



## Olmsted Plein Air Invitational April 2015

By Sandra Kruger

On April 22 – 26, 2015, the Olmsted Plein Air Invitational will make its debut where some 30 nationally acclaimed “en plein air” artists – a French term simply translated to mean “open air” – will make their way into the Olmsted Linear Park. They will set up their easels and pull out their brushes in order to capture the park’s beauty and splendor onto their canvases. Scenic vistas will stretch out before them in this 44-acre botanical paradise designed more than 100 years ago by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., the father of American landscape architecture.

Plein air painting has enjoyed increasing popularity in the United States and the world since the Impressionist period in France during the early 19th and 20th centuries. Plein Air painting was becoming more popular in the U. S. during Olmsted’s life and his famous portrait by John Singer Sargent, set at the Biltmore Estate, evokes the natural landscape Olmsted designed in Atlanta’s Olmsted Linear Park.

The park offers the perfect backdrop for the first art-based event in the park’s 100+ year existence and will benefit the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA). Artists will paint in all six segments of the park during this four-day event, where they will compete for \$10,000 in prizes. The event is open to the public and we encourage you to stroll

through the park to watch the artists. Event co-chairs, Lillian Ansley and Andy Hall, have put together several fabulous events you will not want to miss. While the Sunday event is free of charge, there will be ticketed events as well. The Calendar of Events will be posted on the OLPA website.

The Olmsted Plein Air Invitational is a first of its kind event in Atlanta and will require a lot of volunteers. So, whether you’re an artist, art collector or just an art enthusiast who loves the park, we invite you to volunteer for one day or for the entire event. OLPA will need volunteers all year long. Patron and sponsorship opportunities are available now. For more information, please visit our website at [www.atlantaolmstedpark.org/plein\\_air\\_invitational](http://www.atlantaolmstedpark.org/plein_air_invitational) or contact Sandy Kruger at [sandy@atlantaolmstedpark.org](mailto:sandy@atlantaolmstedpark.org).



2014 Gala - Lillian Ansley, Andy Hall, Kathie Gannon and Gene Ansley

## SAVE THE DATE

*Party for the Parks on Ponce – Preserving the Olmsted Masterpiece*

**Sunday, February 15, 2015**

**Fernbank Museum of Natural History**

*More information on page 4*

## Legacy Leader

By Sandra Kruger

Jim and Fentress Waits live in the Druid Hills neighborhood, and both have served as members of the Board of Directors of OLPA. They recently shared their reasons for supporting OLPA and their involvement with efforts to renew the Park:

“Both of us love this park and enjoy sharing it with our children and our three grandchildren. They love it too — in 2008 our grandchildren contributed money toward the dedication of a bench in Dellwood in honor of their grandmother. We believe this park is truly a work of art and to think Frederick Law Olmsted had the vision to imagine this exceptional natural space is awe inspiring.

Today, when we look out our front door, we see a park filled with lush greenery, beautiful shrubs, flowering plants — and multiple users of the park. When we moved to the Druid Hills community, the Olmsted Linear Park was nothing more than a strip of land extending along Ponce de Leon. From the beginning, the renewal of the park has been a beautiful and visionary project. Those who have led this effort, as well as numerous volunteers along the way, can look back and treasure what they have accomplished.



*Jim and Fentress Waits*

We have seen firsthand how the revitalization of this park has brought our community together for the greater good. For the last 14 years, we have supported the park because we want it to continue to thrive – in perpetuity for our grandchildren and for generations to come. ”

Early this year the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations of Jacksonville, Florida, made a generous contribution to OLPA in recognition of Jim’s volunteer service to the Foundations during the past 20 years.

## What’s Happening in the Park?

By George Ickes, Park Director

Most of the shrubs, trees, and flowers made it through the cold winter and are looking better than ever. The few shrubs we did lose due to the unusually cold weather will be replaced in the fall. Unfortunately, we lost two older trees in the park and we had four large trees and several branches fall across Ponce into the park. We were lucky that they did not cause any significant damage.



*Wende Martin (left) of Oglethorpe Power Corporation and Victoria DeCastro (right) of Georgia Electric Membership Corporation with George Ickes, Park Director in Deepdene. Wende and Victoria were volunteering on behalf of Oglethorpe Power Corporation’s PowerAid program.*

Currently, we are concentrating on mulching the beds, trimming the shrubs and pruning the smaller trees. Thanks to our “Feed-the-Gator” sponsors we were able to purchase a new John Deere Gator – “The George” – this summer which has doubled our mulching capacity. With a few extra hands on board for the next two months we should have all the beds and trees mulched by mid-September.

We’re always looking for volunteers to work on weekends or Tuesday and Thursday mornings. If you know any students that need to fulfill community service requirements for school, the park would be a great place.



*Berrie Sergio, Bob Davis, and Paul Gill with our new gator – “The George”*

## OLPA Board

### Gloria Seymour

A native Georgian and retired AT&T sales executive, Gloria Seymour and her late husband, Arthur, moved to North Ponce de Leon, across from Deepdene Park, in 1997. Gloria is a community volunteer who has served on the OLPA board since 2008, as well as serving on the board of Hillside, an Atlanta residential treatment facility for children. She also enjoys singing in the Cathedral Choir at Christ the King. Gloria chaired the annual OLPA gala in 2007 and is now chair of the OLPA maintenance committee. "I am fortunate to live in this green legacy community that was so fragile only a few decades ago. Preserving the parks gives all future generations a chance to explore nature in the city," says Gloria.



### Krista Brewer

Krista Brewer is actually a native of Druid Hills. She was born at Emory Hospital soon after her parents moved here for her dad, Earl Brewer, to teach at Emory. She attended Oxford College of Emory University and then graduated from Jacksonville University. She received a Masters in Urban Studies from Georgia State University. Her main professional life revolved around writing and editing until she retired to raise her three children. She became active in their schools, including serving on the Board of



Trustees for Paideia. Currently, Krista is active in non-partisan civic engagement work and electoral politics. She and her husband, Gary Flack, live on Springdale Road.

### Kevin Steward

Kevin was born in a small town outside of Dayton, Ohio. He attended Ball State University and moved to Atlanta in 1983. He has seen Atlanta grow in many ways over the past 31 years. Kevin began with a retail career that lasted 10 years, then became a media buyer for a small firm called Media Solutions. Missing the personal contact with people and possessing a long-time passion for houses, he became a real estate agent. He was lucky enough to find someone that would teach him the ropes and that partnership is still going after 17 years! For the past 25 years he has lived and worked along the Ponce De Leon corridor and always admired the beauty of the Olmsted Linear Park. A few years ago, his neighbor, Sally Sears asked him if he would be interested in serving on the OLPA board of directors. He immediately said yes because he believes in preserving our past and our green spaces. It has been a total delight for Kevin to work with incredible people and know the difference we all can make. He is and has been involved with other organizations like AID Atlanta, Project Open Hand and Druid Hills Civic Association. The best way to give back to our community is to get involved in the local organizations and charities! Druid Hills has become his small town within Atlanta and so it is home!



## Park Maintenance Volunteer of the Year

Charlie Jaret is our park maintenance volunteer of the year. Charlie works in the park most Thursday mornings with Park Director, George Ickes. His contributions range from putting in new plantings to mulching, trimming, weeding, and fertilizing throughout the park. Charlie has gotten to know the park patrons who are out in the park on a regular basis. They have gotten to know him and share their appreciation for all his hard work. Charlie and his wife live in the Toco Hills area. Before he retired and became our exemplary Thursday volunteer, Charlie was a Professor of Sociology at Georgia State University. He and George are both alumnae of the University of Chicago, where Charlie earned his PhD and George earned his MBA.



*Congratulations to Charlie Jaret, OLPA's park maintenance volunteer of the year!*

# Treasure the Past and Preserve for the Future

By *Toby Brooks*

It is important to ask ourselves the question, “What do I love about our park?” It could be the graceful transition from the pastoral expanse of Springdale to the old growth magnificence and woodland paths of Deepdene. It could be some of the iconic trees of Dellwood and Oak Grove. Or perhaps it’s the opportunity to take life at a slower pace, to walk along the park paths, appreciate the green space and embrace the opportunity to share it with neighbors or passers-by. Whatever it may be, it’s important for us to periodically reflect on what we really care about in the park so that we don’t take this green space for granted. After years of fighting to preserve and restore the park, OLPA is transitioning into a different role — that of maintaining this magnificent community asset. With the loss of a common call to action, there is a risk that we start to take the park for granted. We at OLPA need to solicit input from the community on what they love the most to make certain that we are focusing our resources on the correct things.



My first exposure to the six segments that make up the Olmsted Linear Park was while driving down Ponce de

Leon Avenue and it had me hooked. Today, we live across from Dellwood Park and have the great privilege of having the park as our front yard. When I was asked to join the OLPA board of directors, I readily accepted. As residents of Druid Hills, I feel we all have a strong obligation to contribute to the maintenance and preservation of this unique community asset. The Olmsted Linear Park is what makes Druid Hills a distinctive neighborhood — the character of this historic district would be diminished without it. As a board member, my highest personal priority is to establish a long-term foundation to ensure the future of the Park, both in terms of financial support and community involvement, because we need to continue to preserve these unique spaces.

Restoration of this park happened because of the dedicated effort of an entire community. Protection of this community asset will require a new generation of park supporters with maintenance rather than rehabilitation as the goal, but with the same shared love for the park. I urge all of us to support the park in three ways: First, financially; second, volunteering to serve on a committee of OLPA; and third, talk to your friends and neighbors who live in the area and may not be supporting the park. Ask them, “What do you love about the park? “Is it worth preserving?” Then explain the importance of stepping up and contributing to make the preservation a reality for present and future generations.

## *Party for the Parks on Ponce - Preserving the Olmsted Masterpiece*

Mark your calendars now for you will not want to miss this fabulous evening filled with French cuisine, show stopping entertainment, dancing and on-site plein air artists in action on **Sunday, February 15, 2015**.

This year we are pleased to announce our **2015 Party for the Parks on Ponce** Co-chairs, Jennifer and Weslee Knapp. OLPA’s delighted to have them on board and looks forward to another successful event.



“We are extremely excited to continue what is now a long tradition toward preservation and improvement of the Olmsted Linear Park.

As residents of the Druid Hills community, we appreciate the benefits of these parks and are extremely thankful that we can enjoy it with our children. For us, the six park segments that make up the park have provided beautiful nature walks with our kids, fabulous paved paths where we have worked on teaching our kids to ride their bikes and countless opportunities for our children to learn about our local ecosystem. One of our favorite annual activities is taking our two boys down into Deepdene to catch and release crayfish. It is a highlight of our summer. Who would have guessed you could do that in a city of our size!

Being chairs of the Olmsted Linear Park Gala is an honor for us and an opportunity to show our appreciation for something that we truly love. We hope to encourage others through our excitement so that many generations to come can share in the enjoyment of one of Atlanta’s greatest landmarks and treasures.”

*Jennifer and Weslee Knapp*



## The Fight for Our Park – A Retrospective

By Gale Walldorff

Late in 1980 and early 1981 rumors were circulating that Department of Transportation (DOT) was planning yet another road project through the abandoned right-of-way that had been cleared for the Stone Mountain Freeway and the extension of I-485. Twenty-five years earlier more than 500 homes had been acquired by the DOT through condemnation for these two major roads. These highways were never built, but more than 200 acres of prime in-town land was left overgrown with kudzu and weeds. Over the years at least four major highway projects had been proposed for the property. All these projects were successfully defeated by the neighborhoods.

As details emerged it was clear that this new plan, called the Presidential Parkway, was a serious proposal that had important political backing: Tom Moreland, the powerful DOT Commissioner called by some the Robert Moses of Georgia; the Mayor of Atlanta Andrew Young who during his campaign signed a pledge not to support the project; and former President Jimmy Carter who was planning to build his Presidential Library on 30 acres within the right-of-way were all in support of the project. The neighborhoods quickly realized that the plan was to bring the parkway from the stub at Boulevard through the old Fourth Ward, Inman Park, Goldsboro Park, Candler Park and finally into Shadyside Park where it would merge onto Ponce de Leon Avenue in front of the Druid Hills Golf Club.

Realizing the importance of working together, seven neighborhoods formed a coalition called CAUTION (Citizens Against Unnecessary Thoroughfares In Older Neighborhoods). The seven neighborhoods were Inman Park, Poncey-Highlands, Candler Park, Lake Claire, Druid Hills, East Lake, and the City of Decatur. There were many ideas and differing concerns among the various neighborhood organizations, but the one unifying goal was to stop the road. The coalition acted as the legal arm of the effort and raised more than \$800,000 to pay for legal fees, hire transportation experts, and prepare the neighborhood response to the Environmental Impact Statement. Hundreds of volunteers were called upon to make yard signs, attend meetings and distribute fliers. There was no Internet at the time, just neighborhood phone trees. To present the facts to the public, CAUTION

took out a full page ad in the Atlanta newspapers that cost \$10,000. The Federal Highway Administration requires state governments to hold public hearings for projects receiving federal dollars. CAUTION organized community participation in the largest public hearing ever held by the DOT. More than 3,000 citizens attended the Presidential Parkway hearing to voice their objections and concerns. Members of CAUTION joined forces with the Olmsted Parks Society and traveled to Washington to make a presentation to the Council on Environmental Quality. This resulted in the first ever public hearing held by the Council on a Federal Highway outside Washington DC.

Just as legal options seemed like they were about to slip away a new group of neighborhood activists called the Roadbusters emerged. They set up what was called Tent City in Shadyside Park. They conducted training sessions on non-violent protest and were masters at Gorilla Marketing. The DOT had begun to clear the right of way and had cut down more than 350 trees. The Roadbusters took action and climbed trees where they sat as several trees were cut down. They were in trenches in front of the bulldozers, and as many as 50 people were arrested in a single day. Lawyers were ready with legal assistance to bail them out of jail. In the fall of 1987 CAUTION and the Roadbusters joined forces to organize a neighborhood recognition at the dedication of the Carter Presidential Library. Hundreds of in-town community residents turned out to celebrate the event complete with balloons, banners, and giant puppets. It was also intended as a protest against Jimmy Carter's support of the road.

In 1985 a Fulton County Judge issued an injunction to halt construction, but it took five more years of protests and legal maneuvering before DeKalb County Superior Court Judge Clarence Seeliger directed the parties to mediation. In 1991 the Justice Center of Atlanta was asked to organize the process and under the guidance of a nationally known mediator, the city of Atlanta, the DOT, and neighborhood representatives were able to work out a compromise that today is known as Freedom Parkway.

It's important to emphasize that this ten-year struggle was accomplished not by just one organization or neighborhood or individual, but through the efforts of groups like CAUTION, The Olmsted Parks Society and Roadbusters working together towards a common goal and supported by countless volunteers. In the end, the community persevered, the historic landscape was restored, and today, the surrounding neighborhoods continue to thrive.

## OLPA Out and About



*Alex McCray, former OLPA Executive Director, and Sandra Kruger, Membership Coordinator attended the Frederick Law Olmsted Symposium presented by Georgia Tech School of Civil and Environmental Engineering in June. You can read more about this event at <http://www.news.gatech.edu/2014/06/05/olmsted-symposium-focuses-building-sustainable-cities>*



*Julie Ralston, President of OLPA, hosted a tour of Deepdene for participants attending the American Planning Association National Conference in April.*

## Ickes Competes in the FINA World Masters Championships

*By Sandra Kruger*

George Ickes possesses many talents: shoveling mounds of mulch, pruning the tallest of shrubs and – now, champion swimmer! This past August, George traveled to Montreal, Canada to compete in the 15th FINA Masters World Championships representing Georgia and the United States. These championships are held every two years and this year they hosted 5,500 swimmers from 97 countries. George won a Silver medal in the Men’s Medley Relay, 75-79 year age group, and a Bronze in the 200 meters backstroke. George competes state-wide on the Killer Whales and nationally on the Georgia Masters Team. We are very proud to have him on the OLPA team as well. Congratulations, George!



## A Tribute to Norman Ross Harbaugh, Sr. (1924-2013)

*By Jennifer J. Richardson*

Though the name Sally Harbaugh has long been associated with Olmsted, few know what an important role Sally’s husband, Norman, played.

When Sally Harbaugh decided to take up the mantle of Olmsted and founded the Olmsted Parks Society of Atlanta in 1983, Norman was right beside her. He served as treasurer and board member of the organization for many years. He financially supported Sally’s research at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, at Olmsted’s home, “Fairsted”, and in many other arenas where Sally gained history and perspective on the life and work of Olmsted.

Norman was an elegant man of many accomplishments, usually formally attired in a dark business suit. He was always respectful of others, and always a gentleman. His smile and laughter could light up a room. He had the uncanny ability for a man of his generation to stand in the background giving support while others led the charge. While Sally may have gotten the press and honors, she could not have accomplished all she did without the help of her beloved Norman.

Norman’s life revolved around many things, but three come to mind: service and love of one’s country; service and devotion to one’s God; and love and service to one’s family. These were the values for which Norman stood. As Sally accomplished her myriad feats in fighting the expressway, founding Olmsted Parks, and in spearheading Olmsted Linear Park Alliance and developing its master plan, Norman was always there beside her until his health no longer allowed it. Still, his towering figure lingers as a shadow behind her—and all who knew him. Norman Harbaugh was worthy of our admiration and honor in how he chose to live his life. In Norman, the Olmsted Linear Park has lost a mighty oak, and we will miss him.

**Thank you** to our Donors, Gala Attendees and Sponsors. We appreciate your commitment and dedication to preserving the Olmsted Linear Park. Your support allows us to continue the work of nurturing and protecting this beautiful, historic landmark today and for future generations. We look forward to seeing you in the park!"

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*I'd like to support Olmsted Linear Park, designed in 1893 by Frederick Law Olmsted.  
The Olmsted Linear Park Alliance was established as a nonprofit organization to preserve  
this unique historical and cultural Atlanta asset for generations to come.*

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