

# FRIENDS OF *Florham*

Spring 2007

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## *Mansion Lanterns Restored*

On the evening of December 10, the Friends of Florham and their guests gathered in the Mansion courtyard for a special lamp-lighting ceremony celebrating their latest achievement — the restoration of the 16 original lanterns around the courtyard and in front of the Mansion.

Some of the original lanterns were missing, and others were in disrepair when Allan Kushen, a relatively new member of the Friends board, agreed to oversee this \$84,000 restoration project and guide it to completion.

Assisted by University personnel, Kushen engaged the firm of International Architectural Ironworks to make exact replicas of the original



*Standing below one of the restored lanterns are key participants in the successful completion of the lantern project, Friends of Florham board members, from left, Sharon Doremus, Allan Kushen, Linda Carrington and Audrey Parker.*



lanterns or to forge replacement parts. The lamps were then rewired. Every evening, the result of this cooperative effort can be seen as the beautifully restored lanterns shed their light on the entrance to FDU's stately and distinctive Mansion.

The Friends plan a suitable plaque acknowledging those who have chosen to contribute to this project. They are The Margetts Foundation in honor of Sharon Doremus, Malcolm and Linda Carrington and Henry and Audrey Parker.

*Emma Joy Dana, left, president, Friends of Florham, and Allan Kushen, Friends board member, at the special lamp-lighting ceremony.*



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## *President's Letter*

In our last newsletter I told you about our project to restore the lights around the Mansion courtyard and the saga about our attempts to accomplish this. As some of you know, we had an exciting "Lighting Ceremony" in December. We enjoyed champagne in the Great Hall until dusk and then we went outside. As the sunlight vanished the switch was flipped, and "voilà" all the lights went on in the newly restored lanterns, just as they did so many years ago. It was a gratifying moment, as this project has taken literally years to accomplish.

We are very grateful for all that was done by so many. I want to particularly thank Allan Kushen, who chaired this project and brought light to the courtyard, and Holly Walker, Elaine Earlywine and Dawn Dupak, who decorated the Main Hall and organized the champagne and crab cakes. You may also remember that in my Friends' letter in the fall I invited gifts of \$2,500 toward this project and promised to commemorate those who helped fund the restoration of the lanterns by including their names on a plaque.

The first offer was from the Margetts Foundation, in honor of Sharon Doremus, for all she has done for the University through the Friends of Florham. Shannie was an active member

since the very beginning and is now an honorary board member. She is the daughter of Josephine Margetts, who was a longtime member of the Fairleigh Dickinson University Board of Trustees. This gift was followed by gifts from Malcolm and Linda Carrington and Henry and Audrey Parker. We are extremely grateful for these gifts as they helped with one of our most expensive projects. We will announce when the plaque is placed.

I must mention that we miss Barbara Keefauver tremendously. She was a member of the original Board and her contributions are too numerous to list here. Barbara leaves a great hole in our midst. We are so appreciative of all that she achieved, and we will certainly continue to miss her.

I hope you all like our beautiful "full-color" newsletter. Wasn't the last one with the Clowney and Italian Gardens, the Florham lily and the Mansion interiors beautiful? Now that spring is here, I encourage all of you to visit the gardens and the beautiful Fairleigh Dickinson University campus of the College at Florham in person. And, of course, we would love you to join us on Saturday, May 19, for our 10th Annual Spring Gala.

— Emma Joy Dana

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## *Spring Gala 2007 Scheduled for May 19*

Ruth and Ed Hennessy are honorary chairs of the 10th Annual Spring Gala on May 19, 2007. This year's Gala, the premier fund-raising event for Friends of Florham, will be a tribute to Barbara Keefauver, honoring her many years of service to the Friends. Keefauver was the initiator and dri-

ving force behind nine successful Galas, which over the years contributed more than \$240,000 toward the restoration of the Mansion.

A large dinner committee is working to ensure that this year's event continues Keefauver's tradition of success. The 2007 co-chairs are Phyllis Conway, Linda Meister and Suzy Moran. The committee consists of Susan Adams, Kathy Atencio, Carol Bere, Natalie Best, Mary Clowney, Emma Joy Dana, Doris Dinsmore, Elaine Earlywine, Nancy Johnston, Carol Knauff, Carole Kurtz, Dorothy Lockett, Kay Lyall, Nancy McLelland, Caron Menger, Audrey Parker, Anne Singleton and Holly Walker.

Tickets for the Gala were still available when the newsletter went to press. Please call 201-692-7008 to inquire. The cost for a Patron is \$250 per person, and the Donor ticket is \$150 per person. Any amount over \$80 per person is tax-deductible.



## Setting the Standard: Barbara Keefauver

Community service is a vaguely defined term, generally referring to volunteer services performed by organizations or individuals for the benefit of the local community. Yet, if we consider Barbara Keefauver's community activities over many years, we recognize that genuine commitment, the ability to undertake difficult projects and the tangible results comprise the gold standard against which all definitions of community service should be judged.

Leadership, organization, diversity of interests and creativity were some of the hallmarks of Keefauver's life of community service. At the Friends of Florham, where she was a board member since 1990, Keefauver initiated the successful lecture series for area residents, featuring well-known architects and landscape designers.

She "created" the Friends' annual gala in 1997 and worked with board members Phyllis Conway, Linda Meister and later Dawn Dupak to ensure memorable evenings in Lenfell Hall, which raised more than \$240,000 collectively toward the restoration of the Mansion and its gardens. With the substantial proceeds from the galas, along with grants from local foundations, matching funds from the University and continued guidance from Keefauver and Phyllis Conway, the "new" Lenfell Hall debuted in 2001, quickly followed by the restoration of the Great Hall in 2002.

Barbara's many contributions to the University were officially recognized at the 2004 gala when J. Michael Adams, president, and Kenneth Greene, College at Florham provost, presented her with the Founders Community Service Award.

While it's never too late to perform community service, a brief retrospective suggests that Keefauver's career was on a steady trajectory early on, with significant projects added along the way. She joined the Junior League in 1961, was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year in 1964, and in 2004, was awarded the Sustaining Star Award for "consistently demonstrating the effectiveness of the trained volunteer through her continued leadership in the community."

Keefauver's involvement with the Junior League morphed easily into her next major undertaking: the Arts Council of the Morris Area (ACMA). A small committee of the Junior League proposed the creation of the Council to the League, which was later approved, and she became the first executive director in 1974. She retired officially in 1991, yet continued her relationship with ACMA as an active board member. The impact of ACMA in Morris County has been impressive, and Keefauver could point to many accomplishments, particularly the popular Arts in Education programs that

she established, which introduce many local area children to the various forms and possibilities of art.

Strong personal interests and community service ideals came together in Keefauver's perhaps least predictable, yet enormously successful enterprise: the foundation of the Marionette Players 45 years ago. From its early days performing in area schools, the volunteer troupe moved to the Bickford Theatre of the Morris Museum where they have entertained generations of children (and adults) for more than 30 years with productions of children's classics, and raised more than \$200,000 for the museum. Keefauver was the director of the troupe throughout its tenure, and her creativity was evident early: she chose plays, adapted scripts, worked on getting costumes and painted scenery — in short, she made sure that the Players were always ready for showtime.

Keefauver died in November 2006, but the current 18-member troupe perpetuates her mission. "We decided that Barbara would want us to continue so we are currently in rehearsal of 'Pinocchio,' for performances in the last week of March," said William Keefauver, her wonderfully supportive husband and former vice president and general counsel of AT&T Laboratories, who is now more actively involved with the Marionette Players.

Finally, clear commitment, hands-on engagement, steadiness, not the least, ingenuity and positive results: Barbara Keefauver's career is the paradigm for community service, and the Friends hope to honor her memory by carrying on with her projects and continuing her goals.

— Carol Bere



*William and Barbara Keefauver at a Spring Gala.*



*The late Barbara Keefauver with some of the marionettes from the Marionette Players.*

## And Now for Something Completely Different

The Friends' successful lecture series has featured well-known architects, landscape designers and panels on Vanderbilt-Twombly history. In an interesting shift, elegant food, classic dinner service and estate auctions were center stage at the most recent lecture, "Dining in the Gilded Age," on October 29 with presentations by Jeff Gourley, executive chef, Gourmet Dining, College at Florham at FDU, and David Breslau, executive director, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum in Morristown. Gourley and Breslau were not speaking about basic comfort food or objects, though.



*From left, Jeff Gourley, executive chef, Gourmet Dining, College at Florham; Emma Joy Dana, president, Friends of Florham; and David Breslau, executive director, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, pause in the Great Hall before the Friends most recent lecture, "Dining in the Gilded Age."*

Lavish entertaining and elegant meals were the norm at the 10 to 20 parties that the Twomblys gave annually at Florham, their country estate, where many of the furnishings, paintings and dinnerware were meticulously selected, often singular, priceless.

Jeff Gourley spoke to an enthusiastic audience about dining customs at Florham, the menu preferences of the Twombly family and about Joseph Donon, the French chef of the Twombly family for 38 years, who was lured from London's Carlton Hotel by the Twomblys with a salary of \$25,000, a separate villa, a staff of personal servants and a sailboat. Donon was the prototype of the celebrity chef, but he found time to compile a rather well-known cookbook, *The Classic French Cuisine* (1959).

Gourley gave an informative step-by-step cooking demonstration of chicken à la king drawn from Donon's cookbook, one of many recipes probably served at Florham. Lecture attendees were treated to a unique reception that he prepared of the chicken à la king with phyllo cups, displays of fruit and cheese straws, accompanied by champagne punch. Gourley's expertise is well earned. He has been banquet chef at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in McLean, Va., and is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. Gourley is also a member of the Con-

frérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, one of the world's premier gourmet societies, with U.S. headquarters at the College at Florham.

David Breslau has been executive director at Macculloch Hall since 1995. He was previously executive director at the Red Mill Historical Museum, Clinton, N.J., and holds an MAT-education degree from George Washington University. Breslau showcased some pieces of exquisite Crown Derby hand-painted porcelain dinner service, among 60 pieces purchased from the estate of Ruth Vanderbilt Twombly at the auction at Florham in June 1955 by W. Parsons Todd, founder of Macculloch Hall and former mayor of Morristown.

Breslau also gave a slide-presentation lecture, highlighting some of the other estate purchases made by Todd for Macculloch Hall, either at the Florham auction or at an earlier auction of estate items in New York. Mayor Todd was definitely not a novice, and among the choice items he purchased were two Chinese Chippendale chairs; a 19th-century Chinese carpet; a painting by the 17th-century Dutch artist, Melchior d'Hondecoeter; and even an 18th-century porter's or barrel chair, bought for \$25 at a tag sale at Florham in December 1955. Among Todd's prized purchases were three chandeliers, including the so-called "Skinny Sister," one of the "Three Sisters" that hung in the Drawing Room at Florham and now hangs majestically in the center hall at Macculloch Hall.

Like all good stories of country houses, the Florham narrative has its own bit of mystery. What

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happened to the jewelry, silverware, table linens and pots and pans? There are no references to these items in the auction catalogues. We are told that when a country house was closed permanently, and an inhabitant remained for a few months, the staff were often given a variety of items such

as pots and pans, tools and clothes. We are also told that jewelry from private families such as the Vanderbilt-Twomblys was often listed in catalogues as being from an anonymous consignee. And this may be the case with the Twombly items. Yet we simply don't know. The "usual suspects" are gone, there are no clues — and the trail has gone cold.

— Carol Bere

## *A Lasting Gift From the Twombly Heirs*

In the summer of 1956, the heirs to the Twombly estate, Florham, donated a 42-acre parcel of land to the community of Madison to use as a site for the construction of a new high school facility. This was part of the dispersal of the estate which included the sale of 600 acres of the farmland to the Esso Corporation and 200 acres to Fairleigh Dickinson University. The sale to the University included the mansion and other buildings on the property; the contents of the home had been sold previously through public auction.

On a Thursday evening in October of 1957, a small but exclusive group gathered at the Bottle Hill Tavern to honor William A. Burden and Shirley Burden, heirs to the Twombly estate and the donors. The Burden brothers were the grandsons of the late Ruth Vanderbilt Twombly. Town officials from Madison and Florham Park were in attendance as the action of the Burden brothers had spared both boroughs from runaway residential development.

Marvin Lyons, Esq., legal representative of the Burden brothers, remarked that there might be some nostalgia regarding the great estate but he preferred to look to the future. William Burden stated that: he and his brother were grateful for being invited to the dinner, which among other things marked the passage of their grandparents' country estate. Florham is entering a new stage of usefulness in the life of the community.

"For 55 years, our grandfather, grandmother, mother and aunt offered a particularly perfect kind of hospitality to literally thousands of guests including some of the country's most distinguished citizens," he continued. Burden also observed that the Twomblys were serious people and very conscious of their responsibility to the community. They would have been among the first to realize that their magnificent home had fulfilled its purpose with the passing of the era for which it was built.

The elaborate lifestyle, which the Twomblys and others in their social and economic bracket took



as a matter of course, has all but disappeared. Their hope was that their descendents find a constructive and distinguished use for the property. They would have been deeply unhappy to have it vanish without a trace — becoming lost in a wave of industrialization or lost to a mass housing development.

Burden also stated that he and his brother were glad to be able to assist in the dedication of the property to further education and research, which are probably the two most important fields of endeavor in the world. On a personal note he added, "What could have given more pleasure to Mr. and Mrs. Twombly?"

He expressed his hope that 100 years from now, those who use the new high school and the University and those who will develop unimagined technical marvels at the Esso research facility will have cause to remember those who helped make possible the establishment of these facilities in that long ago year of 1957.

So 50 years after that night in October of 1957, Florham continues its grand legacy. Fairleigh Dickinson University and Madison High School are thriving and the beautiful and historic grounds of the estate are being carefully maintained and preserved for future generations to enjoy and admire.

— Elaine Earlywine

*Mansion and grounds.*



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