An Evening of Green

By Kate Seville

On February 21, 2016, the luck of the Irish filled the atrium of the Fernbank Museum of Natural History as the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA) celebrated its 12th Annual Party for the Parks on Ponce benefit gala. Every year the Druid Hills community and friends join together to raise money to support the enhancement and preservation of the beloved Olmsted Linear Park. Guests get an opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. It’s always a spectacular event and this year was no exception.

The more than 300 guests were greeted with festive music and gorgeous Irish inspired decorations, designed by Phillip Thompson of Lily and the Lion Floral Decorations. In keeping with the Irish theme, party-goers enjoyed an array of Irish whiskey tastings and delectable bites provided by Affairs to Remember Caterers.

The Atlanta Young Singers of Callanwolde wowed us with their lovely voices and traditional Irish folk music. Honorary Gala Chairs Elena Parent and Briley Brisendine presented DeKalb County Judge Clarence Seeliger with OLPA’s Frederick Law Olmsted Award for Excellence for his exemplary contribution to saving our historic Olmsted Linear Park. We were honored to have him and his wife, Gwen, join us as well as Jennie Richardson, Gale Walldorff and Lynn Kerpel as representatives of CAUTION – Citizens Against Unnecessary Thoroughfares in Older Neighborhoods – a citizen’s advocacy group that worked to save the park from highway destruction. This highway would have divided our historically significant communities and destroyed the beautiful green gem known as Olmsted Linear Park that we all enjoy today.

The event included a silent auction full of wonderful dining experiences, outdoor excursions and a variety of fun things to do around town. The live auction featured a fabulous trip to Nantucket Island, a beautiful Ted Maloof photograph and other wonderful vacation experiences.

continued on page 4

SAVE THE DATE
August 7, 2016
“Stop The Road Reunion”
OLPA Celebrates the 25th Anniversary of saving the Olmsted Linear Park this fall.
Stay tuned for details soon.

Congratulations to the Olmsted Plein Air Invitational!

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Visit www.olmstedpleinair.com to view and purchase artist’s work.
Young Leadership Council

By Allison Snyder

There wasn’t a single cloud in the sky. It was bright and crisp – the type of day when you don’t need a jacket if you stand in the sun.

Sunday, February 7th was arguably the best day of the month to be out in Deepdene park for the first OLPA Young Leadership Council (YLC) volunteer cleanup of 2016. The day started with a tour through the park, led by OLPA Historian Jennie Richardson. She spoke to a group of seven YLC volunteers about the various native plants, the exotic invasive species that have crept in, the oldest trees in the park (one dating back to the Revolutionary War!) and the overall history of Deepdene. She gave everyone a sense of how far the park has come, and how it has changed and grown over the years.

After the captivating tour, the group set to work cleaning identification signs along the park trails, tending to mulched trees and beds and picking up the occasional piece of litter. Yes, gloves were worn and work was done, but it felt more like a stroll in the park than a volunteer workday. In all, the two-hour tour and cleanup was revitalizing, and provided a chance to get out on a gorgeous day and do something purposeful.

Volunteer events like this help keep the Olmsted Linear Park alive and thriving. If you are interested in joining future Young Leadership Council volunteer events, follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/OlmstedYLC/

Spring Maintenance Report

By George Ickes – Park Maintenance Director

Spring is my favorite time of year in the park. It starts with the Redbuds and the Dogwoods. Then onto the flowering shrubs – forsythia, azaleas, spirea, fothergilla and flowering quince. As spring progresses, other flowering shrubs will join them.

We had a lot to do to get ready for spring. We mulched the trees and beds, spread pine straw and attacked invasives, along with ongoing weeding. This year we hired an expert pruner to address the shrubs that had grown too large. The pruner did an excellent job of thinning out shrubs and, when necessary, giving them a hard trim. It can look severe for a short time, but they are already coming back. This all makes for a healthier landscape. This pruning was done in Dellwood and Shadyside.

We continue to have major erosion problems in Deepdene, but we are working with the Georgia Department of Transportation and DeKalb County to rectify this issue.

Volunteers are essential in helping keep our park beautiful. If you are interested in working in the park, please contact George Ickes on 404-723-3118.
Paws in the Park

By Truman Strauss

The phrase “it’s a dog’s life” was coined in the 16th Century to describe the hard and subservient life dogs often lived. The urbanization of this phrase – and our canine companions – now indicates you’ve got it pretty good if you’re living in Fido’s world.

Take Truman, for instance. He adopted me seven years ago and we have not looked back since. He’s trained me well; food and walks at the appointed times each day and naps in between. He has taught me more about life – and about myself – than I ever thought possible.

Most of my education has occurred in the classroom of Deepdene Park, where we’ve learned trust for one another, respect for the environment and kindness toward fellow hikers (Truman knows ‘runner up’ means single file on the trail). Even the squirrels get a pass here.

I revel in watching Truman navigate the stream; carefully choosing where to submerge his paws as he drinks the cool water. When he runs too far afield – or lingers too far behind – I need only pucker my lips, blow his whistle and, voila! wherever he is, Truman comes bounding to me with his ears at attention, his tail standing tall and his wagging tongue visible through an exuberant grin.

There is a science to it all, about which I know nothing. I only know our time at Deepdene is our mutual communion with nature. We both emerge calmer, happier and more centered; grateful for the vision of those before us, the commitment of those who steward the park today and the imagination of those who will take this beautiful parcel of nature to places about which we can only dream.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. aspired to create and sustain an oasis in the city where one can “gain tranquility and rest to the mind.” Truman and I certainly embody that sentiment. I can’t imagine my life - or my walks with Truman – without Olmsted’s incredible legacy.

Mr. Olmsted, I suspect you knew all along the secret meaning to a dog’s life.

Kate Seville

Kate is a transplant from Connecticut, arriving in Druid Hills at the end of 2008, with a brief stint in Seattle, Washington before settling permanently in Atlanta in 2012. Her previous life as a trailing spouse had Kate living in Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Tokyo and Shanghai. Kate is happy to be in Atlanta where the topography and climate are very similar to one of her favorite places to live, Tokyo, Japan.

Today, Kate works as Project Manager for United Healthcare and is part of a team working on a multi-million dollar initiative for the company. She has been in the health insurance industry for over 25 years, having worked for Aetna, Cigna and several regional companies. She holds a degree in accounting from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI.

A native of Western Michigan, and having grown up within minutes of a popular state park, Kate loves the walking paths and trees of the Olmsted Linear Park. She has served on the gala committee since 2010 and co-chaired the 2016 benefit gala.
But, it was the Fund-the-Need event that put guests on the edge of their seats. This year, OLPA will embark on several rejuvenation projects in the park. One of those projects is to conduct a complete tree inventory and sustainability plan – the Olmsted Tree Project. Within minutes of this auction, OLPA raised $15,000.00 to sustain our old, iconic trees. We would like to thank Dean Crownover of My Benefit Auctioneer, for providing a lively interactive evening, not to mention dazzling attendee’s with his ‘pot o’gold’ jacket.

The OLPA event itself raised more than $80,000, which will be used for the continuous preservation and enhancement of the linear park. Of course, all of this would not be possible without our generous and loyal Host Committee, sustaining donors and gala attendees. Thank you for your support for this event and all year long. We want to give special thanks to all of our sponsors: Fernbank Museum of Natural History, AGL Resources, MailChimp, Affairs to Remember, Tunnell & Tunnell Landscape Architects, Canterbury Press, Keller Knapp Real Estate & Consulting, CSX, Paris & Associates, REMAX Metro Atlanta Cityside, Natalie Gregory Sold, Framing By Design and Personal Care.

We had a lot of firsts this year – new gala chairs, auctioneer and new event software. Our gala co-chairs Robin Chalmers and Kate Powers pulled together a hard working committee including Briley Brisendine, Jodi Buckley, Carolyn Hall, Richard Henneman, George Ickes, Elena Parent, Julie Ralston, Ben Stanley, Kevin Steward, Sara Thorpe and Connie Weimar. Thanks to all!

One important reason we come together once a year is to celebrate our past achievements and embrace a beautiful, green future. In 2017, OLPA will celebrate its 20th Anniversary and we hope you join us again to commemorate the occasion. We have some exciting and fun plans for this one, folks!

Thank you again for your generous support. We look forward to seeing you in the Olmsted Linear Park!
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Remembering Dorothy Malone Yates

By Jennifer J. Richardson

Dorothy Malone Yates, age 95, died on December 29, 2015. She led a very full life, including being one of the first supporters of the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA).

Mrs. Yates received her college degree in music and voice from Sweet Briar College in Virginia. For twenty years, beginning in 1946, she served on the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Auxiliary. She also worked to bring legitimate theatre and puppetry arts to Atlanta. She chaired the Metropolitan Opera Guild in Atlanta and championed The Atlanta Opera. She was a volunteer to many Atlanta charities, including Emory Hospital and the Junior League. Dorothy was preceded in death by her husband, amateur golfer, civic leader and businessman Charlie Yates. The Yates were married for 61 years.

Mrs. Yates great passion was gardening. Her home featured an orchid greenhouse and a Japanese Garden. She was a founder and lifetime trustee of the Atlanta Botanical Garden where the Dorothy Yates Garden was named in her honor.

From the beginning, when funds were being raised to rehabilitate the linear park, Ms. Yates generously supported the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance. It was fitting, because the Druid Hills Garden Club had taken care of Oak Grove Park segment since 1928. There is a plaque in Oak Grove that commemorates that legacy.

OLPA is grateful for the support and contributions of Dorothy Malone Yates. A memorial dogwood or redbud will be planted in the linear park in her memory by the Druid Hills Garden Club. OLPA extends sincerest sympathy to Mrs. Yates’ survivors.

Your Investment in OLPA is Blooming

OLPA Participates in the Atlanta Preservation Center’s Phoenix Flies History Event – March 2016

OLPA Historian and DeKalb County Master Gardner, Jennie Richardson leads park tours to celebrate its historical significance in Atlanta and reflect on the importance of sustainable horticultural practices.

To read Jennie’s article in full visit http://www.atlantaolmstedpark.org/docs/Newsletters/2016/PhoenixFliesEvent.pdf

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Support the Annual Campaign

Do you love our wonderful, huge trees and our old-growth forest? This year’s annual fund will put an extra emphasis on these unique treasures in our parks. The board has commissioned a comprehensive tree assessment and are developing a plan for on-going tree maintenance that will be made possible through your generous support of our annual fund. Look for more details in a letter in mid-May.

Here are two other exciting ways to support our park:

» **Recognition Opportunities of benches and bridges** - your family name will live perpetuity in the park.

» **Planned Gifts** - remember the Olmsted Linear Park in your estate planning.

As you plan your giving for 2016, please consider this an investment not only for your community today but your children’s community for generations to come.

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☐ Check for E-newsletter only

Donations can be made online at www.atlantaolmstedpark.org

☐ $50 Maple  ☐ $100 Red Bud – Bronze Level  ☐ $250 Dogwood – Silver Level*

☐ $500 Hickory – Gold Level*  ☐ $1,000 Oak – Platinum Level*

☐ Recurring Gift of $_________ – monthly or annually  ☐ Other

* A donation of $250 or more will allow you to be recognized in our virtual park on our website as a tree sponsor.

Please remember the Olmsted Linear Park Alliance in your estate planning.

Ask your employers about matching gift opportunities.

Thank you for your donation! Your donation is tax deductible. OLPA is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization.