

California Avocado Society 1993 Yearbook 77: 51

Len Keith Gray - 1916-1993

IN MEMORIAM

The avocado industries of the world lost a longtime enthusiast and friend on May 21, 1993, with the passing of Len Gray of Gisborne, New Zealand. Len was recognized among the first persons to have introduced the avocado into New Zealand. His "Waimarae" orchard near Gisborne in the North Island was a showplace for many years, visited by local horticulturists and by visitors from abroad. Len produced outstanding crops of avocados throughout the years on the trees introduced from the Armstrong Nurseries of Ontario, California. He personally promoted the sale of the fruit in local shops and in the Auckland market. Len also had interests in other fruit species such as cherimoya, feijoa, jaboticaba, macadamia, white sapote, and several other species, for which he received many awards and recognitions for his displays at local fairs and exhibitions.

Recognition for Len's contributions of many kinds to the several horticultural endeavors, and to the avocado industry in New Zealand in particular, culminated when he was given the Queen's Award and made a member of "The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire"—(OBE, MBE Gentsman)—at an impressive ceremony on October 4, 1990, in Wellington, New Zealand.

Len was a member of the California Avocado Society for many years. He visited California on many occasions throughout the years to observe developments in our avocado and other fruit industries and to exchange ideas and discuss problems of mutual interest. He also received visitors from many countries of the world, always with a warm welcome and gracious hospitality.

Len is survived by his wife Dorothy, three daughters—Dawn, Heather, and Beryl, and two sons—David and Bruce, both of them continuing the horticultural pursuits of their father in the production of subtropical fruits in the Gisborne area.

We remember Len Gray at this time with respect for his accomplishments and for the friendship he bestowed internationally.

—C. A. Schroeder