



# Interiorscape Hall of Fame



## Julius Roehrs

1999 Posthumous Inductee

He came to be known simply as Mr. Kentia. He was widely regarded as the most knowledgeable person in the country about *Howea forsteriana*. In the Interior Landscaping industry in particular as well as the horticultural industry in general, one could not think of kentia palms without thinking of Julius Roehrs. He came from the legendary Roehrs horticultural family of New Jersey. Julius began his career right after high school in 1928. It was then he started selling nursery stock for the Julius Roehrs Company, a company that his grand father had founded in 1860 in Rutherford, New Jersey.

Over the course of the next 64 years he would go on to work for several prominent names in the industry including the Alex Henderson Bulb Company in Chicago, IL. and the J. Awdrey Armstrong Company in California where he sold roses and kentias. In 1964 Roy F. Wilcox gave Julius the job as head salesman for his nursery in Santa Barbara California selling azaleas and kentias. Wherever he went there was a common thread that always led back to the kentia palm

Whether he was working for the Julius Roehrs Company, the Roy F. Wilcox companies or eventually the Keeline Wilcox Nurseries he seems to have been always associated with the kentia palm. It was that association that led him to work with the interior landscaping industry and many of it's early pioneers such as Everett Conklin in New York, the Leider family in Illinois and Frank James in San Francisco. Mr. Roehrs was the definitive source for information on kentias and through Keeline Wilcox Nurseries he became the prominent supplier to the interiorscaping trade. It seems that Julius Roehrs was as easily suited to the Interior Landscaping trade as was his favorite plant, the kentia palm.

In 1989 Keeline-Wilcox relocated from Irvine California to Oxnard and Julius decided to retire. However it was a short-lived retirement. Relocating the nursery business and seeing it's top salesman retire quickly had a negative effect on Keeline-Wilcox. It didn't take long for them to convince Julius to abandon his retirement plans and get back to work. Before long Julius was again selling semi-loads of kentias and shipping them all over the United States. Once again Julius Roehrs was the gregarious man in the Keeline-Wilcox booth. The business quickly recovered and Julius eventually cut back on his work commitments. Shortly afterward Julius had a series of strokes and passed on.

Among his many accomplishments Julius Roehrs was proudest to have served on the Board of Directors of the Shinoda Educational Foundation which provided scholarships to students in agriculture. He also helped to found The Living Plant Growers Association and was an active participant as an Allied Trade member to the early California Regional Interior Landscaping trade associations that eventually combined to form

CIPA. In 1981 the California State Florists Association named him Man of the Year. Additionally in 1991, the Florida Nurseryman's Association inducted him into the Foliage Hall of Fame.

His family with the creation of the Julius E. Roehrs Scholarship Fund in Plant Pathology at the University of California, Riverside, has also memorialized Julius. Julius Roehrs was known for his enthusiasm, wisdom and dedication to the foliage industry. He was a warm, honest and caring person.

