



Darrel A. Apps

JAN 31, 1938 - MAY 21, 2025



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AJ 
HOLLY & SONS

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In Loving Memory of Darrel A. Apps January 31, 1938 – May 21, 2025

Born to Herman and Eleanor Apps on January 31, 1938, Darrel Apps was the youngest of his brothers, four years younger than Jerry and only 15 minutes younger than his twin, Donald. He was born at his family's dairy farm, four miles west of Wild Rose, Wisconsin. Growing up, Darrel experienced a childhood without the modern luxuries of indoor plumbing or electricity.

Darrel attended the Chain-O-Lakes One Room School, and then continued his education at Wild Rose High School before going on to receive three degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

One day in childhood, Darrel became captivated by a patch of bright orange flowers growing under the eaves of his one room school. It was love at first sight. This spotting of the Orange Ditch Daylily began his lifelong pursuit of education and expertise on Daylily hybridization.

His first time away from his home (and his twin) was when Darrel went off to Madison in pursuit of his bachelor's degree. His early college career was colored by a bit of loneliness and a lot of hard work. This experience shaped Darrel into a new version of himself- more independent and determined than ever. After graduation, he worked for the University of Wisconsin Extension Service at Black River Falls as a 4-H and Horticulture Agent, blending education with horticulture.

Shortly after, Darrel joined the Wisconsin National Guard and was called to active duty during the Berlin Crisis. This catapulted him outside of Wisconsin for the first time, and put a pause on his continued education while he served in Washington State. Darrel's world expanded from a small farm in Wild Rose, to the campus in Madison, to the Pacific Northwest.



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Knowing that he wanted to continue his education, after 11 months of service, Darrel came back to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to get his Masters and Ph.D. During this time, he reconnected with Marilyn Hansen, a fellow Wild Rose native who had graduated from Madison General and was working as a registered nurse. When Darrel asked Marilyn to marry him, she replied, "I'll think about it." This tickled him and he knew he had met his match.

Darrel became Dr. Apps, and Marilyn became Marilyn Apps. They spent their early years of marriage in Lexington, Kentucky where Darrel worked as a State Specialist in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Kentucky. In Kentucky, Dr. Apps became "Dad" and Marilyn Apps became "Mom" to Lisa Marilyn Apps and Gretchen Julene Apps.

The Apps family moved from Kentucky to Pennsylvania, where Darrel joined the faculty at Penn State University. Soon after, Darrel was offered a prestigious opportunity with Longwood Gardens as the Department Head of Education. It was during this time that Darrel began to make his dream a reality, as he founded Woodside Nursery to patent and sell his own unique Daylily cultivars. He proudly noted that these flowers helped pay for his daughters' college education.

After an internal restructuring at Longwood Gardens, Darrel was able to fully focus on mastering the cultivation of hardy, bright, and reblooming daylilies. Darrel and Marilyn moved to the Garden State and transformed their property into a vibrant sea of daylilies. They hosted not only family and friends, but also garden retailers and horticulture enthusiasts who flocked to buy Darrel's creations.

Darrel's dedication to crafting the perfect daylilies marks his innovation and expertise in his field. In 2004, the New York Times named him "Dr. Daylily" noting the miraculous work he did to create the "Happily-Ever-Appster" series of daylilies that bloom for up to 130 days each summer. Darrel hybridized over 450 daylilies, with several patented.

In 2007, Darrel and Marilyn returned to their beloved hometown of Wild Rose, Wisconsin. What was meant to be Darrel's "retirement" was anything but. He spent every day working outside in the soil or inside in his grow room. He continued hybridizing daylilies along with landscaping and beautifying his home and neighborhood.

Although it was bittersweet to leave their family on the East Coast, Darrel and Marilyn were thrilled to be back in Wild Rose near their siblings and in-laws. Darrel dedicated his time in Wild



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Rose to bettering the community, not only through nature, but also through his work with the Kiwanis Club. He valued the impact he was able to provide students in Wild Rose, and mentorship he was able to give to so many in the community.

Darrel Apps lived a life full of beauty and adventure. In his work, he traveled to 6 continents and studied plants all over the world. Darrel's work is revered by all, and the community both near and far will not be the same without him.

Darrel is leaving behind a lasting legacy, not only in his horticultural work, but also in his personal life. Darrel was a loving husband, father, and grandfather. His wit and humor made the house erupt with laughter. His work ethic was infectious, and his influence helped propel his grandchildren to succeed in their education and careers. He has shaped the lives of countless individuals, but his family always had a special place in his heart.

Darrel Apps is survived by his wife, Marilyn Apps, his children Lisa Sybrandt (Larry Sybrandt) and Gretchen Apps (Bill Gray), his grandchildren Justin Sybrandt, Jennifer Sybrandt, Joseph Sybrandt (Alexandra Sybrandt), Willie Gray, and Jacob Gray. Darrel Apps is also survived by his older brother Jerry Apps and his twin brother Donald Apps, along with many loving-in-laws. Darrel Apps was preceded in death by his parents, his two sisters-in-law, Ruth and Marcie Apps, and his brother-in-law Donald Berglund.

A visitation will be held at 10 a.m., followed by a memorial service at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 31st at Holly Funeral Home in Wild Rose (630 County Road GH, Wild Rose, WI 54984)





Events

Darrel A. Apps

JAN 31, 1938 - MAY 21, 2025

Memorial Visitation

 **Saturday**, May 31, 2025


 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CT

 **A. J. Holly & Sons (Wild Rose)**
630 County Road CR-GH, Wild Rose WI 54984



Memorial Service

 **Saturday**, May 31, 2025

 11:00 AM CT

 **A. J. Holly & Sons (Wild Rose)**
630 County Road CR-GH, Wild Rose WI 54984





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Apps family.



May 30 at 10:48 AM



Neil Diboll posted:

When I was just starting out in business, I attended my second Perennial Plant Association conference in Columbus, Ohio in 1985. This dapper gentleman from Longwood Gardens came up to me with great enthusiasm and effusively extolled my efforts at growing native prairie plants. I was pretty much in shock, since most of the world still considered the plants I grew to be "weeds." But not Darrel Apps. He was so supportive and encouraging, at a point when after three years of knocking my head against the wall trying to get people to appreciate native flowers and grasses, with almost no luck, I was seriously considering quitting. Darrel to the rescue! His contagious enthusiasm and smiling spirit stayed with me, and I never, ever forgot it. This one event so completely endeared me to this amazing man that I am forever grateful to him for his support and belief in the value of what became my life's work. It has been an honor to be included in Darrel's wide circle of friends across this world. He will be sorely missed.

May 30 at 4:27 AM



Peter Kronzer sent a Peaceful White Lilies Basket to the Apps family.



May 29 at 5:32 AM



Peter Kronzer planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Darrel.



May 29 at 5:32 AM



Nicole, Jim, Liz, Mike & The 4 Kids sent an Arrive in Style to the Apps family.



May 28 at 5:11 PM



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Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Apps family.



May 28 at 3:10 PM



Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Darrel.



May 28 at 3:10 PM



Phill King posted:

I was lucky enough to sit next to Darrel for the 1st time years ago at a IPPS eastern meeting. Just a great guy and plant expert extraordinaire. I remembering asking him...Happy Returns...it is your's right? He said ..Yes! and I was duly impressed. Years later we grew 75000 of that beautiful plant and I was always grateful to know Dr Apps and value his help and friendship..... Phill King....Greenwood Propagation...Hebron, Illinois

May 28 at 5:46 AM



Gary K Clair posted:

I have only known Darrell for 6 years through our Kiwanis affiliation. I found Darrell to be kind and considerate. I once shared with Darrell that he was my hero. I admired his "get up and go" and willingness to help others always. Whenever there was a project, I asked to be paired with him. Just being with him was enriching. May he rest in peace and manage some heavenly flower garden. Gary Clair

May 27 at 11:35 AM



Anonymous sent a Loving Lilies and Roses Bouquet to the Apps family.



May 27 at 10:00 AM



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Silk F. planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Darrel.

May 27 at 6:52 AM



Preschool In The Valley Committee/ Staff sent a Full Of Love Bouquet to the Apps family.

May 27 at 5:36 AM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Apps family.

May 27 at 3:19 AM



Ernie Wasson posted:

Darrel was my faculty advisor (1982-4) when I was in the Longwood Program at the University of Delaware. He helped me work my way thru the requirements of graduate school and shared his love of plants. I am grateful for all his help and advice. RIP.

May 24 at 3:44 PM



Anonymous sent a Beautiful in Blue to the Apps family.

May 23 at 8:47 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Darrel by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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