

## **BACKGROUND**

### **World Parkinson's Day**

Parkinson's disease was first described by English physician Dr. James Parkinson in his work entitled *An Essay on the Shaking Palsy* (1817). In this short essay Parkinson wrote about "Involuntary tremulous motion, with lessened muscular power, in parts not in action and even when supported; with a propensity to bend the trunk forwards, and to pass from a walking to a running pace: the senses and intellect being uninjured."

Four decades later, Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot added rigidity to Parkinson's excellent clinical description and attached the name Parkinson's disease to the syndrome.

World Parkinson's Day is celebrated annually on April 11, Dr. James Parkinson's birthday. The day is dedicated to advocating for people with Parkinson's disease. World Parkinson's Day increases awareness of Parkinson's and is intended to spur new research and treatment initiatives. Parkinson Society Canada works to educate the public, particularly during the month of April, Parkinson Awareness Month, by hosting fundraising and awareness events and reaching out to Canadians with Parkinson's and to the general public in communities across Canada.

### **What is the Parkinson Tulip?**

The story of the Parkinson Tulip began in 1980 in the Netherlands when J.W.S. Van der Wereld, a Dutch horticulturalist who had Parkinson's disease, developed a red and white tulip.

In 1981, Van der Wereld named his prized cultivar, the 'Dr. James Parkinson' tulip, to honour the man who first described his medical condition and to honour the International Year of the Disabled.

The tulip received the Award of Merit that same year from the Royal Horticultural Society in London England, and also received the Trial Garden Award from the Royal General Bulb Growers of Holland. It is described as a flower: 'exterior, glowing cardinal red, small feathered white edge, outer base whitish; inside, currant-red to turkey-red, broad feathered white edge, anthers pale yellow'.

**On April 11, 2005, the Red Tulip was launched as the Worldwide Symbol of Parkinson's disease at the 9th World Parkinson's disease Day Conference in Luxembourg.**