



The Australian Rose Award, 1987

Mr. R. J. (Ron) Bell joined the Rose Society of Victoria 30 years ago. During the tenure of his membership he has made major contributions to the administration and practice of almost all matters pertaining to rose culture in Australia.

In 1966 he was selected as Convention Secretary for the First Rose Convention to be held in Australia. The success of this 1967 Melbourne Convention owed much to Ron's hard work and organising ability. He was forthwith appointed to the Council of the Rose Society of Victoria and made Honorary Secretary, a position he held for several years.

In 1967 he was made an Honorary Life Member of the Rose Society of Victoria and in 1975 he accepted appointment as Subscription Treasurer, a position he still holds. He has been responsible for maintaining all membership records and for active recruitment of new members.

In 1979 he was a worthy recipient of the Stewart memorial Award, being the ninth Victorian to be so honoured. When recently Victoria decided to become an Incorporated Society, Ron was given the responsibility of implementing our decision. The Rose Society of Victoria became an Incorporated Society within twelve months — in 1984.

In addition to these special duties Ron is an active top class rose selector. He specializes in Australian raised roses and he commonly wins the best bunch and best rose in these classes at Victorian shows. He is one of our top rose judges and is noted as a writer and lecturer on rosarian affairs in metropolitan and country Victoria.

Ron will be remembered for many things but probably he will be best known and best remembered as a major Australian rose hybridist. His planned hybridising career commenced about 20 years ago and he now contributes regular articles to two specialist journals — The New Zealand Rose Breeders Association and The Rose Hybridisers Association of U.S.A. His first Australian rose introduction was Majorie Atherton and royalties from it were directed to the Rose Society of Victoria. This cultivar was chosen in 1983 for illustration on Australian stamps and almost 1.5 million Marjorie Atherton stamps were sold. Other Bell roses of note are April Hamer, Our Rosamond and Janette Murray — all fine roses ranking with the best roses imported into Australia. Royalties from Janette Murray were directed to the Red Cross which received a cheque for \$1,580, covering the first year of its introduction. Ron has donated what will be known as the "Bicentennial Rose" to the Rose Society of N.S.W. This rose will be introduced in 1988 by the N.S.W. Society, who will host the 1988 World Rose convention in Sydney and should receive thousands of dollars in royalties.

Ron has made outstanding contributions to the rose world in Australia and is a worthy recipient of an Australian Rose Award.