

GCNH Archival Moment- November 2022

Susie Stevens, Cherry Shaw Swords and Virginia Thorne Shaw Susan Ehrenkranz

Although Susie Stevens is not a member of our club, she has provided immense and valuable support to the Garden Club of New Haven. In 2015, she established The Cherry Shaw Swords and Virginia Thorne Shaw Fund, to honor the memories of her mother Cherry Swords and grandmother Virginia Shaw. This fund supports the speaker programs of the club and, most particularly, an annual named lecture. Susie's splendid and thoughtful generosity is the reason our club has such a fabulous and varied roster of speakers.



Susie's grandmother, Virginia, who died in 1968, had been interested in horticulture since she was a child in Lake Forest, Illinois. She joined the Rye Garden Club in 1925 and served as its President from 1943 to 1945.



A fun note: the dog was named Susie, and so is Susie Steven's namesake!

Mrs. Shaw was a director of the Garden Club of America, an advisor to its horticultural and conservation committees. She was a club accredited judge for horticulture and landscape design.

In 1958, the GCA awarded her its Horticulture Award for her achievements in Rye. She also received the Distinguished Service Award of the New York Botanical Garden for "planning and supervising of plantings within the garden".



Susie has wonderful memories of playing in her grandmother's Rye Garden. These photos show the marvelous outdoor space Susie's grandmother and grandfather – he worked in the garden too- created.



Cherry Swords, Susie's mom, pictured here as a little girl with her sister Ginger in her mother's garden, moved to the New Haven area in 1950 and she joined our club in 1951.



She had very pretty garden on Briar Lane, filled with lots of bulbs, skimmia and gorgeous roses. Cherry and Susie's dad, Gerard, also worked together in the garden nurturing their lovely outdoor space. Cherry appreciated nature and design. She was a staunch supporter of the Nature Conservancy and one of our club's keen and gifted floral arrangers – her name is often mentioned in flower show schedules. Cherry was a friend to many in the club.



Cherry pictured here with the wonderful Betsy Gentry).

The club salutes Susie- seen here with her mom Cherry and Ginger, her daughter -for allowing us to continue to explore and learn about the worlds of horticulture, conservation, and our environment.

