

Ian Robertson (August 22, 1938–November 4, 2014): Horticulturist and Garden Designer

Ian Robertson, a master horticulturist, internationally known garden designer, educator, author, and occasional broadcaster, passed away peacefully at his home in Charlottesville, Virginia, on November 4, 2014.

Most recently principal at the horticultural and landscape design firm Ian Robertson Ltd. (1993–2014), Robertson left his mark on public and private gardens throughout the world. Among his best-known works are several of the original gardens at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia. The Henry M. Flagler Perennial Garden, in particular, displays his visionary design sense, appreciation of color throughout the seasonal changes, and knowledge of how plant communities evolve over time. In a recent article in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Frank Robinson, president and CEO of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, described Robertson's work as "rich tapestries of color and texture" and "astounding beauty."

Educated at Edinburgh University's Horticultural College, Robertson was a natural teacher as well. Among his credits are professor of horticulture and landscape design at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC); instructor at the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs Landscape Design Institute; lecturer and instructor for Master Gardeners, the Virginia Native Plant Society, and continuing education programs; as well as presenter at seminars for professional organizations such as the Piedmont Landscape Association.

Thankfully for those unable to attend Robertson's lectures, Robertson left behind a collection of written materials and videos. His book, *Six Thousand Years Up the Garden Path* (iUniverse, 2010), carries the reader through a relaxed and magical journey through the gardens of history. In addition, he wrote articles for magazines such as *Fine Gardening* and *The Virginia Sportsman*, and was an occasional contributor to *Virginia Home Grown*, a local live PBS television program that delves into the pleasures and challenges of gardening in Virginia.

Robertson will be fondly remembered for his effervescent charm, sparkling wit, boundless enthusiasm for nature, and deep love for his family. His warm and generous nature attracted people as much as the beauty of his gardens. Clients and students swiftly became his friends, and his friends became an extension of his family.

Robertson is survived by his loving wife Judy Robertson; sons Stuart, Matthew, Robert and James Robertson; brother David Robertson; and their spouses; as well as by his nine grandchildren.

While the world has lost a master gardener, Robertson's legacy remains in all of the seeds he planted both in the ground and the minds of future horticulturists and designers. To honor this legacy, donations can be made to the Ian Robertson Horticulture Scholarship Fund at the PVCC Educational Foundation, 501 College Drive Charlottesville, VA 22902-7589. A fundraiser to support the scholarship will be held June 7, 2015, in the gardens of Waterperry Farm in Free Union, Virginia.