



*Iowa First Lady Christine Branstad*

June 25, 2015

*des moines* Magazine  
Attn: Selection Committee – "Sages Over 70"  
100 4th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Re: Nomination of Elvin McDonald**

Dear Selection Committee Members and Colleagues:

It's easy to see why Elvin McDonald deserves to be honored as a Sage over 70, if you read Joe Weeg's recent *Cityview* feature story about this incredible gentleman.

Elvin's wisdom, personality, and expertise continually benefit individuals across Iowa, throughout the U.S., and around the world in the area of gardening. In New York City, he made a memorable impact on Oscar de la Renta, Eleanor Noall, and Audrey Hepburn. In 2015, Elvin influences countless visitors to Terrace Hill through his expertise and insights on historic gardens.

Elvin was only 13 when he wrote a letter to the *Flower Grower* magazine and proposed starting a society for Gesneriads. Just one year later, the Oklahoma teen published the first society journal.

Now, at the age of 78, Elvin has written 75 books on gardening. He also was named "Iowa Author of the Year" by the Des Moines Public Library Foundation. Those are just a few reasons why Elvin should be honored as a Sage over 70 in 2015.

Personally, I have seen first-hand Elvin's unique talents and dedication related to gardening. It has been inspirational to observe the evolution of Terrace Hill's gardens due to his leadership and guidance. I am truly appreciative of the time, care, and compassion that Elvin contributes to one of Iowa's most treasured historic homes.

Due to his many contributions to central Iowans, this community, and the entire state of Iowa, I'm certain that my nomination of Elvin – to be named a Sage over 70 – is just one of many to be submitted. With that in mind, I encourage you to honor him with this prestigious award.

Sincerely,

*Christine A. Branstad*

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First Lady of Iowa