

## May I have the envelope, please... The winner of the 2002 D. Todd Gresham Award

The D. Todd Gresham Award was established to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the improved culture, increased knowledge and promotion of magnolias, or who have contributed outstanding service to the Magnolia Society.

The process by which a recipient is selected is straightforward. The Awards Committee Chairman, who is the immediate past president of the Magnolia Society, solicits nominations from the membership. When proposing an individual, it is the nominator's responsibility to provide a summary of the qualifications of the nominee, for consideration by the committee. The chairman collects the nominations and supporting material, and distributes it to each committee member. Each committee member then communicates his/her recommendations to the chairman, who compiles the results and presents the award at the annual meeting. This year, the following individuals comprised the Awards Committee:

- Glenn Clark
- Frank B. Galyon
- Mark D. Haimes
- Harriet Mahlke
- Michael L. A. Robinson



DAPHNE LIPPHI

Anita Figlar congratulating her husband, Richard as he accepts the 2002 Gresham award.

When the 2002 recipient joined the society, magnolias were merely an avocational interest. His interest greatly increased from exposure to society founder Joe McDaniel. In the early years, he made use of vacations to seek out venerable specimens of *Magnolia acuminata* and *M. grandiflora*, and documented their existence in the pages of this journal. He became fascinated with the variation within the species of *Magnolia*, and also with the differences between the species and genera of the Magnoliaceae. As he investigated the taxonomy of the Magnoliaceae, he began to question what makes a magnolia a magnolia, and on what basis the other genera of Magnoliaceae are considered to be distinct from *Magnolia*. As his study became more serious, he corresponded with the leading magnolia taxonomists, to understand their reasoning. With further investigation, he observed that the characteristics given for keeping the genus *Michelia* distinct from *Magnolia* are not valid. He presented a paper on his conclusions at the Magnoliaceae Symposium in Guangzhou, China in 1998, and so contributed to a major revision in *Magnolia* taxonomy.

In recent years he has assisted researchers doing genetic analysis of the Magnoliaceae for the purposes of taxonomy. Not satisfied with merely learning about new species, he has been active in attempts to bring a number of these little-known species into cultivation in the West for the purposes of science and the enjoyment of gardeners.

The recipient has served in each of the major offices of the society. As a very active participant in the Internet 'round robin,' he has consistently offered encouragement and sound advice to the novices who have submitted questions. Through this effort, he has been largely responsible for the continued success of the Magnolia List.

On March 30, 2002, The D. Todd Gresham Award was presented to Richard B. Figlar. 🍃