



2002 Oliver Atkin Award

Julie Frink

University of California, South Coast Research and Extension Center Volunteer

Award presented by Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia.

I am honored to have been selected to present the 2002 Oliver Atkins Award. This is a special award in honor of a unique individual who worked tirelessly for the avocado industry throughout their life. Although I met Oliver towards the end of his life one could easily catch the zest for life that he had and his understated but vast knowledge of avocados and subtropicals. The recipient of the Oliver Atkins Award today is a worthy reflection of the dedication that Oliver Atkins gave the avocado industry.

I believe it is very special that the Nurserymen's Section recognizes the value of volunteerism since it is the heart of the California Avocado Society. The voluntary sharing of information, ideas and just plain hard work for the betterment of our fellow members in the avocado industry is what has made the California Avocado Society and the Nursery and Variety Section recognized around the world. Through its activities and publications it has formed the foundation of the world of avocado lore and knowledge as we know it today. With this backdrop, therefore, today's recipient will soon stand recognized before us.

This year's recipient can be described in two words: volunteerism and exuberance. This individual has no financial gain from the avocado industry whatsoever; she participates in the avocado industry from sheer love of the fruit and the tree. She has worked untold hours collecting information on long-forgotten varieties to ones waiting in the wings for release. Her exuberance for the avocado is evident to anyone spending more than a nanosecond with the recipient. She obviously loves the fruit and all things associated with it. Although I have known the recipient for around ten years, it has only been in the

last five or so that I have really come to value her insights and hard work. This occurred when I took over the variety breeding program in 1996. It took no time at all to catch the infectious enthusiasm that the recipient has for the avocado. Now for a little history on the recipient in order to reveal who she is.

In November 1992 Gray Martin recruited a volunteer group to help in the avocado fields at the UC South Coast Research and Extension Center in Irvine. The station houses the avocado variety collection which was established by the Avocado Society approximately 25 years ago. It is also the primary site for field evaluation for the variety breeding program. The initial members were: George Brown, Dickson Shafer, Marie Bouse, Ed McCrany, and Julie Frink, among others. Julie Frink's job was to collect data on history and the best of the breeding program trees. She was joined by Ed McCrany 1992 who assisted her until June 1993. Several other people helped until Spring 1994 when Isabel Barkman began helping full time. Frank James joined Julie and Isabel in 1995 and worked with them until his retirement as a volunteer in 2000. Isabel has since moved on to being the curator of the persimmon collection at the South Coast. Since 1999, others that have worked with Julie include Dewey Savage, Rich Henning, Riley Holly and Tom Ferrell.

During the last ten years it has been the continuity of volunteerism and exuberance that Julie has provided that has kept the group focused on the station's avocado collections. She is responsible for the avocado database that is accessible on our avocado website at UC, Riverside (www.ucavo.ucr.edu). This database has descriptions of over 1000 avocado varieties and Julie has pulled this information from all the sources that she could find. She continually collects data from the avocado collection and is responsible for UC releasing, for backyard planting, the XX3 variety, an interesting selection from Dr. Bob Bergh's breeding program. She is a valued colleague of myself, David Stottlemeyer, Paul Robinson and the other staff who assist in the avocado breeding program and we are proud and very happy that she has been selected as this year's recipient of the Oliver Atkin's Award.