

PARKSIDE

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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in the park

MISSION
 Hermann Park Conservancy is a citizens' organization dedicated to the stewardship and improvement of Hermann Park—today and for generations to come.



hermannpark.org



Photos by Lifted Up Aerial Photography

Top: Exterior with newly added porte-cochere; Bottom Left: The great room used to be the clubhouse lounge; Bottom Right: The lobby that leads into the Tudor Family Grand Foyer is an entirely new addition to the building.

After six years of planning, nearly one year of construction, and over 2,000 plantings later, the renovation of Lott Hall is finally complete. Originally designed by Alfred E. Nutter and built in 1933, it served as the Hermann Park Golf Course clubhouse until 1999, and was then the home of Hermann Park Conservancy and City of Houston's Hermann Park administration offices until 2015. With the goal of preserving and repurposing the historic elements, the Conservancy first began plans for renovation in 2014 as part of its centennial campaign. Thanks to a generous leading gift from Sherry and Tommy Lott, that plan became a reality.

The clubhouse is an important part of Hermann Park's history and the Conservancy wanted to uphold the tradition of gathering and celebration with a new way to enjoy a unique part of the city's past. In order to do this, the Conservancy partnered with Houston First to become one of the first organizations in Houston to participate in the federal and state historic tax credits

program through leasing a city-owned building, which helps incentivize renovating historic buildings in the city's inventory instead of tearing them down. Earned income from events such as weddings at Lott Hall will go towards funding the Conservancy's stewardship programs in the Park.

The restoration plans for the building, by Curtis & Windham Architects, are embellished by landscaping designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. Featuring a melting pot of plantings from different climates and cultures, the gardens perfectly capture the spirit of Houston.

Make Memories at Lott Hall

The newly renovated, historic Lott Hall is ready to host your next event.

Pricing and information:
hermannpark.org/lotthall



Doreen Stoller with members of the Conservancy staff (Michael Scott, Barbara Jo Harwell, Meghan Miller, and Mike Johnson) clean up the Japanese Garden following Hurricane Ike in 2008.

Most of the content in this newsletter was put together before the “big freeze.” But here on Thursday of Houston’s Arctic week, I am proof-reading the newsletter and staring at the lovely “What’s Blooming” photos. Obviously, the freeze wreaked havoc on these beautiful blooms—but with your help and the remarkable efforts of the Hermann Park Conservancy team we know they will be back to greet us next spring.

On January 2, 2021 I celebrated my 18th anniversary with the Conservancy. Over those years, I have seen the Park recover from Hurricanes Ike and Harvey as well as the horrific drought. This photo from 2008 after Ike remains one of my favorites of the Conservancy team. At that point we had a tiny office staff—and following Ike had no power in the office. But the fallen pine needles in the Japanese Garden were so deep they looked like “green snow”, so we each grabbed a rake and helped with the cleanup.

Many of you who regularly visit the McGovern Centennial Gardens know Conservancy team member Jose Ventura. While “ambassador” is not in his job description, Jose makes sure every visit to the Gardens is a special one with his hearty greetings. Today he is out in an almost empty Park assessing the damage from the freeze and helping our friends from the Parks Department by turning off valves to burst water lines to stop the leaks before the Park plumbers can get to them. He checks

in with me from time to time and we discuss the damage—but his attitude is 100% forward looking—“the gardens will be back.” And with his help, and the rest of the Conservancy team, we know there will indeed be an abundance of blooms again.



Jose Ventura

Eighteen years doesn’t seem possible—but I am deeply grateful for my time with the Conservancy. On Christmas Day I celebrated a milestone birthday, and since we could not travel my husband Dan and my friend Gaye Denley put together a surprise birthday video with greetings from my family and friends. So many cherished friendships started here at Hermann Park. Working here has enriched my life in countless ways—from these deep friendships to the happiness I feel watching families take delight in the Park even during the worst days of Covid.

Your support of our work and your time volunteering in the Park have been key to providing that delight to all of the families in the Park. Hermann Park may be knocked back a bit after the freeze, but with your help it will flourish again. On to year 19!

Doreen

Doreen Stoller, President

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In Kind
Lifted Up Aerial Photography

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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Blast from the Past: Mary Gibbs and Jesse H. Jones Reflection Pool

To many Park visitors, the gracious Jones Reflection Pool is all they’ve ever known. After all, it has been in its renewed state for 17 years. However, more seasoned visitors to Hermann Park may remember a time when muddy slopes and families of ducks had overrun the edges of the water.

Plans to remodel the Jones Reflection Pool came to fruition as part of the Conservancy’s 1995 master plan. As part of that process, artist Elizabeth Day created a watercolor

showcasing what the renovated Jones Reflection Pool might look and feel like, using nothing but the preliminary plans and her imagination.

The Jones Reflection Pool was dedicated in 2003 and has been one of the favorite spots in Hermann Park ever since. With the next master plan currently under way, the Conservancy is hard at work creating plenty more favorite spots for the next generation of Park visitors.



1999 – Reflection Pool “Before”

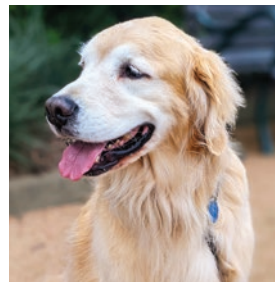


2001 – Watercolor by Elizabeth Day



Present Day – Photo by Nash Baker

Coming Soon: Hermann Bark



Dog park committee co-chair Midas Bonebrake enjoying the views at the McGovern Centennial Gardens

Later this year, Hermann Park Conservancy will open one of the most requested community improvements: a brand new dog park!

Landscape architects Lauren Griffin Associates and the Conservancy team have been hard at work finalizing the designs of the McWilliams Dog Park, named by longtime Conservancy supporters and honorees of this year's *Evening in the Park*: Laura and Brad McWilliams.

And as the last leg of the journey approaches, the Conservancy will be getting the public involved to crowdsourcing the remaining amount needed to help achieve the dog park's fundraising goal.

If you'd like to help bring the McWilliams Dog Park to life, then head over to hermannpark.org/dogpark and give today.

Calling All Canines!
If you have a picture of your pup living their best life in Hermann Park that you'd like to share, send it to media@hermannpark.org.



Photo by @colbiejones_thecav

What's Blooming?

Winter is winding down and Houston is on the cusp of spring, which means lots of new and exciting blooms in the McGovern Centennial Gardens and Japanese Garden.

Continued, next page

Dwarf Bottlebrush (Arid Garden)



Pink Ground Rose (Rose Garden)



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HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Every Membership Counts at Hermann Park Conservancy

Hermann Park Conservancy members all join for different reasons. Some want to support urban conservation and wildlife habitat preservation, some want to share the joy they had as children playing in Hermann Park with their own children, and some just love riding the train.

But regardless of why people join, one thing all members have in common is that they are all supporting vital operational needs in Hermann Park, which helps us keep it looking better than ever. And just how do memberships do that exactly?

- A **Bronze** membership buys **24 pairs of garden gloves** for staff and volunteers to work in the Park.
- A **Centennial** membership buys **weeding tools for 20 volunteers** to remove invasive species from the Park's plant beds.
- A **Gold** membership purchases a **portable water tank** to water newly-planted trees during drought conditions.
- A **Platinum** membership purchases **1.5 acres of Coastal Prairie Seed Mix** to help restore the natural habitat of the migratory bird islands.
- A **Conductor's Circle** membership purchases **20 native trees** to plant in the Park.

Play YOUR Park

While maintaining and caring for Hermann Park isn't always glamorous, it is essential. Every membership counts and they are the best way to directly support the Conservancy's efforts to make sure Hermann Park is here today and for generations to come. Learn how you can help by visiting hermannpark.org/membership.

What's Blooming? continued

Our landscaping and gardening team is able to care for these plants thanks to support from Conservancy memberships. Visit hermannpark.org/membership to help keep these blossoms blossoming.

Apricot tree (Japanese Garden)



Purple trailing lantana (Pergola Walk)



Photo by Nash Baker

Our Stories from the Park

Don Hall

Assistant Closing Manager,
McGovern Centennial Gardens

"An elderly couple was visiting the Gardens from North Carolina, saying that they had a family member who was currently a patient at MD Anderson. They wanted me to pass on a message to everyone saying how much visiting the Park really helped them find some peace and tranquility during a tough time, and that they're grateful to the staff for all that we do."



Keyri Hernandez Pedal Boat Attendant

"I've seen a lot more people in the Park lately, and a lot of them didn't even know things like the pedal boats existed until they were looking for safe, outdoor things to do in Houston. Even though they may have to wait a little bit longer in line, everyone has been really appreciative of the steps we're taking now like masks, and sanitizing the life jackets and boats after each use."

Kevin Velasquez

Membership and Marketing Manager

"I'm getting married in April and due to everything happening in the world, we decided that the best thing to do was cancel our original plans. We agreed that it would be more special, and much safer, to have a just-us ceremony in the Celebration Garden. It's a huge weight off our shoulders and we can't wait to tie the knot at one of the most beautiful spots in the city."



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The names listed above and on the preceding pages include donors who made gifts or pledges of \$100 or more between October 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, and George Hermann Society members. Gifts to *Evening in the Park* will be recognized in a subsequent issue. In compliance with IRS standards, commitments paid over time in installments are recognized once in full at the time of the pledge. Please contact the Conservancy if we inadvertently have not included your name or if you would like to be listed differently in future publications.

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

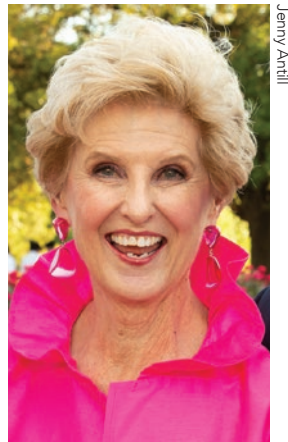
Securing the Future of Hermann Park

by Terrylin G. Neale

Being a native Houstonian, I've been coming to and enjoying Hermann Park my entire life. I've been lucky enough that the Park has always been available to me and my family to play, walk, rest, or run in.

Now that I see so many other families and children in the Park doing the same things, I'm reminded of all my good memories that have been created here. I want to make sure that others are able to have the lifelong experiences at Hermann Park that they deserve, which is why I have included Hermann Park Conservancy in my will.

Hermann Park is a place that should be available for everyone, and I want to do my part in ensuring that it's here now and for future generations.



Jenny Anhill

Join the George Hermann Society

If you are interested in including, or have already included, Hermann Park Conservancy in your will or personal trust, creating charitable remainder trusts, or making life insurance or retirement fund gifts to the Conservancy, please call **713-524-5876** or email development@hermannpark.org.

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John E. Walsh, Jr.
Pippa Wiley
Shari and Gary Winston

†deceased

The George Hermann Society recognizes donors who have provided for the future of Hermann Park through bequests or life income gifts to Hermann Park Conservancy.

If You Plant It, They Will Come

The Commons is shaping up to be an incredible place filled with community spaces, play areas, and natural vistas. However, before any of that can be built, there needs to be a good foundation. So our Urban Land Management team has gone out to the site and planted lots and lots of daikon radishes!

This unassuming and delicious vegetable is actually serving a critical purpose in preparing the land before future plantings or construction of the Commons begins. The Conservancy team planted 65 pounds of radish seed over seven acres in order to revitalize and nourish the old and compacted soil currently in the area. However instead of harvesting them, these radishes will actually stay and decompose in the ground, helping break up and provide essential nutrients to restore the soil.



They may not be bluebonnets but they're the next best thing! Doreen and Lulu pose among the daikon radishes.

Be on the lookout for their bright green tops next time you're out in the southwest section of Hermann Park!

Save the Dates!

**Love Your Park
Member Volunteer Day
Saturday, April 10, 2021**

**Evening in the Park
Friday, April 30, 2021**

We are sad to announce that the *Kite Festival* and *Hats in the Park* luncheon are postponed until 2022.

Look for news on this year's *Run in the Park* and *Park to Port* bike ride very soon!

 Printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink

PARKSIDE / WINTER 2021

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