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**Mary Jelks**

Regional environmentalist, pediatrician, and native plant advocate Mary Jelks died at the end of March after four decades of leadership focused on environmental health and the Myakka region. As a pediatrician, she focused on allergies, which led to a half-century of pollen studies and two books on the subject. An early activist with Manasota-88 opposing phosphate mining and oil refining, Mary became known for work on Integrated Pest Management, solid waste, and recycling. She found special meaning in the Myakka ecosystem, founding the Friends of the Myakka River and leading twice-yearly river clean-ups since 1993, as well as serving on the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council for 30 years. She loved both the Myakka prairie and the river and wrote a poem about an unusual two-headed cabbage palm that grew along the banks of the river. Her family foundation provided the leadership for the acquisition of 614 acres of native habitat along the river, now known as the Jelks Preserve. For many years she tended a patch of dry prairie in the entrance median of the state park, a miniature knee-high arboretum. That was Mary's way of exposing the public to the native plants of the prairie. An illustrated oral history of Mary and her prairie plants may be found at <https://goo.gl/aFjWsT>. – Jono Miller, Serenoa

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Mary and Allen Jelks were founding members of FNPS. Mary was recognized by FNPS in 2004 with the Mentor Award.



**Helen Morrison**

Even in the 10th decade of her life, Helen Morrison of Babson Park often came across people who credited her for kindling a fondness for them for Florida's animals and plants.

Helen Morrison was a respected conservationist and environmental educator. Morrison and her late husband, Ken Morrison, were active with state conservation efforts and founders of such local groups as Ridge Audubon Society, Defenders of Crooked Lake and Green Horizon Land Trust.

David Price, director of Bok Tower Gardens and a longtime friend, said Morrison's genteel manner made her especially persuasive. "She just had this kindly demeanor about her, and her voice was really soothing," Price said. "She was never negative about anything, but she always spoke the truth in her environmental work, and I think that's what made her so effective. She never really insulted anybody."

– Reprinted from the *Lakeland Ledger*

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"I grew up in canoes, on hikes and camping with Helen and her husband, Ken, and other wonderful environmentalists . . . some of the best people you could ever hope to know," said Rachelle Coleman Selser, executive director of the Green Horizon Land Trust "Today, when I envision the face and voice of "Mother Earth," it is Helen's. She will be missed by her family and the environmental community.



**Sherry Cummings**

Sherry N. Cummings, of Lake Worth, Florida, passed away September 3, 2017. She was born June 6, 1936 in Winter Park, Florida. She was a graduate of the University of Florida.

Sherry and her husband Paul were founding members of the Florida Native Plant Society. She signed the initial articles of incorporation and served as president for two terms in 1984 and 1985. The Green Palmetto Awards were established in 1986 by Sherry to honor those who had given special service in the areas of education, science and outstanding chapter to FNPS. According to a Spring 2000 article in *The Palmetto*, The couple also established the Palm Beach Chapter and, in the late 1970s, they established one of the first native plant nurseries in Palm Beach County. "The biggest challenge, Sherry expects, will be to keep our message fresh in the public eye, and keep up the momentum. FNPS is headed in the right direction, but it's important to reach out and get new people involved."

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She was chapter chair of the Florida Trail Association, Loxahatchee Chapter and an outdoor activity leader with the Audubon Society, the Florida Trail Association, the Palm Beach Pack and Paddle Club, and was extremely knowledgeable about Florida wildlife and wildflowers. She also led many bird watching activities at the Green Cay Nature Center and Wakodahatchee Wetlands.– *Palm Beach Post*