



## **American Iris Society Mary Swords DeBaillon Medal history + winners**

This medal is restricted to Louisiana (LA) irises. It is named in honor of Mary Swords DeBaillon (1888-1940).

Mary Swords DeBaillon was born in Opelousas, Louisiana, and she lived in Louisiana all her life. She and her husband, Dan DeBaillon, lived on a fifteen-acre tract 5 miles from Lafayette, Louisiana. She transformed the grounds of her home into a garden renowned for its exquisite beauty and its large collection of native Louisiana plants. She had been growing a few native irises when, in 1932, she visited Caroline Dorman's home, "Briarwood" and saw the large collection of different forms of Hexagonae irises blooming in the garden. Mary DeBaillon realized how varied these irises were and what lovely garden plants they were. She then set out to collect every form of Louisiana's native irises that she could find.

Mary DeBaillon amassed the largest collection of Louisiana irises in the world. She was tireless in promoting these irises as good garden plants and in encouraging any who would listen to grow them. She gained considerable fame as a naturalist and native plant collector. She encouraged collection of the indigenous iris species to save them as civilization encroached on the swamps and bayous. A year after her death the iris enthusiasts in Lafayette organized an iris society and named it the Mary Swords DeBaillon Iris Society. This society became the Louisiana Iris Society in 1948.

The highest award an LA could receive from 1948 until 1985 was the Mary Swords DeBaillon Award. During that period, SLI was an independent unit with no affiliation whatsoever with the American Iris Society (AIS). SLI became a Cooperating Organization of AIS in 1986.

After that date the AWARD was discontinued and replaced with the Mary Swords DeBaillon MEDAL, the highest award exclusively for Louisiana Iris. The MEDAL is a part of the AIS award system. All AIS medalists, including the DeBaillon medalist, are eligible for the Dykes Medal, the highest award presented by AIS.

### **DeBaillon MEDAL - Louisiana Iris**

2009 HENRY ROWLAN (M. D. Faith)  
2008 GREAT WHITE HOPE (Dorman Haymon)  
2007 MY FRIEND DICK (Richard Butler by M.D. Faith)  
2006 PEACHES IN WINE (Heather Pryor)  
2005 RED VELVET ELVIS (Kevin Vaughn)  
2004 HOT AND SPICY (Heather Pryor)  
2003 (No Award)  
2002 EXTRAORDINAIRE - M. Dunn  
2001 PRALINE FESTIVAL - Haymon  
2000 CAJUN SUNRISE - Mertzweiller  
1999 PROFESSOR NEIL - Mertzweiller  
1998 BAYOU MYSTIQUE - M. Dunn

1997 VOODOO MAGIC - Rowlan  
1996 PROFESSOR JIM - Mertzweiller  
1995 KAY NELSON - Granger  
1994 JERI - Bertinot  
1993 FRANK CHOWNING - Rowlan  
1992 BAJAZZO - M. Dunn  
1991 RHETT - Dunn  
1990 ACADIAN MISS - Arny  
1989 BLACK GAMECOCK - Chowning  
1988 EASTER TIDE - Arny  
1987 CLARA GOULA - Arny  
1986 ANN CHOWING - Chowning  
1985 (No Award)  
1984 MONUMENT - Dunn  
1983 EASTER TIDE - Arny  
1982 CLARA GOULA - Arny  
1981 BRYCE LEIGH - Chowning  
1980 ANN CHOWNING - Chowning  
1979 THIS I LOVE - Chowning  
1978 (No Award) - Tie between: F.A.C. McCULLA – Arny and SHRIMP CREOLE - Ghio  
1977 MARY DUNN - Hager  
1976 EOLIAN - Arny  
1975 CHARLIE'S MICHELE - Arny  
1974 CLYDE REDMOND - Arny  
1973 MRS. IRA NELSON - Arny  
1972 ILA NUNN - Arny  
1971 DELTA KING - Hager  
1970 MARIE CAILLET - Conger  
1969 KATHERINE L. CORNAY - Arny  
1968 BLACK WIDOW - MacMillan  
1967 DIXIE DEB - Chowning  
1966 G.W. HOLLEYMAN - R. Holleyman  
1965 FRANCES ELIZABETH - Rix  
1964 W.B. MacMILIAN - Conger  
1963 NEW OFFERING - C. Davis  
1962 DIXIE DUSK - Matthews  
1961 LOUISE ARNY - Arny  
1960 AMETHYST STAR - DuBose  
1959 HER HIGHNESS - Livingston (Collected)  
1958 WHEELHORSE - C. Dormon  
1957 BLUE CHIP - S. Smith  
1956 WOOD VIOLET - R. Dormon  
1955 THE KAHN - C. Dormon  
1954 SAUCY MINX - C. Dormon  
1953 VIOLET RAY - C. Dormon  
1952 ROYAL GEM - S. Smith  
1951 CHERRY BOUNCE - Nelson  
1950 CADDO - Trichel  
1949 BAYOU SUNSET – MacMillan  
1948 MARY S. DEBAILLION - C. Dormon (Collected)