Charles Ceronio

Background:

Since childhood Charles was very interested in nature and in plants in particular. As a youngster he was involved in gardening and he believes he inherited his green fingers from his late mother and her parents who were great gardeners in their own right. He started growing bonsai in 1968 after attending one of the first bonsai exhibitions held in Johannesburg at the time. Since then he was hooked on bonsai and it became part of his life ever since.

Charles was co-founder of the Pretoria Bonsai Kai in 1969 and acted as President for most of the existence of the Kai.

He is an advocate for the use of indigenous plant material for bonsai, due to their adaptability to the harsh African climate.

He studied the art of Bonsai under the guidance of the late Mr John Naka, a world famous Bonsai Master. He acted as Mr Naka’s assistant during his numerous visits to South Africa.

Achievements:

* Wrote the book “Bonsai Styles of the World” which was published in 1999. The book was well received all over the world and received an exceptionally good review in the March Edition of BCI, 2001. The book is at present in the process of review for the third edition and will be available by the end of 2014.
* Demonstrated and lectured at most National South African Bonsai Conventions since 1980 and appeared regularly on Provincial and club levels as well.
* The creator of six African Bonsai Styles, namely the Baobab, the Pierneef or Umbrella crown style, the Flat Top, the Wild Fig, the Wonderboom and the Bushveld or natural styles, which have become the most popular styles used in Southern Africa.
* Lectured and conducting bonsai demonstrations and workshops at cultural and horticultural organizations.
* Initiated the promotion of growing master trees by establishing the annual Top 10 Exhibition to select the ten best trees in the Gauteng, North West and Mpumalanga Provinces of South Africa.
* During 1999 and 2000 two of his trees were selected amongst the hundred best trees in the world. This event was sponsored by the Japanese Airlines and organized by the Nippon Bonsai Association in Japan.
* During 2007 his Celtis sinensis group -planting won a golden award at the Penjin Convention in China.
* Co-organizer of the First International Bonsai Convention for Southern Africa held in Pretoria.
* Represented South Africa in May 2005 at the 5th World’s Friendship Bonsai Federation in Washington as demonstrator.
* During the 2009 World Bonsai Friendship Convention in Puerto Rico, one of his trees was selected for publication in their commemorative book.

DEMONSTRATIONS AND LECTURES ABROAD:

* Invited by John Naka to demonstrate at the meeting of his Masters pupils in Los Angeles in 2001 under the chairmanship of Roy Nagatoshi.
* Demonstrations and workshops at the Namibian Bonsai Association in Windhoek, Namibia, 2001.
* Demonstrations and workshops at Harry Tomlinson’s summer school in Nottingham, England, 2002.
* Demonstrations and workshops at the Slovak Bonsai Convention in Nitra, April 2003.
* Headliner at the Zimbabwe’s National Bonsai Convention in Harare, September 2003.
* At present main Bonsai Instructor for Pakistan Bonsai Society. Did demonstrations and workshops in Karachi, Ravalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore. Visiting Pakistan on an annual basis since 2004.During 2009 he appeared on three television shows in Pakistan.
* Demonstrated an African scene as well as the Pierneef style at the 5th World Bonsai Convention in Washington during May 2005.
* Demonstrations and workshops in Brazil during May 2006.
* Acting as Bonsai judge for Brazil Bonsai Association together with European Bonsai Masters such as Walter Pall [Germany] and Salvatore Liporace [Italy]
* Being invited as Headliner for the 21st Anniversary of the Bonsai School in Sydney, Australia where his book “Bonsai styles of the world” is a prescribed book together with John Naka’s two books on Bonsai Techniques.
* Co-Headliner of Mid-Atlantic Bonsai Convention in New York, 2011.
* Co-Headliner at the European Bonsai Convention in Lithuania, 2012
* Selected as one of five head Bonsai Judges for the world’s photo competition for the 6th World Bonsai Convention in China in September , 2013.
* Demonstrations and workshops in Florida during October 2013.

COMMUNICATION MEDIA

* Appeared on several bonsai programs on national television in South Africa [Kyk-Net and on Keith Kirsten’s show-SABC2] as well as in Slovakia, Brazil and Pakistan.
* Interviewed on numerous radio programs over the years.
* Numerous bonsai articles appeared in newspapers as well in leading South African magazines, such as “Garden and Home”, “Sarie”, “Rooi Rose” as well as in “Lantern”

BONSAI ACTIVITIES

* Conducting Classes for Beginners on a regular basis.
* Conducting monthly workshops for members of Pretoria Bonsai Kai.
* Styling and shaping neglected trees for the public.
* Acting as a consultant with regard to bonsai problems to the public.