



Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life? - Mary Oliver

DONNELLA MAE DULL

November 15, 1934 – March 5, 2024



Donna Dull, shown here in her grandmother's gardening hat, was passionate about education, volunteerism, and gardening her entire life. It's fair to say that her father, a firefighter and her mother, a children's librarian, along with her grandparents, instilled and nurtured that passion with their big gardens, dedication to service, and their love of learning as she grew up in Forest City.

Donna began her teaching career at a time when teachers weren't allowed to marry. Instead, she devoted herself to her students, and taught kindergarten for 43 years. Miss Dull was an all-time favorite teacher for generations of students, exacting a perfect balance of loving kindness and no-nonsense instruction a 5-year-old needs. She genuinely cared for each of her students, she kept them safe, and did all that she could to ensure their success in those tender years.

When she retired after 41 years of service at Lincoln Elementary in Clear Lake, Donna devoted herself to volunteering for numerous causes in the community. Among them were programs she developed for Fire Prevention Week and an Adopt an Officer program in Clear Lake. She helped start the Community Kitchen in Clear Lake and served on the advisory board of the Mason City Community Kitchen. The Fire Museum of Clear Lake, Friends of the Library, Wright on the Park, Music Man Square, the Iowa State Historical Society, Clear Lake Historical Society, Clear Lake Arts Center, Habitat

for Humanity, and the Iowa National Heritage Foundation all benefited from Donna's time and talents.

Her involvement with Earth Day activities earned her the nickname 'Mother Earth' and she was named Grand Marshal of Clear Lake's Fourth of July parade in 2012 to honor her many contributions to north Iowa. She was a life member of Heritage Park in Forest City and Kinney Pioneer Museum in Mason City as well as the National Education Association, the Iowa State Education Association, and Daughters of the American Revolution, Mason City Chapter.

Donna traveled extensively to many European cities and noticed that the best of them had public green space. So, when talk of turning the Central Schools site into a public garden started she knew it was a good idea. She joined the steering committee and worked diligently to plan for Central Gardens and to launch a space for gardening and education.

Donna served Central Gardens of North Iowa for over 24 years as a charter member and board member and served as board secretary and historian. She volunteered in the office two days a week, responding to calls and correspondence, writing receipts, and maintaining records. She also served on the Membership & Marketing Committee and the Executive Committee.

Donna was generous to Central Gardens with her time, talent, and treasure. She built Mother Earth's Workshop, the MEWs, her namesake from Earth Days, where the very heart of the Gardens beats and the cadence of volunteers at work and at play keeps time. She placed the bronze sculpture of the barefoot boy reading in the Lily Garden to remind us that the site Central Gardens is on is devoted to learning and to honor her father, who loved reading to her.

She purchased numerous bricks for friends and community leaders and had them placed throughout the Gardens over the years. And Donna was generous with memorials, frequently contributing to Central Gardens endowment on behalf of friends and comrades who had passed.

continued on next page



DONNELLA MAE DULL - CONTINUED

She's funded the ISU Insect Zoo the last two years, purchased wreaths for the main gates each Christmas season, and purchased countless plants and flowers for the Gardens, including a favorite of hers, the peonies.

Donna's friends are hosting a celebration of her life on Sunday, June 2, from 2 PM to 4 PM in Central Gardens, when the peonies are in bloom. The public is invited to attend and learn more about the legacy she leaves in north Iowa. Memorials on behalf of Donna and a life well lived may be made to Central Gardens of North Iowa, Clear Lake Historical Society, and Clear Lake Public Library.

How wonderful that no one need wait a single moment to improve the world. -Anne Frank

CENTRAL GARDENS NEEDS YOU! *Yes, You!*

Central Gardens has some important shoes to fill this year. Volunteers are needed for gardening as well as in marketing, finance, maintenance, and in the office. We need people of all ages and abilities, of varied interests and skills, to serve Central Gardens in a variety of ways. You don't have to get dirty to volunteer at Central Gardens but you sure can!

To learn more about volunteering at Central Gardens, please join us on **Sunday, May 5, 2 PM - 4 PM** for a volunteer open house. Refreshments will be served and volunteers will be on hand to answer all of your questions. Come and find your place in the Gardens!



Donna Dull

BEE A MEMBER!

Join Central Gardens Here!

Leo Tolstoy said spring is the time of plans and projects. Nowhere is that truer than at Central Gardens. In fact, volunteers have been planning and plotting all winter to get ready for the gates to open May 1st. Memberships support the mission of Central Gardens and our ability to open the gates, offer free admission, and provide over 70 free events each year.

Please keep the momentum going at the Gardens by establishing or renewing your membership today.

As a member, your benefit package includes the following:

- **Exclusive** 20% discount on bricks and pavers*
- **Free admission** to over 345 American Horticultural Society (AHS) gardens and arboretums in North America and the Caribbean*
- **Newsletters** to keep you informed about what's happening at Central Gardens
- **Recognition** in the Annual Report
- **Pride** in supporting the quality of life in north Iowa

**Does not apply to corporate memberships.*



*To join us today, simply scan the QR code or mail your renewal to Central Gardens
PO Box 735
Clear Lake, IA 50428.*



TILL PEONIES BLOOM

BY KIM YEONG-NANG

Till peonies bloom

I'll still wait for my spring to come.

When peonies drop laboriously

their blossoms one by one

I'll then be drowned in sorrows for my loss,

spring's gone.

One day in May as it was so hot and humid

When even fallen blossoms were prostrate wilted,

Without a trace peonies vanished from this world

And had my soaring thrills to sorrow twirled.

While peonies wither as they may,

with them my year's all gone.

Year round for the rest,

all the way I'm weeping crestfallen.

Till peonies bloom,

I'll still wait for spring,

splendid but yet sorrowful, to come.

Till peonies bloom.



2024 Corporate Members

DESIGNER (\$2,500 + UP)



GARDENER (\$1,000 - \$2,499)



CARETAKER (\$500 - \$999)

Bombie (Bonnie Hall)
Clear Lake Bank & Trust
Laird Law Firm, PLC
Larson's Mercantile
Sail Inn
Stellar Industries

PLANTER (\$250 - \$499)

Bergland + Cram Architects
Brother's Ace Hardware
ControlPrint Creative
Farmers State Bank
Glen's Tire Service
Jane Fischer & Associates
Lake Liquors
Metalcraft, Inc.
North Iowa Community Credit Union
Steve Wright Outdoor Lighting





Central Gardens of North Iowa
P.O. Box 735
Clear Lake, IA 50428

Address Service Requested

CENTRAL GARDENS EVENTS

Follow us on Facebook or visit our website at www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com for information on activities, events, and programs coming up at the Gardens in 2024.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2024

Gates open at dawn for the 2024 season.

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 2 PM - 4 PM

Volunteer Open House.

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Nature of Nature Plants. Free.

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 8 AM - 12 PM

Plant Sale and Gardening Fair.

FRIDAYS, JUNE 7 - AUGUST 30, 9 AM - 11 AM

Garden Explorers (kids). Free.

FRIDAYS, JUNE 7 - AUGUST 30, 9 AM - 11 AM

Fresh on Friday Bouquet Sales and Refreshments.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 12

Noon Summer Garden Party. Ticketed event.

SUNDAYS, JULY 14 - SEPTEMBER 1, 5 PM - 6 PM

Picnics & Performances. Free.

