**July 29, 2025**

*by Carol Kelleher*

All Hallows Guild is very pleased to be able to continue its tradition of sponsoring summer interns. This year we have three interns in horticulture and one working on turf. Although the students are recruited and hired by our professional staff, the Guild pays their salaries. We do this for two reasons: the hard work and young muscles of the students help with pruning, weeding, trimming, and mowing, easing the burden on our staff, and we like to help train the gardeners of tomorrow with hands-on experience in plant care and identification and garden planning. Our interns have had the chance to visit Oak Spring Garden Foundation in Upperville, VA, the Bunny Mellon property, and Cavano's Perennials in Maryland, and have viewed online seminars—all furthering their education.

L to R: Owen Loucks, Bailey Davila, and Isaiah Johnson

**Bailey Davila** comes to us from Spartanburg, South Carolina, where she attends Spartanburg Community College, studying horticulture. Bailey is in her second year, but had three years toward a Bachelor's degree in another field before she decided to make a major change. She has many credits that can transfer and will ultimately receive a Master's degree. This internship is a requirement of her degree program. Bailey plans to enter the field of agronomy, a branch of agriculture that deals with field crop production and soil management. She hopes to teach in this field. Fittingly, she learned about our internship through AgHires website. Bailey is fortunate to have found a host family locally, allowing her to live and work here this summer. Bailey has found the practical work to be her favorite – and working in a public garden, not a commercial enterprise.

Bailey's summer internship project is redesigning the STA Green Roof – for which she will specify sedums and succulents to provide cohesive weed control.

**Isaiah Johnson's** hometown is Washington, DC, and he attends Delaware State University studying Sport Management. This directed him to the turf internship, which is a requirement of his degree and is the final part of his program. He had not done mowing or weeding before, and the preparation of the school fields for sports, placing goals, and getting fields ready is right in his study area. He participated in a field day at the Green Association program at American University and had an opportunity to get on the field at Nationals' Park to observe the turf management there. Isaiah also has been able to participate in turf management webinars.

Isaiah has enjoyed working on the Cathedral Close and especially working with people who are friendly and helpful.

**Owen Loucks** is from Northern Virginia and is a rising sophomore at Syracuse University studying Biology. He learned about our internship on Indeed. Owen enjoys working with different people in Horticulture and Grounds and the variety of personalities he encounters daily. The variety and scope of the many types of plants in our different garden areas are favorites – so much so that Owen's summer project is mapping and naming plants all around our Close.

Owen was quick to respond to a question about how the internship will help in his schoolwork – he now has a much better grasp of what gardening actually entails, and the plant ID learned here as a practical skill will certainly dovetail with his academic work.

**Dandelion [Andy] Risch**, comes from Friendship Heights, Washington, DC, and rides the Metrobus to the cathedral. Andy is a rising sophomore at Ithaca College with a biochemistry major and an art minor. That seems like the ideal combination for a garden designer! Our internship was recommended to her by a professor and it is a requirement of her study. She loves being outside – even in this very tropical summer – and will do her internship project on insects. She will photograph different insects and log them into a database. She reports her project is going well – hopefully with a lot of friendly pollinators.

Andy says her college campus is very wooded so a combination of a lot of biology courses and experience in the environment gives a comprehensive experience. She participates in a number of micro-labs, and tracks mice and mammals in the woods. She hopes to follow a career in entomology, perhaps finding ways to counteract pests, and is interested in conservation, possibly as a park ranger.

Andy likes working with different people on our staff, being exposed to different viewpoints and methods of working.

Our 2025 summer interns are a varied group with impressive and mature viewpoints and goals, and we hope the experiences we provide will help them toward their goals. We are grateful for the support of our members that allows us to create these opportunities.

**by Beth Cowie, "Out and About"**

**July 2025**

**Perennial border in the Cowie garden**

In 2019 my husband and I purchased a piece of property in Northern Michigan and engaged a contractor to build what we thought at the time would be our summer house. We had kept our design for the house simple and small – we originally envisioned just being in Charlevoix for a few months each year to escape the heat and humidity of DC. Several months into the

construction, Covid changed everything.

Our house was already framed up and closed in when the pandemic happened. We could adjust some details, but we weren't going to be making any major changes. Instead, I decided to focus on the garden. The house has a small footprint, so the outdoor areas are an important extension of our living space.

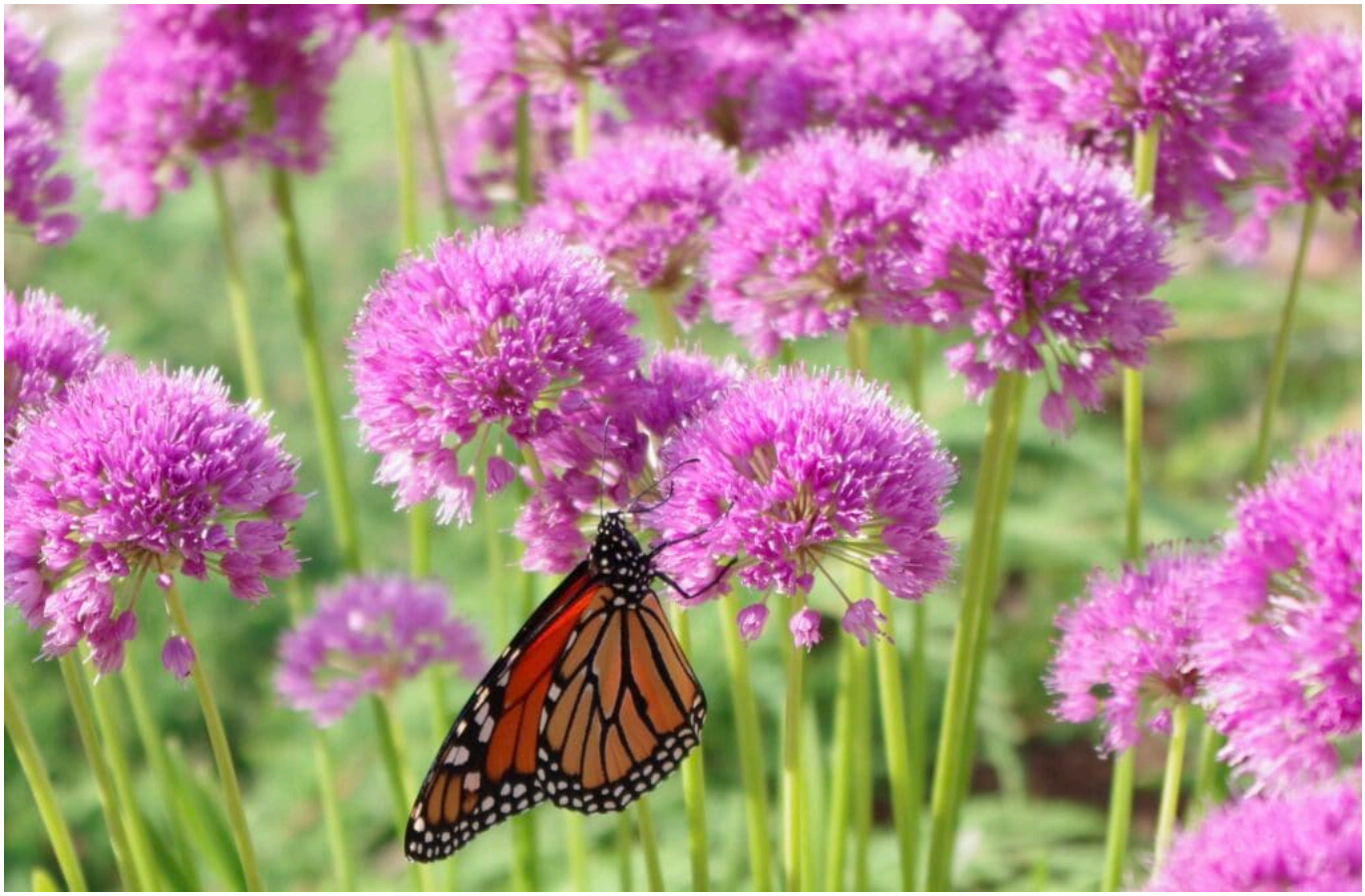
I looked for garden inspiration in books and in gardens that I visited. Since we were in the middle of the pandemic (and I had some extra time on my hands), I also took the Foundations of Gardening Course through Michigan State University and became a certified Master Gardener.

What I hoped to create was a cottage-style garden with a variety of pollinator-friendly perennials. Despite being a rather formal garden, I found the Bishop's Garden to be an excellent model – particularly the Lower Perennial "Blue" Border. The blue, purple, and white palette, along with the layered heights and plant structure has always been one of my favorite parts of the Cathedral Grounds.  I was also inspired to group plants in warm hues as they are in the Bishop's Garden's Upper Perennial Border. Living within walking distance of the Bishop's Garden was a blessing during the early part of the pandemic, and I visited

almost daily.

My garden will always be a work in progress. I started with the rear yard – which was defined by a low fence to contain the dog. This is the more “formal” part of my landscape – and the only part with a turf lawn. A perennial border runs along the fence, and over the past few years, I have added plants on both sides in order to visually minimize the fence. This area also contains my greenhouse (where I start all of my vegetables and flowering annuals from seed), as well as several raised beds with herbs and vegetables.

The front of the house is surrounded by more perennial beds with a variety of deer-resistant plants and shrubs. Deer pressure is intense, so “deer-resistant” is not a hard and fast term. Behind the rear yard is a vegetable/fruit garden with a 7 foot fence (which does make it deer-proof), and a “cutting garden” filled with annual flowers. Beyond that is our meadow – with native wildflowers, red osier dogwood, and prairie grass.



Gardens take years (or lifetimes) to mature. I'm impatient, so I kept adding plants to the borders (and maybe just making the borders a bit bigger)…. Plants themselves became the mulch. If you don't have areas of open ground in a planting bed, then there is no space for weeds. An opening in the border was just an opportunity to put in a new plant. There is repetition in the borders, but having a variety of perennial plants allows for a variation in the bloom times, and variation of heights and shapes. It also means that when a pest (insect, disease, or mammal) attacks, the entire border isn't affected.

All of this may sound like a lot to maintain, but doing things in the garden almost never feels like "work". Having minimal turf grass means that we don't spend any real time mowing (it takes less than 10 minutes with a push mower to cut the rear yard). We don't apply pesticides and native plants don't require any fertilizer. And at the end of the day, we have a lovely space to relax, or entertain, or just sit and listen to the birds enjoying the fruit on the serviceberry trees.

*Beth Cowie is a former All Hallows Guild Board Member and has recently retired from her career as an architect in Washington, DC. Currently she resides in Charlevoix, Michigan, where she volunteers through MSU Extension as an Advanced Master Gardener and is President of the Northern Michigan Master Gardener Association.*

**March 2025**

Dear Friends of the Guild,

All Hallows Guild has been actively engaged in a strategic planning process for the past three years. The Strategic Planning Committee examined and clarified a multitude of the Guild's activities including membership issues, finances and, most importantly, larger scale projects for the gardens and grounds. At our February Board meeting, having gathered professional studies and cost estimates from 2016 – 2024 and held extensive discussion, the Guild voted on the special projects for further refinement. We are excited to share with you the projects:

**Water Remediation and Maintenance and Repair of Check Dams**. Estimated cost: $200,000.
**Invasive Plant Removal and Replanting of the Forest.** Estimated cost: $1.7-2.1 million.
**Horticulture Maintenance Yard.** Estimated cost: $438,000.
**A Woods Overlook. (On woods side of where bridge once stood.)** Estimated cost: $101,000.

The option for a Woodlands Bridge Replacement did not receive a majority vote. Although the Guild voted in 2016 to pursue building a new bridge in the woods, the lapse of time to obtain proper studies and the dire health of the woods in intervening years, caused many to feel that water mitigation and replacing invasive species takes precedence at this time.

With this vote, our Strategic Planning Committee has finished its work and our Special Projects Committee begins to gather exact bids, explore sequencing/scheduling, obtain Guild approved votes for utilizing our funds, define necessary fundraising/grant writing and work with the PECF. The Special Projects Committee will be working to evolve which projects are ultimately viable. I would anticipate that the Water Remediation and Invasive Plant Removal and Replanting will definitely be acted upon. We are working closely with the PECF to coordinate any special projects with other Close activities.

As the Guild works through this process, we felt it was important to inform our membership and supporters. We look forward to working with you to restore our woods to health.

Best,
*Debbie Page*
President, All Hallows Guild

November 2024

*Sophia Dove, a student at National Cathedral School, was the first recipient of an All Hallows Guild environmental scholarship of $1000 to go toward appreciation and understanding of the outdoor world. Sophia used the money to cover expenses for a week-long summer program with the University of North Carolina Wilmington and took detailed notes. Please enjoy her report reprinted below.*

**How To Apply**

On Sunday, July 7, I checked in at Terrapin Hall, where I stayed for the week of my program. After check-in, I set up my room, went to dinner, and then went to the beach in the evening. The dorms were suite-style, so I had a roommate and two other dorm-mates in the suite.

On Day 1, we started in one of the UNCW labs, where we reviewed our itinerary and did introductions. We then went to a yacht club to scrape the docks for “fouling community.” The fouling community consists of organisms that are considered pests for boat owners and dock workers, such as barnacles, sea squirts, and sponges, but also includes crabs, sea stars, and corals. We scraped the sides of the docks with small nets to collect as many organisms as we could and then placed them in water-filled buckets for further

investigation. When we returned to the lab we tested sponge samples we had taken from the docks along with sponge samples from the Caribbean to test to see if any of them contained compounds which could kill a strain of E-Coli. We crushed up each sponge sample in alcohol and put it on an agar plate which contained the E-Coli, along with one other sponge sample and a positive and negative control. In doing this, we learned about the first step in the process of finding a compound in oceanic life to turning it into a pharmaceutical product which can be used by patients. We also looked at water samples taken from the docks to test them for high concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus. High concentrations of either of these elements can lead to algal blooms which leech nutrients out of the water, creating what is called a “dead zone.”

On Day 2, we set out for a residential beach close to a historic site. We discussed the impacts of the barrier walls erected to protect the site on the beach ecosystem, and looked at the coquina rocks in the area, named for the tiny shell fragments which fused to create the rocks. In the photo, if you look closely, you can see the makeup of the rocks, which is

variable because of the shells. We also discussed beach renourishment. On this beach, there are many homes, but as we saw, sea level rise has eroded the beach under the houses- we saw a lot of sandbags supporting stilts which were being used to keep the homes standing. One of the actions the state has been taking to preserve this real estate is beach renourishment, a process where sand is taken from the seabed and put on beaches to refresh them.  Later, we hiked through the marsh and learned about its importance to the marine ecosystem. Many of the fish and crustaceans in the ocean are born in marshes, but marshes are disappearing. Marshes would usually move backwards away from sea level rise, but because of roads, marshes are trapped between the roads and the rising oceans, so they are going under the waves. We got to investigate some of the sea life living there through seining, where two people hold a net which is strapped between two poles and shuffle it across the bottom to catch sea life. A third person, the “taco-person,” then folds the net from the bottom to keep the creatures in the net until the net arrives on land with the catch, in which case, either the creatures are put in water-filled buckets or released back into the water. We caught a variety of creatures, including blue crabs, snails, shrimp, and multiple types of fish. After this, we visited Wrightsville Beach, where we looked at sea level rise through measuring the changes in shoreline elevation. We had a device built out of two rods with rulers on them, and a string in between, and we crab-walked it down the beach. The changes in sea level rise were measured through the movement of the string. We then returned to the science building to speak with a professor who was working on measuring levels of heavy metal in the intercoastal waterway through measuring the amounts of heavy metals found in oyster tissue.

On the third day, my group took a kayaking trip through one of the estuaries which branches off the Intercoastal Waterway. We looked at the effects of sea level rise on the ecosystem. It is most apparent in the trees. This area used to be a freshwater ecosystem, but because of sea level rise, the area has been flooded with seawater. All the salt killed the trees, but the wood is still standing, creating a ghost forest. Birds still like to nest in the trees though – I saw multiple ospreys and osprey nests while kayaking. Afterwards, we tested plastic that we had been collecting throughout the trip for which of the seven types of plastic they were.

On Day 4 of the camp, our group took a trip on the research vessel the R/V Cape Fear. We learned to use many different tools that researchers use to measure different factors. Pictured here is the Ponar grab, a tool which is dropped to the ocean floor, and upon contact, a spring releases, capturing sediments. Scientists use this data to determine where could be the best place to get sands for beach renourishment. We also took plankton samples, and measured water turbidity – also known as clarity – through two different tools. One device measured it digitally, and the other was a measurement-marked rope with a black-and-white disk at the bottom through which we measured the distance down after we could not see the disk anymore. After everyone took a turn using the different tools, we went out farther off the coast and did a trawl. We caught many creatures, such as a butterfly ray, a flounder, and multiple squid, shrimp, and other fish. There were also some sharks circling the boat, because they have learned that when there is a trawl, fish are thrown back into the water, and they will usually get a meal. When we returned to the lab, we looked at our plankton samples under the microscope.

On Day 5, we started the day learning about corals and the issues facing them at the Center for Marine Science's Coral Lab. Coral bleaching events, which happen when rising sea temperatures cause corals to expel the algae which feeds them, are killing corals all over the world. Scientists have therefore been trying to study corals and grow new ones to replace the ones which have died as a result of the bleaching events. To grow corals, scientists black out all the rooms and only use red light, as corals use the light from day to night changes to figure out when to reproduce. The scientists control all the other light in the room so they can decide when to have the corals reproduce. After our trip to the Coral Lab, we returned for lunch, and then worked on the end-of-program presentations which we would be presenting to our parents later that day.

Although my original intent was simply to make NCS more coral-friendly, the program I attended had a broader perspective. We certainly touched on issues impacting corals, but I learned how various interconnected issues have far-reaching impacts on coastal ecosystems. Three such related issues are: 1) the creation of dead zones via fertilizer runoff, 2) harm to a plurality of ecosystems due to warming oceans, and 3) beach erosion. For example, through fertilizer runoff, excess phosphorus and nitrogen enter the oceans and create algal blooms. These algal blooms feed off these elements, upending the ecosystem from its necessary and natural nutrient concentrations. Ultimately, these blooms deprive the ecosystem of its nitrogen and phosphorus, creating dead zones, where little can flourish and life is not well-sustained. Secondly, global warming and increasing ocean temperatures are detrimental to the coral reef ecosystems.  More specifically, the increasing water temperatures cause shallow-water corals to expel the colorful algae that they use for food.  The loss of this nutrient source eventually kills the coral.  Thirdly, warming oceans also impact sea level, causing it to rise, which is harming coastal river freshwater ecosystems by introducing an excess of salt. Rising sea levels also erode public beaches and the land around coastal

homes. This erosion impacts not only those that live there, but also the local governments as well which must garner the manpower and funding to renourish the beaches. Further research projects could include investigation into the decrease of fertilizer runoff, to keep it out of local waterways; exploration into sustainable, cost-effective, and lasting erosion solutions; or inquiry into global warming solutions.

**September 2024**

*by Anne Clippinger*

In January of 2024, the Cathedral community was fortunate when Adrienne Schopf took the reins as Head of Horticulture, succeeding the wonderful Sandy Flowers, who retired at the end of last year. Addie came to the Cathedral in 2015 after a stint at Tudor Place in Georgetown, and spent the past several years as Bishop's Gardener, so she hit the ground running. She reports that the job is really fun but has "many moving pieces."

An Iowa native with a horticulture degree from Iowa State University, Addie was drawn to Washington, DC, because of her interest in historical gardens. Something she particularly values about the Cathedral Close is that while there is a rich history and a mission to honor the vision of the original designers, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Florence Bratenahl, in collaboration with All Hallows Guild's Garden Committee, she is not constrained by a specific plant list. This "keeps things interesting, keeps people engaged, and and allows them to try new things."

This summer, one of the hottest on record, has been a challenge for everyone. Addie reports that with the first 100-degree day coming in mid-June, irrigation has been a constant activity, leaving little time for regular maintenance tasks. The heat stresses the '60s-era irrigation system in the Bishop's Garden, and many areas of the Close require hand-watering. All summer, she says, everyone was "running around moving sprinklers." Fortunately August, when storms sometimes bring too much rain, was relatively normal. Now, with cooler weather, the crew is weeding, planting, and addressing projects requested by the Close schools. The grass is growing again, and the turf crew is busy.

Addie expressed appreciation for this year's summer interns, sponsored by All Hallows Guild in partnership with the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust. Izzie Della Santa, a student at the University of Maryland's Environmental Science program, and Anna Bolejack, from Virginia Tech's Landscape Architecture program, provided vital assistance in the Bishop's Garden; and this year we had our first Turf Intern, Devin Jones, a recent University of Maryland graduate. Addie says the interns were quick studies, and the staff is very grateful for their help through this challenging summer.

Current priorities on the Close include continuing to replace the 40-plus trees lost in a devastating storm in the summer of 2023. In some cases, this means finding new planting locations, and even new varieties of trees. An example is the Apse Grove, an AHG project at the Cathedral's south end, where several oaks were lost. The staff will experiment with "new to us" Southern cultivars, which should be better able to withstand our warmer winters to come. Also, the Apse area includes new flower beds planted with native cultivars. While the Bishop's Garden incorporates more stone and lends itself to a formal design, the staff increasingly looks for other areas to plant more natives, which attract pollinators and and can adapt more easily to climate change. "You can't have too many natives," says Addie. Even in more formal areas, sometimes she needs to explain that new native cultivars aren't necessarily wild and tall, and can accommodate more formality. She enjoys the challenge of encouraging our community to include more natives, and to think beyond the flower season. There is much room for creativity in respecting our historical concept while adapting to present and future conditions.

Visitors may surprise a bunny in the Bishop's Garden and Addie says that's ok, up to a point. Rabbits can be destructive, and a few years ago they were a real problem. But by choosing plants less attractive to them, the staff can fend off overpopulation. Also, Addie has seen evidence of a fox den on the Close! Natural predators are encouraged rather than chemicals or other artificial methods of pest control. This year, says Addie, we have more chipmunks, who are less destructive, and in her opinion, cuter; but of course cuteness is in the eye of the beholder. The goal is a natural balance and a healthy environment, and we are all grateful to our knowledgeable horticulture team for preserving that.

**July 23, 2024**

All Hallows Guild sponsors two or three garden interns each summer and this year the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust granted us sponsorship funding for two. Their youthful energy helps our staff during the intensive growing season, and, in turn, they receive both practical and educational horticultural experience. This year AHG sponsored a third intern to learn from and assist the turf maintenance team.

**Meet the Horticulture Interns:**

***Izzie Della Santa (L) and Anna Bolejack (R)***

**Izzie Della Santa**, from Chevy Chase, MD, is entering her second year at University of Maryland's Environmental Science Program. As the University of Maryland curriculum requires a student internship, Izzie applied after seeing this internship described on the university ListServ. The highlight of the internship for Izzie is the work dynamic, friendliness and helpfulness of the Horticulture team. The staff readily shares their plant identification knowledge as the team walks and works through the gardens and grounds.

After finishing her first year in the Landscape Architect Program at Virginia Tech, **Anna Bolejack**, from Arlington, VA, was drawn to All Hallows Guild's internship program after reading All Hallows Guild past blogs describing the program. While Anna overall finds the program educational and enjoyable, the weekly tending and weeding of the succulent garden on St. Alban's green roof provides her the most satisfaction.

The educational walks through the Norman Walk, Bishop's Garden and Sundial Bed with Ashley Coates, Bishop's Garden Horticulturalist, show Anna the rationale behind certain landscape design elements and the connection between landscape design and landscape

maintenance, which will be useful in her studies. Anna finds the program provides the right balance of hands-on-experience and education.

Every year, the interns undertake a Special Project. This year's Special Project entails cataloging and photographing the plants in the Bishops Garden to create a complete plant inventory. This project will aid the Bishop's Gardeners as well as the Garden Tour docents and hopefully boost the interns' plant identification skills.

In addition to the Special Project and work on the gardens and grounds of the Close, the interns view neighboring gardens and operations through organized field trips. These field trips include the American University landscape professionals field day event and trips to the National Arboretum, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and Hillwood Gardens.

**Meet the Turf Intern:**


**Devin Jones** is the Close's first Turf Intern. Originally from Westminster, MD, Devin currently lives in College Park, MD, after graduating from University of Maryland in May

2024 with a degree in Communications. Devin found out about the internship while working on the grounds crew at Nationals Park. He finds the job to be therapeutic and appreciates how his job helps enhance the beauty of the grounds enjoyed by visitors. Since there are no sports activities in the summer, he helps Turf staff with mowing, weed whacking, trimming, Integrated Pest Management and grooming the fields. Because of the internship, Devin is working with people showing him how to do tasks the correct, professional way. He enjoys coming to work each day and hopes to pursue a career in Turf Management. He is applying to local organizations and government agencies for a permanent grounds maintenance position.

The Guild thanks the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and all supporters who allow us to provide opportunities for the next generation of horticulturists and turf specialists. In turn, we are grateful for the interns' energy and willing hands to make our landscape ever more beautiful for those who come to enjoy this haven of peace.

**April 11, 2024**

Sandy Flowers, Director of Horticulture at the Washington National Cathedral for the previous eight years, is now retired and lives in the midst of a Virginia forest, but her property is beautifully landscaped with small decorative trees, a flowing waterfall, and many flowering plants. There's an American wisteria vine that has been trained up and over her front porch and the birdhouse hanging from the Japanese snowbell (*Styrax*) tree has a cheerful chickadee family living in it. We met up with Sandy to talk about her career and her personal approach to landscaping.

**Sandy, will you tell us about your childhood? Where did you grow up and was there someone who influenced you toward gardening?**

I grew up in Fairfax County, Virginia, so you could throw a stone practically to every place I've lived in my childhood. But my maternal grandparents had a 10-acre farm in Dranesville, which was quite rural back then. That is where I was introduced to gardening. My grandparents were subsistence farmers so they grew all their own food and provided for quite a few other people in the area. My grandmother was an amazing gardener. My grandfather had a general store in Dranesville and he also drove the milk truck down to Georgetown once a week. During the depression, my grandmother would pack up bags full of produce, get on the milk truck, be dropped off in Georgetown where she began by going door-to-door selling her homegrown fresh vegetables. Eventually she got a regular clientele who expected her to come, and they would ask her to bring dressed chickens, ready-made cakes, and other specialties. She would always bring two or three of her kids with her to help carry the bags back-and-forth.

We grandkids would stay with my grandparents during the summer. She had a huge vegetable garden and every fruit tree under the sun. She had a flower border around her vegetable garden, all the way down the driveway, and then a big border in the back full of perennials. She loved flowers! It was nothing fancy or even organized–she just grew everything and so I learned to love everything. Her favorite thing to say was "let's walk around and see what's coming up." I still use that phrase today.

It's still my favorite thing to go outside and see what's coming up in the garden. Why do we want our suburban gardens to look the same all year long? They are mainly planted with evergreen foundation shrubs and turf grass, it's the same all year. I learned from childhood that the heart of a perfect or an ideal landscape is the transition between seasons. The Japanese have names for 24 seasons, each split into finer divisions of about five days. Plant life changes much more frequently than just the four seasons that we mark. It's totally cool to see things come up, bloom, see them expand, and then see them fade. The next thing is always coming so it's always interesting.

My mother never took to gardening but my two aunts were avid gardeners. My aunt Marian lived nearby and I was often getting called to come help her. My aunt Kathryn, who just died at almost 98, lived in Florida, so her gardening experience was with tropical plants.

**It sounds like you had enough influence in your life to be self-taught, but did you go to school for horticulture?**

I went to school, but not for horticulture. I have a master's degree in nutrition. I originally wanted to be a PE teacher because I was an athlete. But I busted up my knee and had to bail out of that. I took a hiatus from college and was a florist for about five years and learned floral design. I loved that work.

**How did you make the shift from being a florist to working with landscapes?**

I decided I wanted to design things big enough to stand in. So I shifted to landscapes. I took an internship at River Farm with the American Horticulture Society, and then I saw an advertisement in the Washington Post for a job as a gardener at the British Embassy. I knew I could really learn there and happily, I got the job. I stayed there for seven years and I loved it.

Then I took a job at Green Spring Garden in Alexandria, where I learned to be a manager. I started a master gardener program for them, ran the farmers' markets, and oversaw the garden plots.  After that job, I managed a beautiful private garden in DC designed by Lila Fendrick. That's where I learned to maintain water features. They had three different water features, and no one knew how to maintain any of them. So I had to learn not to be afraid of water features. They are tricky. They are time consuming but add so much to a garden.

After seven years managing the private estate, I took the job as the Bishop's Gardener in 2013.

**The Bishop's Gardener: love that title! How are the gardeners organized at the Cathedral?**

There are six zones at the Cathedral and there's a gardener for each one.  The Bishop's Gardener takes care of the Bishop's Garden, which includes the Nitze and Church House gardens. The three schools — NCS, Saint Albans and Beauvoir—each have their own designated gardener. There's a Cathedral Gardener who has a huge responsibility: the west front all the way around to the north and down to the woods and the amphitheater. And now he is responsible also for the Virginia Mae Center gardens. And the sixth is the turf manager

of the playing fields. That landscape is 7 acres, and it needs to be kept nice because it faces all the neighbors.


A rose from the Bishop's Garden

I eventually moved from being the Bishop's Gardener up to Director of Horticulture, with the very able Evan Johnson as my assistant. Evan was wonderful: he was a really diligent, hard worker. He knew so much about the grounds in general because he had been there for so long. I was at the Cathedral from November of 2013 to my recent retirement in 2024.

**Your name is Sandy Flowers, which is so perfect. Has that always been your name?**

No, my first name was Sandy Smith, but I married Roger Flowers and after we parted I kept the name Sandy Flowers.

**So much of your work on the Cathedral grounds is supported by the All Hallows Guild. What is the process to get a project approved and paid for?**

That's a very good question and many people at the Cathedral don't know how that works. I would first bring the garden committee a design for a project for them to consider, and they would comment and make usually very good suggestions and we would incorporate them. Of course they would also ask, "what is this going to cost?" So we would then cost out not only the plants but the labor. If we were calling in someone to do stonework, we would call Serra Stone and others to get estimates for all of that then the committee would review it and see

whether it was within their regular operating budget or if they needed to ask the All Hallows Guild board for the money.

Some project requests come directly from the schools. NCS recently asked for a redo of the Curran Courtyard. The landscaping was done at the last minute of a construction project. (Unfortunately, if you have to get ready for a school opening or some other event the construction crew just slams in anything green that they can find. That happens in horticulture more than you would care to believe.)

So they came to me and said students want a pollinator-friendly garden and they want to bring hummingbirds and butterflies and so forth. So we created a design and they joined us to present it to the garden committee and it was approved. Once the funds were approved, we ordered the materials and the Horticulture team installed the garden. It is a much more enjoyable and usable garden space now.

The Cathedral has a great bargain in our landscape department—we don't have to make a profit on projects, so they can be done at wholesale cost. Our crew is so willing and capable. I enjoyed working with all of my people and they each have different skills and abilities that they bring to our projects.

We always run any kind of renovation through the All Hallows Guild Garden committee, not only looking for funds, but also for approval of the general concept. We try to keep everything cohesive on the close. AHG has the big picture in mind. You need to walk carefully aesthetically. There are some styles that will not fit. One of my loves is Japanese garden style, but I could not bring any of that to the Cathedral because it just doesn't fit with a Gothic cathedral. I don't think we need to keep the landscape in medieval England, but we want to keep the character of the place.

Frederick Law Olmsted designed the original design to be "park like." This is excellent because it gives the staff a lot of freedom to use their creativity. We are trying to include more native plants simply because we have learned this is important for our ecology.

**Tell us about the internship program, which is financially supported by the All Hallows Guild.**

It is a wonderful program. For up to 12 weeks in the summer we take 2 or 3 college students and train them in horticultural work. We take advantage of their youthful strength and we give them our knowledge and experience. They don't just weed all the time! We want them to have positive, well-rounded experiences when they're with us. We take them

on field trips to other professional gardens nearby and we give them a creative project to complete every year. That makes them research, think, and plan. We want them to learn.

The internship program takes time & effort to manage, but it is worth it–it's a great program. It benefits us and it benefits them. It teaches us what the next generation is learning and what we need to teach them to fill in the gaps. And really one of the best ways to learn gardening is to have hands in the dirt and knees on the ground.

We also teach them how to "see". We have a walkabout most mornings to start the day. Knowing how to look at the way the landscape changes over time is important. Many professional gardeners who are making a name for themselves are older. They have been gardening for decades and are still teaching well into their 80s or 90s. They are good because they have learned to pay attention and really "see" what the garden requires.

**Do you have any comments you'd like to make about the team of horticulturalists that you've left behind?**

The Horticulture team at the Cathedral is a terrific group of people. Some of them were there before I came to the Close. They are motivated, skilled, and *enjoy* working. We made it fun together, laughed and made jokes. If you're doing that kind of hard work, you need to have staff that can keep it light instead of complaining the whole time. Our staff doesn't complain, and I asked them to do some really, really hard things such as reworking beds after construction equipment has compacted the earth mercilessly.

**What are your plans for retirement?**

Well, I'm trying to get to home projects that I have let go a little long such as repainting the exterior of my house. I'll work in my garden, of course, and I always get calls to work on design projects for other people I know. I will volunteer at Flower Mart just to be part of the Cathedral community and see my friends. It was time to turn the Horticulture Department over to a new generation. It's time for Addie Schopf and Mike McGinnis to have a chance to grow and show their management skills. We need to open ourselves to change and that's another good thing about not being locked into a historic design. You can open up to change. That's important in gardens and it's important in every aspect of our lives. I have lots to keep me busy here, but I'm looking forward to making space in my life and seeing what comes.

**March 10, 2024**

Dotted around the grounds of the Cathedral Close are many benches and trees purchased by All Hallows Guild with memorial donations. Gifts in honor of, or in memory of, loved ones help the Guild maintain the beautiful 57 acres of gardens, grounds, and woods. The Guild has created and regularly updates a master file of over 139 memorial benches and over 400 memorial trees, demonstrating years of generosity.

AHG members originally compiled the now-electronic file from handwritten notes and other archival material. They then worked with the Horticulture staff to assemble a searchable spreadsheet describing and locating memorials wherever possible.

*Family members often approach the guild, asking for the location of a memorial bench and tree. Through a master list, the guild helps families and friends find the memorial dedicated to their loved one. Finding these memorials are often emotional moments for family members. The Guild recently received a note and photograph thanking the Guild for the comfort this memorial tree brought to their family.*

When a tree dies or is removed, the Guild researches the tree’s provenance to determine how to proceed with replacing the tree. And so, when the beautiful Copper Beech (pictured below) south of the Bishop’s Garden died, the Guild began to research its background.

*The Copper Beech, also known as a Purple Beech, is a cultivated form of the common Beech.*

Our research revealed that All Hallows Guild donated the tree in 1976 to honor Dean Sayre's 25 years of service (he retired two years later). Francis Bowes Sayre Jr. was Dean of the National Cathedral for 27 years (1951 to 1978). He was the first grandchild of Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, and was born in the White House. As Dean of the National Cathedral, he helped to oversee the iconography, funding, and construction of the cathedral building, which began in 1907.  His children attended National Cathedral School and St. Albans during his tenure as Dean. Dean Sayre was the first dean to call the Sayre House, constructed in 1953 as the "Deanery", home. Dean Randy and Melissa Hollerith moved into Sayre House in 2018 after both the house and front and back gardens underwent renovation.

All Hallows Guild contributed approximately $62,000 to the initial landscaping in the Fall of 2018. The July 2023 storm caused massive destruction of the trees behind Sayre House. All Hallows Guild paid for the approximately 20 trees planted, including white oaks, Southern magnolias, Pecans, Yellowwood, Dogwood, Sassafras, and Persimmon. The variety of species should help them thrive, with no one type dominating or subject to wholesale decline. Several Viburnums were added to help create an understory and will give lovely spring blooms along with the dogwood and spring bulbs.

The loss of the Copper Beech greatly affects the surrounding gardens and trees. The tree's shade no longer provides relief from the sun for neighboring plants and trees. The Prodigal Son Garden will suffer and will have to be rethought, and no longer does the tree shade nearby benches for quiet contemplation. But as we consider the redesign of this area, we look to the nearby "Deanery," Sayre House, to recall not only Dean Sayre's long history at the Cathedral, but the Guild's historical and present-day influence on the gardens and grounds of the Close.

**December 21, 2023**

### After the loss of large Trees a new Plan

**On the east end of the Cathedral, between the Apse and the Cathedral Library**, 11 new oak trees (of three different species) have recently been planted. Several significant trees (two large white oaks and a yellowwood) that stood in this location were lost earlier this year. With these large trees now gone, we have taken fresh look at the space: how it has been used; what plants have survived and thrived; and how new plantings and hardscaping might enhance the area.

*Young trees have been planted between the Cathedral Apse and the Cathedral Library*

*Autumn 2019 – the area behind the Cathedral Apse was shaded by large oak and beech trees*

**The newly planted trees are stage one of a redesign** of the entire area – which we hope will incorporate seating areas, paths, and plantings. The current layout forces people wishing to use the tables and benches to walk through the plantings – creating soil compression as well as trampling the flowers. Our hope is to create an inviting space where nature and humans can coexist harmoniously.

Bench near mature tree – Spring 2021


Bench near young tree – December 2023

**Selecting Trees to Thrive**

**In selecting the trees to be planted**, it was important to consider which species would tolerate the current conditions as well as the expected climate extremes of the future. Fungal disease, such as Oak Wilt has destroyed stands of large trees throughout the Midwest and Eastern United States. The warming climate and violent storms have also taken a toll on our trees. You can currently see evidence of that in our Olmsted Woods.

Remains of a tree removed near the Apse


The stump of a large oak – February 2023

**Oak trees are slow-medium growing trees** that reach mature heights of 50 to 80 feet. Under optimal conditions they can have lifespans of up to 500 years. In order to give these new trees their best chance to reach maturity, three varieties were selected: overcup oak, *Quercus lyrate;* shumard Oak*, Quercus shumardii;* and swamp chestnut oak, *Quercus Michauxii*.

**The New Plants**

A distinct feature of the **overcup oak**, *Quercus lyrata,* is its acorn – which is almost completely covered by its cap. This white oak has a range native to the Southeastern United States. Overcup oak has the advantage of being resistant to oak wilt.

**Shumard oak**, *Quercus shumardii*, a North American native, is a member of the red oak group. Young trees have a pyramid shape, but as they age, their branches spread to a broad open crown. Shumard oak typically grows at a moderately fast rate to a height of 40-60′. Their red-brown fall color appears late in the season. This species is quite drought resistant and also withstands short-term flooding.

**Swamp chestnut oak**, *Quercus michauxii*, is a native species of white oak known also as basket oak, for the baskets traditionally made from its wood, and cow oak (where it grows near pastures cows enjoy eating the acorns). Swamp chestnut oak grows in a humid, temperate climate characterized by hot summers, mild and short winters, and no distinct dry season (sounds about right for DC!). Its sweet-tasting acorns will make it popular with birds and squirrels, although they will have to wait a bit – since the trees will not begin to produce acorns until they are 20-25 years old.

**There are nearly 60 oaks native to the United State**s, with some native to very small ranges that illustrate just how diverse the genus *Quercus* truly is. Oaks can be found presiding over pastures, providing shade in urban parks and suburban neighborhoods, and thriving in natural stands in the United States and Canada. The White Oak is the state tree of Maryland.

*Young oak tree planted adjacent to the former location of a large tree*

**The Next Steps**

**Eventually, the new trees will be underplanted with native plants** to define where the turf ends and the garden bed begins. The grove is being planned to provide spaces for people alone or in small groups to relax, meditate, or converse.

Mascara and Chionodoxa forbesii bloom in the apse area in early spring

Galanthus are the first to bloom in the apse area – often in January

**December 17, 2023**

**Betty Louise Gordon (Mrs. A. Wayne "Pete" Gordon)**

Almost 50 years ago, a kind, energetic, and quick-witted Betty Gordon joined the board of the All Hallows Guild. Like many, she began as a volunteer for Flower Mart, creating the puppet show that has now entertained generations of children. She went on to serve in a variety of ways: as AHG President (1984-1986), on the Flower Mart Executive Committee as Secretary, and later the Flower Mart Advisory Committee, designing Flower Mart flyers, posters, and tote bags. She was a member of the Herb Cottage Committee for many years, working onsite for hours and hours. Betty and Kay Brown were co-directors from the inception of the Tea part of Tour and Tea, a joint venture of the Cathedral and the Guild begun in 1990. Betty came to direct the program until 2006.

Betty died peacefully on December 7, 2023, "just before dessert," at age 96.

**Betty Gordon and her daughter Allison Lineberger with two of their puppets.**

When Betty retired from the "AHG Puppeteer Theater" in 2013, this was written about the productions (and it's worth repeating at length): "Her talents for organization and creating folklore artistry brought a touch of Broadway to Flower Mart.… With needlework, paint

brushes and deft management, the All Hallows Guild Puppeteer Theater is now a traditional delight for children of all ages at every Flower Mart. Always performed in the context of familiar legends of various countries, these cloth puppets have been handmade or purchased but their voices are the voices of volunteer performers with a yen for theatrics. The founder and director of this delightful enterprise (Betty) gives full credit for the theater's success to all the volunteers who worked with her."

Kay Brown says of Betty, "We have lost an incredible woman. One whom I could not have done without." Lydia Benson remembers, "When you entered a room and saw Betty, you knew you had a friend there." Sarah Brau recalls, "She knew the infinite value of joy and laughter generated by puppets and [I remember] her kindness to many young mothers coping with challenges. She was a unique role model for many of us and will be greatly missed."

"Her presence brought joy," according to Louise Beale.

To read the official obituary, click here: https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/washingtonpost/name/betty-gordon-obituary?id=53802477