

PARKSIDE

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY NEWSLETTER

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



stories from hermann park



"[It was] August 24, 2015, and the first day of school. We couldn't wait to enjoy an extra day out in the Park! We couldn't wait to visit the new McGovern Centennial Gardens. We walked all the way to the top and the views were spectacular, and the sitting area and the engraved messages were memorable! [When she turns 15] we would love to have a birthday party at the Gardens to celebrate my daughter's quinceañera!"

— Silvia Mayeli Urteaga

Over the past few months, Hermann Park has been a place for people to come together and enjoy the outdoors. This is exactly what Hermann Park has always done for Houston, for over a hundred years.

Hermann Park matters to Houston and Houstonians. No one knew that more than Keith Wade. A longtime board member and early supporter of Hermann Park Conservancy, Keith knew the importance of the Conservancy's efforts to make the Park what it is today.

"It's a real commitment to make sure that everybody in this city has an opportunity to come and enjoy [Hermann Park]. We have families who can't go to a ballgame anymore, they're priced out," he said. "Here, they can come in and stake out a space, just enjoy different activities that they may not have been exposed to."

Although we lost him to Covid-19 in May, Keith also knew better than anybody that the community's support of the Conservancy was vital to our success. That support has helped the Conservancy create a vibrant urban park in the heart of Houston.

If you have had a chance to visit the Park recently, there's no doubt you've seen the appreciation of Park users right now. There have been countless emails, personal anecdotes, phone calls, and social media tags from people just thankful for Hermann Park's existence. These are just a few of those stories.

And, with your help, we will continue to create a place for these stories to happen. From McWilliams Dog Park to the Commons to the return of public art in the Park, our current campaign is creating an even brighter future for Hermann Park. See more at hermannpark.org/masterplan.

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Letter from the president

Like many people across the city, I could not believe it when I learned that Keith Wade, one of Houston's best citizens, had died from complications of Covid-19. He was one of those rare individuals who woke up every single day trying to make the world a better place ... and on most days he succeeded, in both big and small ways. It's hard to imagine Houston without him, working behind the scenes to bring people together for the greater good.

Keith helped so many people and organizations across the city, and any one of them could write a story like this. My story is about the role he played at the Hermann Park Conservancy, where he served on the Board of Directors (including a term as chairman) for many years. When we asked him just a few years ago what motivated him to put so much time and energy into the Conservancy, he shared his reasons and that conversation has never left me.

"This park has played an instrumental role in a lot of ways people wouldn't normally think about," he said.

"When I was growing up, Houston was a segregated society. I drank out of colored water fountains and went to colored restrooms. But the one thing I was able to do, was come to Hermann Park and play with kids of all shades, colors, backgrounds, religions, and we just played together. We all were on the rocket slide together. We all fed the ducks. We watched other people feed them. We all watched them try to get clean in a muddy pool of water that thank goodness we fixed. This park gave people an opportunity to be in the same space in this great city and learn how to get along."

The fact that the Park was a unifying place when he was a child made him want to be involved as an adult—to make sure that it continued to serve that purpose. But that wasn't enough for him because Keith wanted our entire community to be united at every level. The little boy who grew up in a segregated city rose above the injustice he experienced in his youth to be a relentless voice of reason, compassion and insight.

I saw him deal with many difficult challenges over the years, in numerous situations where people were locked in conflict, but he never let any of that beat him down. I never heard him raise his voice or get combative or force his views on others. Instead, I witnessed many times when he was able to listen well and gradually bring people around to his position so that everyone felt they had won in the end. And no matter how difficult the problems we were trying to solve together, we always ended our phone calls or meetings in laughter.

In a day when many leaders demand attention and try to speak louder than others, Keith embodied the nobility of true servant leadership. You rarely saw him in front of the camera, but he had a huge network of people who trusted him and valued his perspective. He also had a gift for bringing those people together—from the City, the County, faith groups, nonprofit organizations, churches, and community associations—to get things done. And he was the last one to claim—or even accept—credit for it.

Today I took a walk around Hermann Park just to think about Keith and thank him silently for all that he did for us and gave to us. It occurred to me that he embodied a lot of what parks are here to do for our city, especially now because our community needs them so much. Like our parks, Keith brought us together. He helped cultivate peace. He looked for the opportunity to create common joy. And, in his words, he gave people an opportunity to be in the same space in this great city and learn how to get along.

Rest in power, Keith Wade. We miss you and we are better people because we knew you.

Doreen

Doreen Stoller, President



Doreen Stoller and Keith Wade

DONORS

The Commons at Hermann Park

- \$50,000–\$1,000,000**
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- Phillips 66
- Stephanie and Frank Tsuru
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- Gary Mercer

Stories from Hermann Park continued

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Beverly Dickerson
Cece and Mack Fowler
Kristen Castellanos Ridgway and David
Ridgway
Carolyn and Howard Tellepsen



“I discovered Hermann Park forty years ago. [I still] discover something new about Hermann Park with every visit. The wonderful walks around and through the Park fills my mind, heart, and soul with joy.”

— John Bayduss



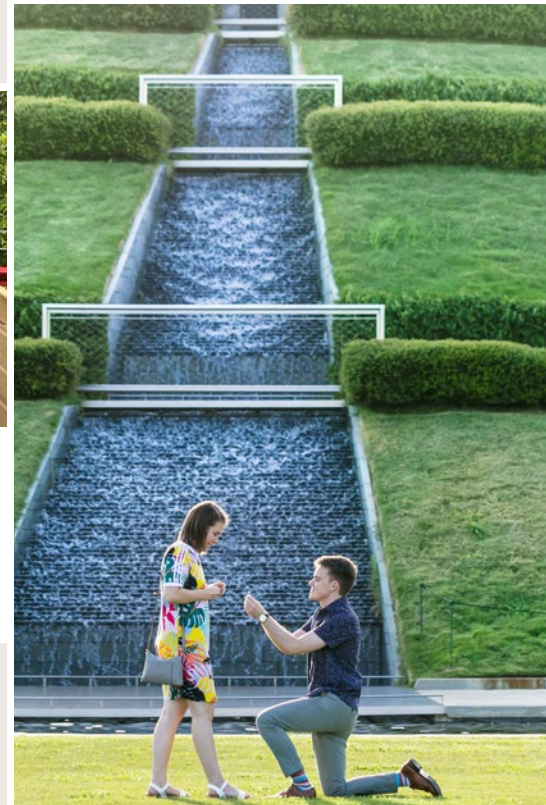
“I love where I live. After work, I hopped on a bike and took a spin around one of Houston’s most beautiful parks and bayous: Hermann Park. I love that we are close to outdoor spaces, museums, great food, and so many other things that are now becoming familiar and home.”

— Caroline



“After riding the pedal boats, my daughter Frankie and I thought there would be no better way to rest our legs than riding the Hermann Park Railroad. We were able to take in the scenery of the beautiful Park, and enjoy her first train ride.”

— Elliott Arnold



“Hermann Park has been a very important Park to my family and myself throughout my whole life. We have spent many afternoons hanging out at the Park and spent full days at the Japan Festival or Kite Festival each year. It is so important to me that last summer I got engaged there! I said yes to the love of my life in my favorite place!”

— Holly Reichert



“There are so many blessings at Hermann Park. The hawks over the golf course, the duck families in the ponds, the way the Park sings in the sunshine. My most favorite spot is the painted heart tree root on the running path. It is always a reminder

to love each other, our city and our neighbors. And when it rains, the heart stands out even more. A reminder that when we are in tough times... love overcomes.”

— Jenny Meyer

Canceled but not forgotten; honoring this year's *Hats in the Park*

Jenny Antill



2020 *Hats in the Park* Chairs: Mary D'Andrea, Gina Bhatia, and Allison Thacker

Hats in the Park has always marked spring for the Conservancy and provided Hermann Park's friends a chance to toast the Park and support our work caring for this vital Houston treasure.

Though this year's event had to be canceled, we wanted to highlight the hard work of chairs Gina Bhatia, Mary D'Andrea, and Allison Thacker. Together, they had raised funds to benefit the Conservancy, all to acknowledge the impact of this year's honoree, Sandy Godfrey.

Co-chair Gina Bhatia and her husband Dr. Devinder Bhatia have always had an appreciation for Hermann Park. "Not only are Allison and Mary my co-chairs, they are my neighbors too. We consider Hermann Park our extended backyard. I am grateful to everyone who has supported this fabulous Park," Gina said. The Bhatia family have years of happy memories here, bringing their children to the Park on Sunday mornings, and have continued to find happiness in the Park going on long morning walks, especially during the pandemic.

Mary D'Andrea is also grateful for the Park. "During these times of change and uncertainty, Hermann Park welcomed guests as it's always done. Its flowers bloomed more beautifully than ever, the leaves on the trees emerged from the winter. Thank you Hermann Park for doing your job like clockwork, helping all who were able to enjoy your space, beauty, and hospitality," Mary said.

We were so sad to not gather together this spring, but we look forward to next year's *Hats in the Park!*



Sandy Godfrey 2020 Honoree

Sandy Godfrey and her husband, Lee, are longtime supporters of Hermann Park Conservancy. Together, they chaired Evening in the Park in 2008. Sandy co-chaired *Hats in the Park* with Franci Neeley in 2011 and has rarely missed this event since its inception. She serves on the boards of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston Ballet, Houston Grand Opera, The Houston Seminar and the Chinquapin School with a particular interest in education and connecting with the community. She graduated from the University of Texas, has a PhD in Psychology from Rice University and is a member of the Advisory Board for the Dean of Social Sciences at Rice. She worked at NASA and thought she had the right stuff for a while. Sandy recently toured Brooklyn parks with Matt Urbanski of the landscape architecture firm, MVVA, that developed the revised Master Plan for Hermann Park. She is very excited to see what the future holds for our beloved Hermann Park.



Jenny Antill

Hats in the Park Donors

All gifts in honor of Sandy Godfrey, Honoree, and chairs Gina Bhatia, Mary D'Andrea and Allison Thacker

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Rohini and Ethan Beeson
Edith and Edwin Birdsall
James A. Brooks

HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY

Gardens in full bloom; all made possible by your *Hats* support

Our gardeners have been hard at work in McGovern Centennial Gardens all year, to ensure that the Gardens would be in full bloom for everyone to enjoy. Your support of *Hats in the Park* makes sure that these Gardens can remain available and free to Houstonians.

As the Gardens approach the height of the growing season, gardeners place mulch in the flower beds



Dwarf Chenille 'Summer Love'



Purple Coneflower



HPC Gardeners work in Lake Plaza, tending to the bioswale areas near the parking lots



What your membership means

Hermann Park Conservancy is here to maintain and improve Hermann Park. But we can't do it alone. Become a member of the Conservancy today. Whether it's the purchase of gardening gloves for staff and volunteers, weeding tools to remove invasive plant species, or new plants and trees, your membership donations go a long way, with real-life benefits throughout the Park. Funds raised through memberships go to our general operations fund. Here's just a few ways memberships have helped improve the Park over the past few months.

Will Isbell, Harris County Master Gardener, hosted several online classes from McGovern Centennial Gardens.



Hermann Park at Home; programming goes online

This spring, the Conservancy launched the Hermann Park at Home series, which featured ways to experience Hermann Park from home. From simple, quick videos of turtles swimming in the Japanese Garden, to online classes, to a full virtual train ride while the Hermann Park Railroad was closed, the content was as varied as the Park itself.

If you want to check it out for yourself, keep up with our social media accounts or go to hermannpark.org/athome.

Pandemic closure? Time for a train refresh!

During quarantine, many of you probably took the extra time to tackle a few projects at home. We did the same with Hermann Park Railroad!

The Conservancy did some sprucing up on the train, the maintenance barn, and parts of the track around the Park, beyond its regular maintenance. Keep a look out for a new paint job, as well as some new decals on the engine. The train is back open to the public, and offers rides from Kinder Station daily, from 10 am to 6 pm!



Jose Ventura, Conservancy maintenance staff member, did extensive work on the train engine.

Want to be a part of it all? Become a member at hermannpark.org/membership.

DONORS

Membership continued

Centennial (\$100-\$249)

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- Carolynne and Douglas White
- Susan White and Scott B. Swanson
- Marilyn Wolfe-Kirk and Harry Dewitt Kirk
- Sallie and Bob Wright
- Gay Yellen and Donald Reiser



Since the beginning, the *Kite Festival* has been a free event. Families from all over the area gather in Hermann Park to celebrate a beautiful spring day, and it's all made possible by our Festival supporters.

Though this year's event was canceled, the Conservancy is still grateful for the generous support of our work in the Park from those listed below. And mark your calendars: next year's *Kite Festival* is set for **Sunday, March 28!**

Kite Festival Donors

\$10,000

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In Kind

SpeedPro Imaging Sugar Land



Leave a legacy. Join the George Hermann Society.

Established to recognize donors who have provided for the future of the organization through bequests or life income gifts, the George Hermann Society helps us ensure that Hermann Park will remain a treasure for Houstonians, now and for generations to come.

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

George Hermann Society

- Robin and Richard Brooks
- Genevieve Lykes Duncan†
- May Shelmire Duncan†
- Cece and Mack Fowler
- Steppie and Robert Holsclaw
- Demaris D. and C M Hudspeth†
- Ann Kennedy and Geoffrey Walker
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- Sherry and Tommy Lott
- Jackie and Malcolm Mazow
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- Susan Schweitzberg and Ron Mirrack
- Doreen Stoller and Dan Piette
- 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.

The names listed above and on the preceding pages include donors who made gifts or pledges of \$100 or more between January 1 and April 30, 2020, as well as all *Hats in the Park* luncheon and *Kite Festival* donors, and George Hermann Society members. Gifts to *Evening in the Park* will be recognized in a future 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



"Hi, I'm Midas Bonebrake, co-chair of the Dog Park Committee. We're halfway on fundraising for the McWilliams Dog Park, and we sure would love your help. For more information, go to hermannpark.org/dogpark!"

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