March 28, 2021

It all Began in 1939

Flower Mart began modestly in 1939 when All Hallows Guild first hosted a festive marketplace of stalls and flower carts on the Cathedral's Pilgrim Steps. Hundreds of people visited the first of what would become one Washington's premier springtime events. In the more than eighty years since it began, Flower Mart has welcomed many First Ladies (Mrs. Woodrow Wilson was a frequent visitor in the early years), ambassadors, and notable figures from the world of politics, theater, and sports. Although it has continually expanded in size and scope, **Flower Mart is still an all-volunteer effort and is the Guild's largest annual fundraiser in support of the Cathedral's gardens and grounds.**

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Flower Mart 1947 – the Wesley Heights Garden Club booth

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  Flower Mart 1948 on the Pilgrim Steps

It’s about Flowers (and Much More)

From the start, Flower Mart has been a place to purchase flowers and garden plants. Over the years the vendor marketplace has expanded to offer new and varied merchandise, including gifts for garden and home as well as fashion and accessories for men, women, and children. There is a wide array of festival food for sale from the long-standing Episcopal Church Women’s baked goods to new food truck offerings.

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  First Lady Bess Truman shopping at Flower Mart in 1950

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Premier Plants at Flower Mart 2018

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  Shoppers at Flower Mart 2019

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  Orchids for Sale at Flower Mart 2017

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Episcopal Church Women’s Baked Good Tent

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  Flower Mart Festival Foods

Fun and Games

Children’s rides and games are a large part of the fun. For decades the centerpiece has been the antique carousel, acquired by All Hallows Guild in 1963. The Guild raised funds for the initial restoration of the carousel and continues to support its maintenance. Most recently, the Wurlitzer caliola was entirely refurbished and will be unveiled at the next Flower Mart in May 2022.

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Climbing Wall

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Carousel Animal “Pillow” the Camel

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Front view of finished case with polished pipes

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Something for Everyone

Flower Mart now includes two full days of free entertainment on the west front of the Cathedral; an **International Floral Exhibit** inside the Cathedral's nave; the spectacular Cathedral Tower Climb; and for over 40 years, an **original puppet show presented by the all-volunteer All Hallows Puppeteers**.

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International Floral Display

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Entertainment in Front of the Cathedral

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  Puppeteers Betty Gordon and daughter Allison

Opening Ceremony

It all begins with the Flower Mart opening ceremony. District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser has helped cut the ribbon to open the previous two Flower Marts. Past ribbon cutters include actress Elizabeth Taylor and First Ladies Bess Truman, Mamie Eisenhower, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Barbara Bush.

The 1954 Flower Mart Committee decided to bring international flair into the festival by seeking an embassy to be honored during Flower Mart. That year, the French Embassy participated, and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon (wife of the Vice President) cut the ribbon at the Opening Ceremonies. Since that time, 45 different Flower Marts honored a foreign country or countries. With its incredible location on the second

highest spot in the Nation’s Capital, Flower Mart has honored the United States and the District of Columbia a number of times with themes such as the Bicentennial of Washington, DC, in 1991 and the Bicentennial of the United States in 1976.

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  Barbara Bush at Flower Mart 1990

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  Jacqueline Kennedy at Flower Mart 1961

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  Elizabeth Taylor Opens Flower Mart in 1979

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Flower Mart 2013 Celebrated America the Beautiful

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  DC Mayor Muriel Bowser Helps Open Flower Mart 2018

The Past and Future

Since that first Flower Mart on May 1, 1939, All Hallows Guild has held the event each spring with only a few exceptions. In 1943 and 1944 “phantom” Flower Marts were held because of World War II. In 1945 All Hallows Guild participated in the “Cathedral Festival” in lieu of Flower Mart. For the next 74 years (1946 – 2019), the volunteers of All Hallows Guild presented the festival each spring. The Covid19 pandemic necessitated the cancellation of the Flower Marts planned for May 2020 and 2021. **We are hopeful that Flower Mart will again bloom on the Cathedral grounds on the first Friday and Saturday of May in 2022**.

