Camellia show judges have a four-fold responsibility:

- To the exhibitors.
- To the public who will view the show.
- Courtesy and good manners toward fellow judges and adherence to show procedures and regulations.
- That the acceptance of judging duties, (when asked) is that a competent job is done and the mere fact that a person has been asked to judge is not a social distinction.

To be a judge is a privilege. To be a **good judge** is an honor. A judge pledges to give his services, if at all possible, regardless of likes, dislikes or personal comfort. Judging takes much time, will necessitate much travel, will take much energy, and will require much hard work to say nothing of money for expenses.

The obligation to exhibitors, public, and fellow judges is that the blooms are judged fairly and impartially in accordance with the rules and standards laid down by the show committee and in particular *The Rules & Regulations Governing Procedures & Judging ACS Shows.*

Judging a Camellia show is a team effort not only with respect to the other teams that participate but particularly with uniformity in judging by the other teams. The overall result should be the appearance that the show has been judged by one group of judges.

There is no place in judging of a camellia show for the intrusion of individual ideas, preferences that will cause one section of the show to be out of line with the rest of the show.

Show committees publish and supply to all exhibitors and judges show rules to the end that there will be a common understanding with regards to the plans for the show.

A **good judge** accepts the responsibility of acquainting himself with these rules and it is important that he abide by any changes by the chairman of the judges.

A **good judge** should thoroughly acquaint himself with as many old and new varieties as possible.

I believe that the worst defect in the judging process goes back to a lack of knowledge by the judges of the varieties that they are judging. All judges know (or should know) that in judging, every flower is judged against the best standard of that variety. This is impossible, unless the judge knows the variety he is judging.

Some judges do have tendencies to judge on the basis of their concepts of a “pretty” flower, particularly one with a bud center. On the other hand it might be size, color, form, markings, and/or condition to say nothing about the texture, substance or distinctiveness.

Some judges give undue credit to size and I believe this is a serious defect in judging, while others will start out in judging a variety looking for specks on a flower to eliminate it from competition, forgetting that a flower with superb form, size and color might merit a blue ribbon even though it has a speck or two.

A **good judge** will acquaint himself and keep himself informed with the size, form and color of all exhibits. This can be done by closely examining the complete show after it has been judged so he may increase his knowledge of the differences in flowers because of growing areas and growing techniques.

A **good judge** should grow as many varieties as he has space, conditions and labor to care for as well as being financially able to buy the newer plants, fertilizer and sprays to maximize the growing conditions.
Judges who slack off in their activities in growing should take special attention to keep themselves informed so they can serve adequately as a judge. Failure to take such action should disqualify them as a judge.

A good judge should eliminate his personal tastes such as in color, form, size, texture, etc.

A good judge will stay with his team and not wander off or go on ahead to the next variety before judging is completed on the variety being judged.

A good judge should be careful to allow all judges on the team the opportunity to observe the flowers and avoid the appearance of trying to dominate the team.

A good judge will have the willingness to discuss the reasons for his decision and to be guided by the majority of the team without argument.

A good judge will not prolong decisions but move along as briskly as possible during judging.

A good judge will and has the responsibility to judge a flower as it is at the time of judging and not try to anticipate what will occur to the flower later. He must, however, be alert to any condition of the flower that indicated it has passed its peak of perfection.

According to ACS rules, a judge must eliminate himself from judging if his flower is in the variety being judged. A good judge can do this by “stepping back” and announcing that he is in competition and let the other judges make up their minds as to which is the best flower.

A good judge, when he knows that a flower belongs to a particular grower will not “politic” for that flower, and will “keep his mouth shut” and not discuss the blooms while the final judging is taking place.

A good judge will be very familiar with the American Camellia Society point scoring schedule and judge his particular assignment on the basis of point scores.

- Form---------- 25
- Color--------- 25
- Size---------- 25
- Condition----- 25

It is important that the point scoring be followed in principle, if not in the mechanics, in arriving at a decision.

In judging a camellia, a good judge should not take any one factor by itself and reach a conclusion of this single factor. A good judge will consider every factor in relation to all other factors. In most cases the blue ribbon flower will stand out “head and shoulders” above the others and it will be unnecessary for the judges to consider the factors individually in selecting the winner. However, when competition within a variety is close a good judge should break down the points to substantiate that his overall judgment is sound. The scoring schedule may be of more value and more frequently used for second and third place blooms rather than the first place bloom.

The use of points, consciously or unconsciously, helps the good judge to guard against an inclination to be influenced by a single factor that may make a flower stand out in his eyes over other flowers.

Since specimens of a variety are judged against the highest standard for the variety, a good judge should be familiar with the variety being judged. If he is not familiar with the variety being judged, or if he is judging in an area where the variety is affected in a way with which he is not familiar, he should seek information (Camellia Nomenclature or discussion) that will help him reach a sound decision.

Serious camellia classification efforts began as early as 170 years ago. Elaborate systems were proposed throughout the years, some having as many as 13 classifications. The ACS recognizes the Camellia Nomenclature published by the Southern California Camellia Society as THE official nomenclature publication. To win an ACS Certificate or Award, except for seedlings and mutants, the variety MUST be listed in the 1981 Camellia Nomenclature Historical Edition, the current edition of the Camellia Nomenclature, or the Camellia Nomenclature Supplement.
Under the present point scoring schedule the following definitions and clarifications as defined by *The Rules & Regulations Governing Procedures & Judging of ACS Shows* should be used in each case and let us consider what a **good judge** has to contend with.

**Definition of Terms used in Point Scoring System:**

**Form:**
- Form – That which is true or characteristic of a variety in all of its expected variations. The form may be better, but it must not fall short of these requirements except as are habitually found in certain growing areas.
- Texture – Smooth or creped as characteristic of the variety. Thickness or thinness of petals as characteristic of the variety.

**Color:**
- Color – That which is characteristic or better for a variety as stated in *the Camellia Nomenclature*.
- Markings – Amount, distribution, design, and clarity of distinguishing features such as variegations. Sparkle, sheen, or brilliance of the petal surface as it applies to the different varieties should be considered. Markings may differ somewhat from those described in the *Camellia Nomenclature*.

**Size:**
- Size – Size as indicated in the *Camellia Nomenclature* refers to blooms grown unprotected and not chemically treated. Larger size is a plus except in the case of miniatures where it should be considered a deficiency.

**Condition:**
- Condition – Freshness, as indicated by color and appearance of the stamens (non-retic hybrid stamens can be discolored), anthers, petals, and leaves. Blooms and foliage should be free from insect or disease injury, holes or rips, discoloration or other surface marks of any kind caused by weather or damaging contact of any kind. Growth buds may be removed by the exhibitor without risk of penalty.

The **good judge** should not disregard superiorities in other categories, (in “Mathotiana” for example) preferences for the bud center over the open semi-double form. All things being equal, however, the judge’s personal preferences as to form will sway his judgment. Some varieties have characteristics that set the highest standard for a variety: for example, the best of a “Guilio Nuccio” has four high rabbit ears. To receive full points for form a “Guilio Nuccio” should have these rabbit ears. This does not preclude a flower of this variety, without such rabbit ears, from receiving a blue ribbon but a **good judge** should not send it to the contention table for consideration as “best”.

In judging variegated flowers, however, more discernment seems to be in order. For the purpose of show competition, variegation is considered to be a spot of white on the flower, **no matter how small the spot**. Although, to be a contender a variegated bloom should have enough white and the white should be so placed as to make the white a distinctive part of the flower. Among **good judges** there is one aspect on which there has not been agreement and that is how much white the bloom should have and how it should be distributed.

Many varieties do not characteristically have a regular pattern of variegation or a pleasing distribution of white. For such varieties a **good judge** must use his better judgment in comparing the extent to which the variegations, or markings, add to the appearance of the flower by the
amount, distribution, design, and clarity of markings and variegation. The quantity of white in itself should not be sufficient to win a blue ribbon in these varieties. The regularity and pleasing distribution of the color throughout the bloom should be the sole criterion.

Multiple Blooms: An entry of multiple blooms is judged as a single entry and a good judge should judge it as such.

- In a solid color variety entry, there should be similarity in size, color, form, and condition.
- An entry of a variegated variety should have matching variegation within the blooms, in addition to all the other similarities or factors required for the solid color varieties.
- An entry of mixed varieties should have a pleasing similarity of size, color, markings, condition, texture, etc.

A good judge recognizes that a flower that “stands up and looks at you” as you approach the table needs no schedule of points to help a judge reach a decision unless it has hidden faults that become apparent on closer observation.