

Planned Giving

The Measure of a Life Well Lived

By Ann McKinnon

Some of Boyce Thompson Arboretum's most loyal and steadfast friends are no longer with us, but they have an impact every day. How? By metaphorically planting a tree, even though they knew they might never sit in its shade.

We don't measure the value of a person's life by what they had in the end. Real meaning comes from what they did to positively impact the lives of others—the selfless sacrifices made to give children, friends, coworkers or even strangers a better life—by whatever means they could. All too often, we can forget what really matters and only remember what constitutes a 'meaningful and purposeful' life when it's too late to act.

Such was not the case for longtime BTA volunteer and ambassador, Ron Dinchak (1948 – 2019). Ron was a college instructor, environmentalist and writer whose life's work was dedicated to learning and teaching others about the Sonoran Desert ecosystem.

A camping and outdoors enthusiast, he influenced countless students and community members on the importance of living a sustainable life. He encouraged young people toward STEM education, bringing thousands of elementary and high school students to campus for fun, educational science experiences, and trained teachers to incorporate conservation and ecology into curricula.

Long involved with educating homeowners in landscaping emphasizing sustainability in water conservation, wildlife habitat, and organic gardening, he taught xeriscape classes at BTA and across the Valley, and was a consultant and award-winning designer of hundreds of landscapes, both residential and commercial.

Dinchak led by example. He recognized that if we all did small things in our lives to reduce waste, recycle, and reuse whenever possible, collectively it would have a big impact. "Talk is cheap" Ron would say, but he never

judged others for their choices. He just lived his life the best way he could—how he believed was right—and hoped others would emulate his actions.

His respect and enthusiasm for the mission of the Arboretum led him to name BTA as a beneficiary in his will. He connected with our vision and chose to become part of a community that makes a lasting difference. By including BTA in his estate plans, he became part of another fellowship, another way of belonging.

The Arboretum has something special to offer—natural beauty in a spectacular setting, friendship, inspiration, solace for those in need—and these things are so valuable that some are willing to give to sustain them. Ron's passion for preserving the natural world will live on in all who knew him, and his legacy will live on at BTA. Thanks, Ron!

Donors of planned gifts are recognized as members of the Legacy Society and are invited to Legacy Society events. Have you included Boyce Thompson Arboretum in your estate plans? Let us know! We want to stay in touch and ensure that we can report the impact of your generosity. To discuss your estate planning goals, please call (520) 689-4588 or email support@btarboretum.org.

Top Picture: Tom Dinchak (left) said of his father, Ron, "He was my best friend. He never let me down, not even once, not even for the smallest thing." Bottom Picture: Ron Dinchak

