



Ken Moore

A man walks along a path, children following. They stop to examine a wild flower; “What’s its name?” The man replies, “What would *you* call it?” It’s Ken Moore, retired assistant director of the N. C. Botanical Gardens, doing what he enjoys most - opening the world of Nature to new observers.

Ken grew up in Sandston, Virginia and spent summers on his aunt’s tobacco farm. An only child, he was happy playing in forests and fields with the children of two African American tenant families sharing his aunt’s farm. Later he added the joys of his aunt’s vegetable and flower garden to his woods walking.

At Davidson College he majored in liberal arts and in 1964 received a Masters in English from UNC. To help pay his expenses, he worked at the Carolina Inn cafeteria where he met cafeteria regular, William L. Hunt, who had established the Botanical Garden Foundation. Ken was fascinated by Hunt’s passion for plants and horticulture. Following two years military service Ken returned to Chapel Hill to pursue botanical studies.

Ken was a botany student in 1968 when Ritchie Bell, director of the botanical garden, hired him to supervise nature trail construction. By then Ken recognized his passion to be out of doors in the natural world. In 1971 he became the Garden’s first permanent employee, where he remained until

2003. Ken was the on-site manager of the development of the Garden's plant displays and educational programs. He represented the Garden at annual conferences, during which period the Garden became recognized as a leader in native plant conservation and education. Ken introduced the "Conservation Through Propagation" and "N C Wildflower of the Year" programs which became nationally known. Ken continued to plan and execute an early passion of Ritchie Bell, overnight bus and van excursions for the general public to natural areas across state.

After retirement, Ken wrote a weekly plant column for 5 ½ years, "FLORA" for *The Carrboro Citizen*. For four years he was an "earth guide" at two childrens' nature institutions where he learned that children should be outdoors as soon as they can crawl and we adults should not discourage their natural inclination to explore and learn! At the time of this writing, Ken continues to lead field trips and teach classes at the Botanical Garden and Duke Gardens. As a member of the Friends of the Seymour Center Board he promotes outdoor learning experiences such as walks on area greenways. He believes we all have a mission to preserve our human and natural heritage for future generations.