

Front Lines

2/28/2017

Billy Foard Passes

Jennifer Polanz



Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Billy Foard, the founder and owner of Valley View Farms in Cockeysville, Maryland, who passed away Wednesday, January 25, at the age of 78. He and his brother John began Valley View Farms as a roadside produce stand in 1962, and 55 years later, the garden center is still going strong as one of the largest garden centers in the mid-Atlantic region.

The store expanded over the years to add a large retail greenhouse, nursery department, outdoor furniture, water garden department, fall decorations and an extensive and very popular Christmas shop. I was fortunate enough to visit the store two years ago during a trip to Baltimore just after it won the Retail Award from the Perennial Plant Association for its extensive perennial selection. I experienced there the best customer service I've ever had at a garden center.

Billy's son Andy took over ownership and day-to-day management of the business that year (2015), but Billy remained a constant presence at the store until recently, according to Greenhouse Manager Carrie Engel, who started at Valley View Farms in 1972.

"Seldom does one find a friend, mentor and boss as cool as this guy," she says. "Billy, you taught me, my family, coworkers and business associates so much about character, kindness, work ethics and the importance of being yourself."

Billy is survived by wife Kay, sons Andy (and wife Kristen) and Stuart (and wife Debra), daughter Lisa (and partner Lisa Valle), sister Suzanne Foard, and grandchildren Kaylin, Will, Jackson and Mason. **GP**