

IN BLOOM

A PUBLICATION FROM BOTANICA & WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS

FALL 2015



Perennial Wingstem (*Verbesina alternifolia*)
on the Waterfront Botanical Gardens site

Photo by Valerie J. Smith

WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS



OUR VISION

To create a botanical garden and conservatory of extraordinary beauty that engages, enlightens and inspires people about plants and nature.

www.waterfrontgardens.org

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Perennial Wingstem
(*Verbesina alternifolia*)

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I'm very happy to share the news that we have raised over \$1.75 million for the Waterfront Botanical Gardens!

As you may recall, Louisville Metro and Botanica agreed on a \$1 purchase price for the 23-acre property. Part of the agreement includes achieving our final milestone: raising \$2 million toward the creation of the garden. The \$1.75 million raised gets us very close to reaching that \$2 million goal.

In the pages that follow, you'll read about two families who have made major gifts to the garden effort. George Duthie pledged \$500,000 to sponsor the Entry Plaza in loving memory of his wife, Mary Lee. Emil and Nancy Graeser, who helped kick off our early fundraising efforts, have added to their initial gift for a total of \$450,000 pledged to the project.

Our board and volunteers will soon be working on plans for development of the site, sometimes called "pre-phase" construction. It includes activities such as moving soil, changing the slope of hills, installing basic utilities and planting trees.

Your support has made this progress possible. Together, we've taken significant steps in our journey, but our work is by no means complete. I hope you will continue to support the garden effort as we head in to these next exciting stages.



Happy gardening,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian".

Brian Voelker
President, Board of Directors

P.S. Supporting the garden is easy! To see our Master Plan, become a member or make a donation, visit waterfrontgardens.org.

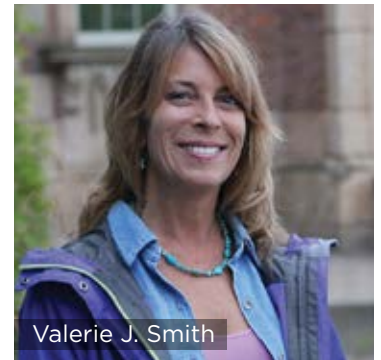
CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

PHOTOS BY VALERIE J. SMITH

We are lucky to have over 300 volunteers who help our organization on a weekly basis with everything from gardening and site cleanup to data entry and event planning. In recognition of those amazing individuals, we had our first Volunteer Appreciation event on Sept. 10, hosted by Bob and Janet Hill at Hidden Hill Nursery. Food, drinks and music by the Hart Strings made for a perfect evening with 75 volunteers and board members.

This year we introduced the Dot Wade Volunteer of the Year Award, named in memory of Botanica's longest-serving and hardest-working volunteer. This is the perfect way to remember Dot, who worked to bring a botanical garden to Louisville for many years. In Dot's words, "We need places where children can learn about nature and interact with it. If we don't take care of our land, our plants, our air and our water, our future will be grim."

The first recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award is Valerie J. Smith. You may recognize her name because Valerie is a member of the board (since November 2013), and she takes many of the photographs we use to promote the gardens. Valerie spent last summer as the photographer for our project to document all the plants growing on the site. In addition, Valerie serves on several committees, secures sponsors, works at information booths, digs, cleans, writes, interviews and cooks. No other volunteer has shown such diversity of interest and commitment of time to this worthy project.



 **TO JOIN OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS, SIGN UP AT:**
WATERFRONTGARDENS.ORG



A LOVING TRIBUTE TO MARY LEE DUTHIE

BY BOB HILL PHOTOS BY VALERIE J. SMITH



George Duthie and daughter Anna Lee Mershon at their family's home in Indian Hills. The Duthie family pledged \$500,000 to sponsor the Entry Plaza in memory of their wife and mother, Mary Lee Duthie.

The best gardens will linger well past the lives of their creators, their presence constant and comforting reminders of the loved ones who planted them. They can also provide inspiration to give to the Louisville community for a future garden - to have \$500,000 pledged in your name to help Botanica create its 23-acre Waterfront Botanical Gardens at Frankfort Avenue and River Road.

Mary Lee Duthie left such a wonderfully crowded life - and legacy. The garden at her home in Indian Hills still offers the parade of spring lilacs near the front entrance, the fragrant magnolia further down the drive, the oak-leaf hydrangeas tucked in a corner, the great burst of red azaleas around her house - the house she first designed on a blank piece of paper.

"Of course, when she got through," said her husband, George, laughing at the memory, "it overlapped the lots on both sides. We kind of reduced it down a little bit."

George and Mary Lee Duthie laughed a lot together in their 67 years of marriage. It was a life that grew to include four children, 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren - including the latest, to be born in November - and huge expanses of gardens.

They first met at Southern Methodist University in 1945. He was there from his home in Buffalo, N.Y., for U.S. Navy training; she lived in Dallas, only a few blocks away from the school.

"I met her at a dance," said Duthie. "We kinda went together from there on."

He was away on a ship for about six months. She waited for him. He graduated with an engineering degree in 1947. She graduated in 1948 with a degree in journalism. They skipped her graduation ceremony to get married that day.

He went to work in Dallas, and moved to Louisville in 1953 to work at a company named Stewart Mechanical, staying with it for about 40 years, eventually owning it, then selling it in 1994. They built a house on Circle Hill Road in Seneca Park. The house soon filled with children, the yard with flowers. She couldn't help it. Her mother was an avid gardener; the energy was in Mary Lee's blood. "It was her consuming hobby," said Duthie. "She had tons of gardens."

"We just wanted to memorialize her with one of the first things that will be built at the Waterfront Gardens"

Then came the move in 1990 to Poplar Hill Court to the house she helped design, and a gardener's dream - more than 2 acres of blank landscape canvas.

Working outside - and she never hired a regular gardener to help - she dug in, out and over. "Except for some trees, it was totally bare," said her husband. "She just did it all by feel. She loved kneeling in the dirt."

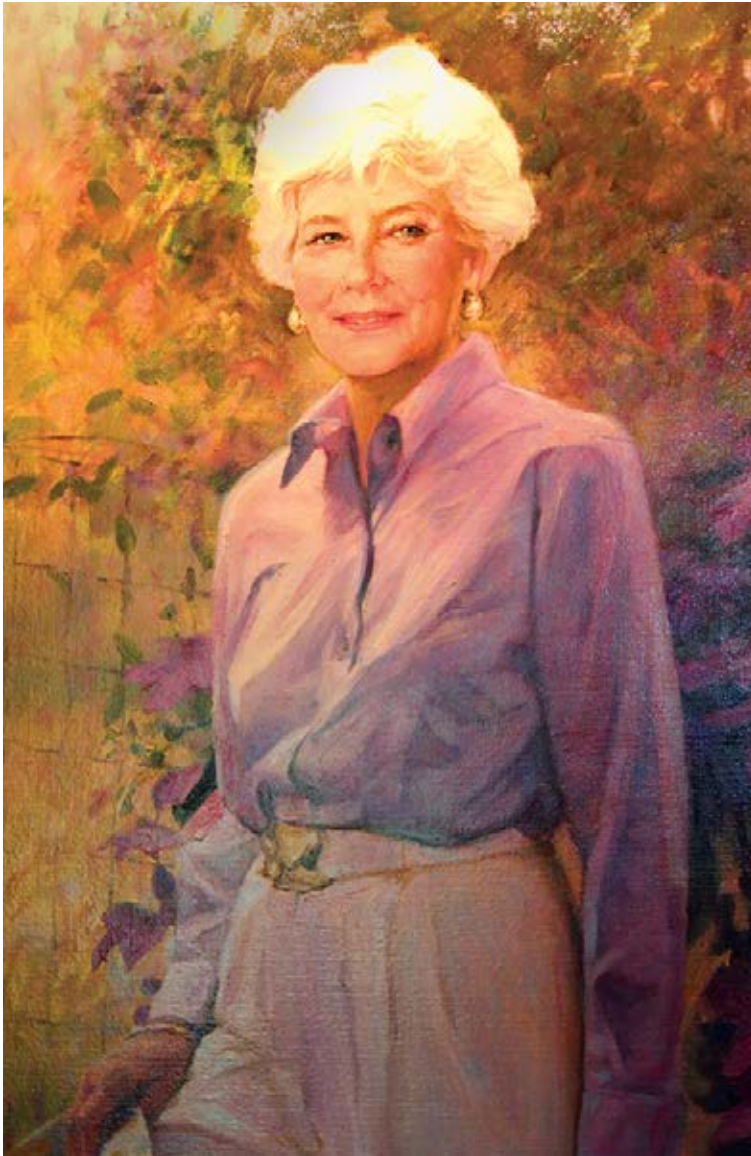
For food, she grew tomatoes, peppers, squash and black-eyed peas. For color, she dug in bulbs and planted roses, peonies, azaleas, coleuses, columbines, clematises, hardy begonias, geraniums, asters and irises. For texture, she planted spruce and pine trees, Japanese maples, hemlocks and yews. Above all towers that majestic oak tree that must be hundreds of years old. For love and memories, she planted gardenias. "I used to buy her gardenias for corsages when we dated," said George.



For fun – and spirit – famed local sculptor Barney Bright created three nymphs dancing and playing music in the shadows. For all-season gardens, she added a greenhouse.

It's all crowded around their home, framing it, hiding it a little, all coming together as one – house and yard; design and designer.

As age and illness slowed her gardening passion, her family moved many of the potted plants up onto a patio near the house, where she could better take care of them. Near the end, when she was mostly bedridden, they moved her to the front windows, where she could look out as sunlight played across her landscape, not to forget the inevitable wild turkeys and deer – one so familiar they named her Dolly.



Mary Lee Duthie died at age 87 on June 7 in her home – a location and fate to which her husband George has also pledged.

“It’s all her legacy,” he said of the house and yard. “She would be glad we are taking care of it.

His eyes fill with tears as he speaks of his wife. He will be buried in Cave Hill Cemetery next to her – and below a statue of St. Francis, the patron saint of animals and the environment, which is now outside their home, but which will be moved to the cemetery.

His desire to honor his wife with the \$500,000 pledge to Botanica came while he was having a conversation at Audubon Country Club with Emil Graeser, who along with his wife, Nancy, has pledged a total of \$450,000 in matching grants to the Waterfront Botanical Gardens. Their generosity brings the total raised for the site to \$1.75 million in donations and formal pledges. Botanica also has an existing \$1.8 million endowment, from which only interest income can be used, thanks to a gift from Helen Harrigan. The Duthie gift will specifically go to name the Mary Lee Duthie Entry Plaza just outside the Visitor Center as part of the roughly \$15 million to \$20 million required for Phase I of the project.

“We just wanted to memorialize her with one of the first things that will be built at the Waterfront Gardens,” said Duthie, who is hoping others may give to the Botanica cause. “She loved the Ohio River. She is still here...she is definitely still here.”



ON OUR WAY TO \$2 MILLION

GRAESERS PLEDGE MATCHING GRANT



In 2013, Emil and Nancy established the first \$225,000 matching grant to encourage others in the community to donate to the gardens. Our supporters helped us meet that goal in just 18 months. This latest pledge brings the Graesers' total support to \$450,000 for the garden effort.

Emil hopes that others in the community will join his support for the project. **“We believe that Louisville should have a viable botanical garden that would be available for the education of children, the enjoyment of its citizens, the attraction of visitors and the enhancement of the city,”** he said.

Two of our longtime supporters have pledged their help in achieving our \$2 million fundraising goal – the final milestone that will enable our purchase of the 23-acre property.

Emil and Nancy Graeser are so excited about our recent progress that they once again pledged a \$225,000 matching grant to support the gardens. Their pledge is included in our total of \$1.75 million raised for the project, and it will match every gift, dollar for dollar, up to the matching grant total of \$225,000.

Here's how it works: If an individual makes a \$250 donation, that gift will be matched by \$250 from the Graesers' matching grant. Thanks to the match, the total impact of the gift is \$500.

If you've thought about making a donation to Botanica, there's no better time than now. It's a great way to double the impact of your gift – no matter the size.



TO MAKE A DONATION, USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE, CALL (502) 276-5404
OR VISIT: **WATERFRONTGARDENS.ORG**

EXPLORING BEARGRASS CREEK

BY BOB HILL

Our organization's hands-on approach to connecting area residents with the land, air and water around us was never more apparent than when Dr. David Wicks led a flotilla of 30-foot Voyager canoes up Beargrass Creek to see what we could see – which was plenty.

Wicks, a passionate environmentalist on a mission to **clean and restore Beargrass Creek** – among others – began the journey at the new Metro Louisville Community Boathouse along Towhead Island, with a historical look at the three forks of Bluegrass Creek. We then loaded into the canoes, had a brief paddling lesson and headed up the Ohio River to see Louisville from a unique perspective: below bridge level on Beargrass Creek.



Our group paddled past the eastern edge of the botanical garden site. We saw old sewers and new treatment methods, the concrete remains of the original downtown Belvedere and future, solar-powered restoration projects.

We paddled past arching trees, evidence of the return of beavers and about 175 years of Louisville history, in three hours. We had a great time, learned a lot and left with a shared vision for the future.

HILLSIDE GARDENING

BY BOB HILL



Hillside gardening is a welcome challenge that can lead to all sorts of paths to discovery for gardeners – and their guests.

It's a challenge that will be met with the Entry Gardens and the designated Mary Lee Duthie Entry Plaza at the Waterfront Botanical Gardens, providing a functional, elegant and welcoming approach to 23 acres of flowers, shrubs, trees and art, every day of the year. It will also provide diverse areas within the hillside for water features, sandstone walls, terraces, grassy areas, quiet places, hidden corners and native gardens – each worthy of a special sponsor to be honored within the botanic garden as a whole.

And any gardener with a hillside to deal with at home can also create a special place utilizing the slope to his or her advantage. If the slope is steep, chances are that some soil has been washed away. So keep in mind that you might need some terracing with the path, a curling entryway of brick, stone, gravel or, in heavily used walkways, contoured cement.

What's more fun than walking up a long series of rock steps, bending left or right as the situation demands? If you have space, let the path wander off at some point to a secluded area, a gazebo, a homey shed, perhaps a carved-stone wall where water captured from above can run down and recirculate.

You'll need bulbs to define the path, or to pop up in clusters for a spring or fall show. The old standbys are good – tulips, daffodils and leucojum. But there are many others that offer color and surprise: fritillaries, bluebells, alliums and windflowers. And don't forget the fall-blooming bulbs that always catch people by surprise – crocus and colchicum.

The path could be lined with tall, narrow trees such as columnar oaks or fastigate hornbeams. Spring-blooming dogwoods, redbuds and cherry trees could be spaced across the slope for natural-looking bursts of color. Four-season trees such as paper bark maples or Cornelian cherries provide year-

Rendering of the future Entry Garden with views of the Heigold Façade, Visitor Center, Mary Lee Duthie Entry Plaza and Conservatory.

round interest. Once some shade is established, you could go with hostas, hellebores, heucheras, native ginger and astilbes. Keep in mind that you are creating a journey – a path that both holds someone in place and encourages the walk up – or down.

Fragrance is a must along the trail. Try lilacs, sweetshrubs, Chinese abelias, iteas or Korean spice viburnum. Witch hazel is a must. It blooms very early in spring, when we most need color, and its fragrance will drift across the garden for 30 feet on a still morning.



Art in the hillside garden is mandatory, as are benches placed in strategic areas to sit and take it all in as you look up and down.

With so many horticultural options, and a talented design team, the Entry Gardens are sure to be one of your favorite spots at the WBG. And if you have a hill of your own, a little planning and a little work will help you turn it into a real treat.

reGENERATION FAIR

OCTOBER 10

On October 10, Botanica welcomed the public to a day of activities as part of the reGeneration Fair.

Featured speaker Benjamin Grumbles, Secretary of the Environment for the state of Maryland and Louisville native, talked about the important role soil plays in a healthy environment. Grumbles was introduced by Ted Smith, Chief of Civic Innovation at Metro Louisville and Exec Director of the Institute for Healthy Air Water and Soil. Hundreds of visitors enjoyed sustainable activities and demonstrations, including beekeeping, rainwater gardening, making compost tea, growing mushrooms, and making self-watering planters. Kids of all ages enjoyed participating in a butterfly release.



Credit Valerie J. Smith



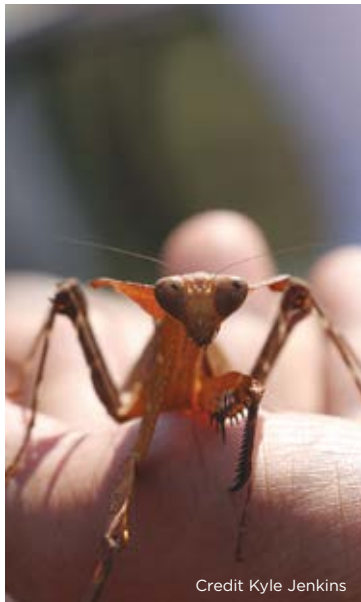
Credit Kyle Jenkins



Credit Valerie J. Smith



Credit Valerie J. Smith



Credit Kyle Jenkins



Credit Valerie J. Smith

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Waterfront Botanical Gardens would like to thank the many individuals, organizations and corporations that support our work. The list below reflects memberships and donations received from July 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015.

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