

Memorial Tribute to *Hylah Haile Boyd*
November 16, 2022
Presented by Betty Jenkins

Ladies, will you join me in standing in tribute to our esteemed member, Hylah Haile Boyd.

Thank you. What a privilege it is for me to stand today to honor our dear Hylah. Thank you, Kelly, for asking me to do this.

Hylah was president the year I joined Tuckahoe Garden Club in 1994 and wow, was I ever in total, absolute awe. She was that energizer bunny who left anyone in her presence inspired and motivated. When I was president (which I never imagined sitting there in that first meeting) she was my trusted advisor, my guardian angel and my encourager-in-force. If I needed advice, she was there. I am sure she was that, and more, for many of you.

Before I read the forthcoming tribute, I first want to share with you a little bit of Hylah's history with Tuckahoe Garden Club. I want our newer members to realize the enormous impact she had in this club.

Hylah joined Tuckahoe in 1969. In the years between 1969 and just recently, she served twice as the awards representative. For 9 consecutive years she served as our club's conservation chair, for two years she gave her advice as a representative to the Finance Committee. She was our representative on numerous GCA committees, she was vice chair to GCA Conservation. She was GCA Zone VII Conservation Representative. At Garden Club of Virginia, she was a director at large, chair of the Conservation Committee and for 6 years our served on that Committee. She was Horticulture Chair of our club for 3 years, she arranged flowers at the KV house for 3 years, she was a member of our nominating committee for several years and served on projects for 8. Whew, just how does one person do that in a lifetime? Hylah did.

And in our Green Book, there are at least 10 awards or recognitions for which Hylah was honored. And that does not include all the regional and national recognitions that I am about to share now.

This tribute was authored and read by Kelly Armstrong at the recent Garden Club of American Zone VII meeting in October.

"Hylah Haile Boyd, a member of The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton since 1969, died on September 20, 2022.

Hylah served as GCA Director from 2007-2009, zone representative and then vice chair of the Conservation and National Affairs & Legislation committees, and zone representative on the Nominating Committee. She was a member of the Board of Associates and its co-chair from 2009-2010. She served as club president from 1994-1996.

Hylah was recognized widely for her groundbreaking work in conservation. She was awarded the Laughlin Medal in 2002, the Marion Thompson Fuller Brown Conservation Award in 2010, the Medal of Merit, and the Creative Leadership Award.

In 1998, Hylah founded Scenic Virginia, a non-profit dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing Virginia's scenic beauty. She also served on the boards of The Garden Club of Virginia, the Virginia Conservation Network, Capital Trees, and the Essex County Conservation Alliance. She was an advisory board member of the Northern Neck Land Conservancy."

That is an amazing list of accomplishments and contributions, but what is worth contemplating is all the creativity, hard work, and vision that went behind the scenes to make all those achievements a reality. That was our Hylah.

At Hylah's memorial service, The Very Reverend April Greenwood, our club's spiritual leader in every respect, proclaimed many of Hylah's extraordinary achievements in her short life. I'll share just a couple of April's remarks:

"The list of her accomplishments as a conservationist is long and while they cannot all be listed today, her founding of Scenic Virginia in 1998 stands out as a wonderful gift to all Virginians yet to come. She did as the prayer for conservation exhorts us to do. She "sought to be a faithful steward of God's bountiful resources of nature so that generations yet to come could enjoy the riches of this earth."

I said earlier that Hylah was my guardian angel. Little did I know that Hylah was indeed an angel. Listen to what April shared:

"The name Hylah has a Hebrew origin found in the Bible. It means a ring of bright light or a halo. We usually think of angels or saints when the word halo is mentioned. Hylah certainly lived up to her name. Our culture unfortunately often depicts angels as cute chubby little creatures with lopsided halos. But there is nothing cute about halos and angels in scripture. Angels are messengers of God who speak words that need to be heard and whose halos shed light on areas that are dark and need to be seen and addressed. When the light is turned on, then we can see more clearly what needs to be done to clean up a particular mess. And this is exactly what Hylah devoted her life to doing through her passionate work in conservation and restoration."

I will close here with the same prayer that April used at the conclusion of her homily:

"O heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works; that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, we may learn to serve thee with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord". Amen.

At the end of Hylah's service at St. James's, we recessed to the song "You are my Sunshine". Hylah, you are indeed our sunshine, and always will be.

Hylah Haile Boyd's Positions with Tuckahoe Garden Club, GCA and GCV

Member 1982-2022

- GCA Horticulture and NAL Vice-Chair
- GCA Horticulture and NAL Vice-Chair for Land Use
- GCA Nominating Committee
- GCA Zone VII 2010 Director
- GCA Zone VII NAL and Conservation Representative
- GCA Board of Directors Director at Large
- GCV Conservation Committee
- GCV Conservation Committee Chairman
- Horticulture
- Joint Meeting
- Nominating Committee
- Projects
- TGC President
- TGC and GCV Horticulture

Hylah Haile Boyd Awards

- GCA Awards:
 - The Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal – 2002
 - Creative Leadership Award - 2015
 - Medal of Merit – 2012
 - Marion Thompson Fuller Brown Conservation Award – 2010
 - Zone VII Director's Award - 2010
- GCV Awards:
 - The deLacy Gray Memorial Medal for Conservation – 1999
 - The Blue Ridge Garden Club Cup – Lily Show - 2012
- TGC Awards:
 - The Marion Boatwright Dudley Award – 1996
 - The Elizabeth Wingo Knowles Bowl – 2017
 - The Hylah Boyd Conservation Bowl – 2008
 - The Ann Arey Mason Bowl - 2014