAL DESIGN COMPETITION WINNER ANNOUNCED

The final meeting of the Wister Medal design judges was held on May 15, 1993. The winning designer is NANCY S. HARKINS of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who will be awarded a life membership in AIS. Runner-up is JAMES W. WADDICK of Kansas City, Missouri, who will receive a gift certificate for irises of his choice. Further details will appear in the October Bulletin. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who participated!

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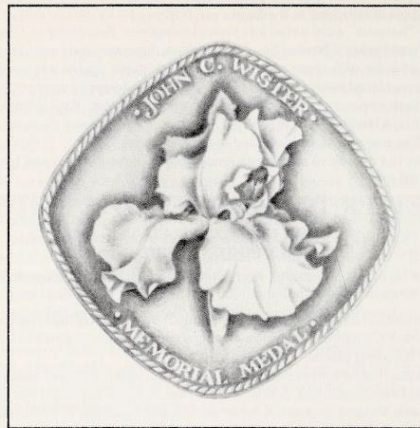
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In 1993, Silverado (Schreiners) was voted to receive the first John C. Wister Medal.

1993 AIS AWARDS	
DYKES MEMORIAL MEDAL	
EDITH WOLFORD TB (BEN HAGER) 113 votes	
runners-up	
BREAKERS TB (SCHREINERS) 39 Votes	
IMMORTALITY TB (L. ZURBRIGG) 37 Votes	
JOHN C. WISTER MEDAL (TB)	MORGAN-WOOD MEDAL (SIB)
VOTES	144 JEWELLED CROWN
229 SILVERADO (Schreiners)	(R. Hollingworth)
runners-up	runners-up
70 CHAMPAGNE ELEGANCE	53 TEMPER TANTRUM
(D. Niswonger)	(W. McGarvey)
48 ORANGE SLICES	46 INDY (R. Hollingworth)
(D. Niswonger)	
KNOWLTON MEDAL (BB)	MARY SWORDS DEBALLION
166 ZINC PINK (A. Ensminger)	MEDAL (LA)
runners-up	47 FRANK CHOWNING
96 CHICKASAW SUE (J. Gibson)	(H. Rowlan)
67 BROWN BERRY	runners-up
(A. & D. Willott)	44 EXQUISITE LADY (A. Owen)
	43 DELTA DOVE (M. Dunn)
HANS AND JACOB SASS	WILLIAMSON-WHITE MEDAL
MEDAL (IB)	(MTB)
106 MAUI MOONLIGHT (T. Aitken)	230 BUMBLEBEE DEELITE
runners-up	(J. & D. Norrick)
84 RED ZINGER (P. Black)	runners-up
57 ASK ALMA (C. Lankow)	62 ROSEMARY'S DREAM
	(M. Dunderman)
COOK-DOUGLAS MEDAL (SDB)	53 AACHEN ELF (L. Kennedy)
81 DARK VADER (R. & L. Miller)	53 CRYSTAL RUFFLES
runners up	(M. Dunderman)
64 JEWEL BABY (E. Hall)	
59 RAZZLE DAZZLE (G. Gaddie)	C. G. WHITE MEDAL (AR)
CAPARNE-WELCH MEDAL	(½ or more Aril)
(MD8)	71 SYRIAN JEWEL (H. Shockey)
70 SPARKY (T. Aitken)	runners-up
runners-up	41 DEE MOUSE (H. Danielson)
36 LITTLE GREEN EYES	36 KHYBER PASS (K. Kidd)
(C. Boswell)	
31 SNOWY RIVER	WILLIAM MOHR MEDAL (AB)
(A. & D. Willott)	(¼ to ½ Aril)
31 FUNNY FACE (M. Brizendine)	77 JEWEL OF OMAR (C. Boswell)
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he medal and designer were showcased In the October 1993 Bulletin.



PRESENTING THE WISTER MEDAL DESIGN AND ITS DESIGNER

Lynn Markham

Pictured above is the beautiful and distinctive design which will be cast in bold relief on the face of the John C. Wister Memorial Medal. The medal will be cast in bronze and will be 3-1/2 inches in diameter. The talented designer, Nancy S. Harkins of Tulsa, Oklahoma, has most graciously agreed to design the reverse of the medal as well, and this work is already in progress. The medal will be presented for the first time at the AIS National Convention in Portland, Oregon, and the recipient will be Schreiners for their tall bearded iris, SILVERADO.

Introductions are in order, of course. Meet our designer:

Nancy Harkins has loved drawing and painting since she was a small child. Her work received recognition throughout her school years, and at seventeen, she was accepting commissions for portraits from classmates and teachers. Having received little formal training, she continued to study and work on her own and in short-term classes and workshops. In 1984, she quit her office job to make watercolor painting her vocation.

The old "flag" irises of Nancy's childhood memories had never been much of a favorite, but when she attended the Tulsa Area Iris Society show in 1982, she was

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totally captivated by the form and color of the newer varieties she encountered. She began her small iris garden that year with eight rhizomes purchased from the club. Never having had a great interest in floral painting, she was surprised when in Spring, 1985, she felt the need to experience the beauty of her irises in a deeper way by doing drawings and watercolor paintings of them from life. Her first efforts concentrated on the basic shape and color, but by her third season, her joy was to capture every dramatic curve and nuance of color, still without photographic reference.

Since that time, she has produced countless drawings and over forty-five richly-colored watercolor paintings from most of the irises in her garden. Many of these works are in private collections locally and around the country. Her work may be seen at the Scissortail Gallery in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, or at her home.

Nancy is active in her church, a local arts group, and the Tulsa Area Iris Society. She resides in Tulsa with her husband (and best friend), Ed.

Congratulations, Nancy!



Nancy Harkins

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As a tribute to the designer of the new Wister Medal for tall bearded irises Nancy Harkins was to be given one of the medals in recognition of her artistic contribution to the AIS.

Originally 30 medals were procured from donations received during the design process.

In 1998 it was decided to award three medals each year.