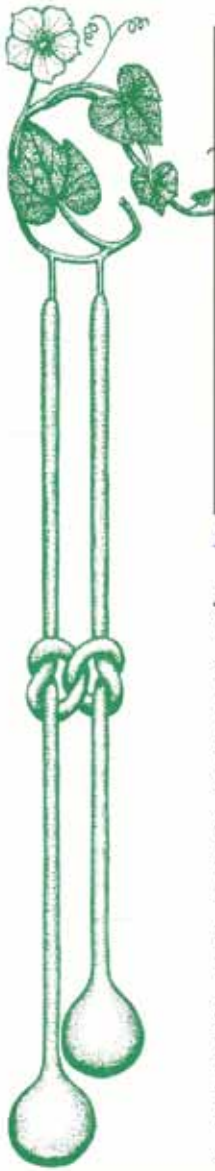


We Knew Jim Story

by Donn and Bev Kelver



Bev Kelver, Jane & Jim Story

Jim Story was a very active member of the Garden Club of Indiana and his local club. Jim served on the board of TGCI with my wife Bev. In 1987 Bev became president of TGCI and Jane Story became 1st VP. Jim continued to attend state meetings but was now very involved with gourds. At a fall board meeting Bev and Jim were having a conversation about gardening and she told him I was busy preparing space at our new residence and Jim's first question was will he be growing any gourds? She said I had never grown any. BINGO! A new recruit. Gourd seeds were sent home for planting next spring. He now had my interest and a phone call to him gave me more information than I expected along with a sketch of a possible gourd arbor. By the spring of

1988 my garden soil was ready to receive gourd seeds and it included a new gourd arbor. The summer of 1988 was very hot, the soil rich with compost, plant watered regularly and boy did the gourd plants thrive. My lack of experience didn't pose any problem, other than I did not realize what was going on in the mass of vines. To my surprise there was a very large long

handle dipper concealed within. I attended a fall meeting with Bev and was having a conversation with Jim about my gourds and when I detailed the size of the dipper gourd, he said, "You must harvest that before the Ohio Gourd Show and enter it," as he was sure it would be a winner. Plans were made to attend the show. Those plans included building a special long holder to support the neck for the long trip.



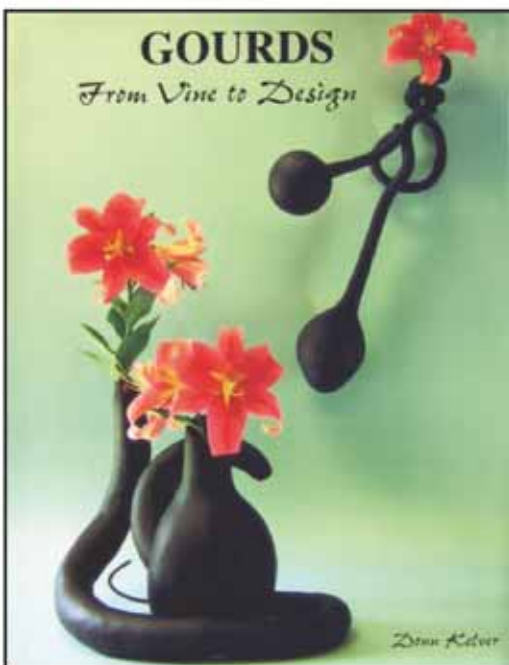
Donn Kelver & Glenn Burkhalter

THE SHOW

I filled out my exhibit form and brought in my long handled dipper gourd 74 inches long, a 2-inch neck diameter and an 8-inch ball. This was the largest gourd that anyone had seen in all of the past shows. I was bombarded with questions of what were my special instructions. I said, "a Jim Story seed, lack of experience and a lot of luck." Dr. Charles B. Heiser, Jr. author of *The Gourd Book* was at the show and wanted to discuss my growing techniques that resulted in producing such a show stopper. When the show was over I then went to Jim and said I would like to try and save the gourd if possible but did not know what to do. Jim offered to take the gourd with him and dry it over the winter if it was mature enough. For the next 4 months Jim and Jane had a 6 foot long gourd in their living room in front of the fireplace with Jim carefully turning it and successfully completing the drying process. Today the gourd stands in the corner of my office as a reminder of the special friendship that we shared with Jim and Jane.

JIM AND NATIONAL GARDEN CLUB

When Bev was serving on the National Garden Club Board, Jim felt this would be his opportunity





to expose the floral designers to the use of gourds as floral containers. Jim helped to establish a class in floral designs using gourds as a dominant feature at the Ohio shows and included them in the first Indiana Gourd Show. With pictures and containers, we were able to introduce this new idea at the National Garden Club convention with a lot of questions on where to get the containers, can they raise their own, where do you get seed and many more. Deen Day Sanders, the National Garden Club President at that time, was an outstanding Atlanta floral designer and she was very interested in this new item. After several conversations with her about my exposure to gourd, she felt it would be a great idea if I would write a book about gourds that would include growing instructions and floral designs using gourds as a feature. With much encouragement and arm twisting I agreed that I would do my best (and with Bev's help) to accumulate information and put it into book form.

THE BOOK – Gourds From Vine to Design

Numerous trips to Pendleton, IN to visit Jim Story's gourd gardens and photograph the gourds in various stages of growth and training were always welcomed by Jim and Jane. Jim always found the time to walk through his gardens and explain his culture and training of his prized gourds. He would explain his insect control, pollination

techniques, harvest hints and need for proper cleaning and drying. Photos and more photos of gourds and their uses were taken and filed for use in the book. Deen Day Sanders had a floral workshop at her estate in Georgia and had designers from the region gather and prepare designs that she would then have photographed by a professional photographer for possible inclusion in the book. Deen decided to fund the printing of the book as a gift to the National Garden Clubs as we were granting the copyright to NCG.

THE VIDEO – Gourds From The Vine

When we returned from the National Garden Club Convention where the book debuted, Jim and I discussed (at Deen's urging) the possibility of producing a video of his gourd garden. We wanted to show the cultivation, structures, cleaning techniques and so on. Jim was very receptive to the idea as he was always willing to share his knowledge of gourds with anyone.

After returning to Atlanta I met with Deen Day Sanders and Nick Nicholson from VIA, a professional video producer that Deen had employed numerous times. Deen explained that we wanted him to go to Indiana and take a video of a gourd garden. With a puzzled look Nick said "A What?" He did not have a clue what a gourd was and how it could be important enough to load his equipment on a plane and fly to Indiana. He said this would be expensive, and she said "I know - send me the bill."

In preparation for the video shoot I wrote a list of questions for Jim to explain the garden in various stages of growth and training. Nick arrived at sunrise on the selected day and was amazed at what he saw. The wheels immediately began to turn in his mind on how, what and why. The process went very smoothly with Jim answering the questions as Nick filmed the response. Approximately 8 hours of video was recorded.

After the shoot a rough video was produced; each frame was numbered in sequence. They were sent to me to edit and select a variety of segments to tell the story of Jim Story's gourd expertise. When we were happy with the end product Nick us sent a couple of copies of it. Deen and Jim and Jane Story each gave their permission to produce the gold master of the video. The copyright for the video was initially held by NCG but later transferred to the Indiana Gourd Society.

Yes, Bev and I knew Jim Story and I am glad he infected me with "Gourd Fever." It was definitely a privilege to be friends with Jim and Jane, and I feel privileged to have shared many garden club and gourd functions together.