

FRIENDS OF

Florham

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND COUNTING

As the Friends of Florham celebrate twenty-five years of significant growth, and an impressive résumé of restoration and preservation projects, a bit of history is warranted. On April 26, 1990, a group led by the late Dr. James Fraser, then director of the FDU Library at Florham-Madison; Emma Joy Dana, president of the Friends of the Library; and Raymond Soldavin, vice president of institutional advancement at FDU, held its first meeting. A board was established comprising various FDU members, and active volunteers from the community. The group, originally called "The Cultural Affairs Board," revised their name at the April 12, 1991, meeting to the "Friends of Florham."

The initial and broad mandate of the Friends was to attract the community to the Florham Campus, essentially by highlighting the historic importance of the buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White, and grounds landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted — potentially amplifying the public image of Fairleigh Dickinson University. There were early discussions of restoration projects including areas of the mansion, which is known today as Hennessy Hall, and the Italian gardens, and of developing a public lecture series. The Friends' initial mission, "assisting the University in preserving the historic elements of the campus," has broadened to include working with the University on various projects, undertaking other projects as a group, and educating the public about



CLOWNEY GARDEN, RESTORED 1994

the history of the estate, the family, and of the historic period. As Dr. Peter Woolley, provost of the Florham Campus, commented: "At FDU, we are privileged to have this heritage to share among faculty, staff, students, and alumni. It's our goal also to have people appreciate its rich history, its colorful characters, and the fact that we have to work at this heritage to continue to enjoy it."

The Friends moved quickly to attract the public to Florham, offering a series of three well-attended lectures given by eminent local New Jersey historian, John Cunningham, beginning with "The Morris Gentry and Their Estates" in November 1991. The Friends continue to offer lectures by a variety of architectural historians, landscape designers, and by particularly popular lecture returnees, Samuel G. White, architect and great-grandson of Stanford White, and

Ulysses Grant Dietz, chief curator and curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum.

The Friends Board comprises volunteer leaders from the community and FDU. Membership has changed over the years, and the Friends continue working to fulfill their mission by raising funds through fundraisers, annual membership appeals, and grant requests.

The first Friends newsletter was published in 1997, and is now published semi-annually, keeping members current about the Friends' various projects. Memberships have grown from 100 plus in 2000, to more than 500 today, with a mailing list exceeding 1,700 supporters, according to Linda Carrington, Friends' membership chair. The Friends also moved into the 21st century with several digital projects. They established a

(continued on page 7)

FALL 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary Edition of the *Friends of Florham Newsletter*. In our first newsletter, published seven years after the founding of the Friends of Florham, we expressed our desire to share our mission, our accomplishments to date, and our plans for the future with the community. Some things never change, but we have evolved — our mission is more clearly defined, Hennessy Hall (formerly, the Mansion) and gardens are more beautiful, and our community extends much further.

Last spring, we launched a new fundraiser, “The Tiffany Table: A Luncheon at Florham,” and we created an occasion that was incredibly beautiful — literally, socially, and financially. Lenfell Hall, the Great Hall, the guests and the speakers were all exquisitely turned out and the feeling of excitement and enjoyment was palpable. Many thanks to the committee, Danielle Lindner, Chris Adrignolo, Jenn Johnson, Ann Wellbrock, Valerie Adams and Regina Kelly AND the com-

munity. “The Tiffany Table” was stunningly successful not only as a fundraiser but also a “friend”-raiser. Plans are already underway for the 2016 “Tiffany” luncheon.

The first phase of our portrait project—portraits from the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C.—is well underway (see pages 5–6). Please stop in Hennessy Hall to see the giclée reproduction portrait on canvas of Frederick Law Olmsted hanging in the Great Hall. This winter, portraits from Biltmore that will be hung there include Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Vanderbilt (Florence’s parents) and a group portrait, *Going to the Opera*, which features Florence as a young adult with her parents and siblings. Portraits from Columbia University will mark the second phase of this project, and are scheduled for completion this winter as well.

We will participate in the development of the University’s new long-range plan this year. And we look forward to this wonderful opportunity to focus our attention on

the preservation and restoration of Florham’s historic keyhole: Entrance driveway, Hennessy Hall, L’Orangerie (Hassan Orangerie) and gardens.

And, the Friends are exploring a joint venture with PBS to produce an episode devoted to “Florham” as part of the proposed new “Treasures of New Jersey” PBS series. See article below for more details.

Preparation for this newsletter took us on an enjoyable trip down memory lane, and I hope you enjoy the resulting retrospective articles. I want to thank Carol Bere for all the work she did to assemble the images and the information. And, most important, as we did in our first newsletter, we invite you to cultivate a deep appreciation for the treasure of Florham by joining us as a member and helping us spread the word to the community. The beauty of Hennessy Hall and the grounds continue to inspire us as we work to protect and preserve our legacy. Some things really never change.

— Dawn Dupak

PBS DOCUMENTARY OF FLORHAM ESTATE

You’ve seen “Treasures of New York” on your local PBS channel. Now there will be “Treasures of New Jersey.”

PBS affiliates approached the University about making a documentary of the Florham estate and campus a few months ago and have decided to move forward. Though no timetable has been set, producers say they may begin filming as soon as the fall 2015 semester.

“We are lucky to have this heritage, and I am thrilled that documentary producers recognize this campus as a Treasure of New Jersey,” said Florham Campus Provost Dr. Peter Woolley.

The documentary will be nearly an hour long and will feature the history of the Vanderbilt-Twombly

family, the architects, the Gilded Age of Morris County and, of course, Fairleigh Dickinson University.

“I like to say that we follow some of the best traditions of the Vanderbilts,” said Woolley, “such as having several homes. Just as the Vanderbilts had several homes, so does FDU. Theirs were in Florham; Newport, R.I.; and New York City,” Woolley said. “Ours are on the banks of the Hackensack River, Vancouver [British Columbia, Canada], Oxfordshire [England] and Florham.”

Producers say the format and tone of the documentary will follow the style of “Treasures of New York,” which has featured Columbia University, Cooper Union, the

Flat Iron building and many more landmarks in the city.

“We have been saying for a long time that this is a treasure of New Jersey,” said Dawn Dupak, president of the Friends of Florham. “It is gratifying to have this recognition.” In fact, the Friends have been advocating for the estate now for 25 years.

“The Friends are strongly supporting this effort by PBS,” added Dupak. “Our support includes financial underwriting, and we urge alumni and students to do whatever they can to support it as well. This is a great opportunity to put your alma mater in the spotlight.”

More details of the production schedule are forthcoming soon.

TIFFANY BLUE & FDU: PERFECT TOGETHER

At 11:30 a.m. on May 21, Hennessy Hall at Fairleigh Dickinson University was showered in blue ... Tiffany blue, that is. The Tiffany Table: A Luncheon at Florham, the first fundraising luncheon hosted by the Friends of Florham in partnership with Tiffany & Co., attracted an enthusiastic group of more than 135 men and women, including, notably, 51 people who had never previously attended a Friends' event.

A dedicated committee chaired by Danielle Lindner and including Dawn Dupak, Jennifer Johnson, Valerie Adams, Ann Wellbrock, Christine Adrignolo and Regina Kelly worked for months to ensure the success of the event, and The Tiffany Table did not disappoint. Guests were greeted with sparkling drinks, complimentary gifts courtesy of Tiffany & Co., many wonderful silent auction items, and a chance to win a diamond metro bracelet valued at \$6,200 that was generously donated by the Short Hills (N.J.) Tiffany store especially for the event. Michael Plante, group director of the Short Hills Tiffany & Co., gave a fascinating talk about the lengthy association between Tiffany & Co. and the Vanderbilt family. Friends board member Danielle Lindner commented afterward, "We could not have been happier with the day and the reception. The overwhelming generosity that Short Hills Tiffany & Company provided us was incredible."

A delicious lunch catered by Gourmet Dining was served on tables draped in white, with beautiful centerpieces of white hydrangeas. Tiffany's iconic blue boxes, with a crystal bowl inside each box, graced each guest's plate as a thank you for attending the event. The fabulous day ended with a live auction, which included items such as a private "Breakfast at Tiffany's Experience" for twenty people at the Short Hills store, an exclusive in-home private dinner for six prepared by Chef Jeff Gourley



FROM LEFT: JACK SHARESHIAN, HADJ DANAN, LINDA BOPP, AND MICHAEL PLANTE FROM TIFFANY & CO., AND FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS DANIELLE LINDNER AND JENNIFER JOHNSON.

of Gourmet Dining, an exclusive Chef Table Experience at the Jockey Hollow Bar & Kitchen, and, of course, the anxiously awaited "Mystery Blue Box" surprise. Tiffany donated 100 blue boxes, with all but one containing pairs of beautiful wine glasses. One box was the "Mystery Blue Box." Guests who purchased the Tiffany blue boxes were handed a white feather for each box they bought. At the end of the live auction, they held up their feathers and were graced with box after

box, and one fortunate lady, Jennifer Lehr, joyously discovered that she had "won" the "Mystery Blue Box," which was the gorgeous diamond metro bracelet.

To say that The Tiffany Table was a success would be an understatement. All proceeds from the event will be directed toward the restoration of Florham. The best news, perhaps, is that the intrepid committee has agreed to produce the event again next year!

— Danielle Lindner



SILENT AUCTION ITEMS



JENNIFER JOHNSON AND THE OPENING OF THE BOXES

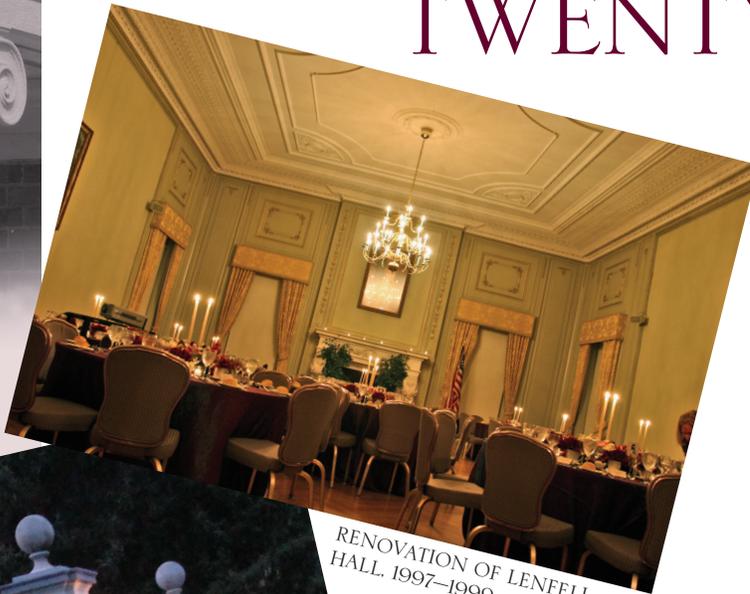


FROM LEFT: KATHY ATENCIO, CAROL KNAUFF, LISA MATHUS AND ELAINE EARLYWINE.

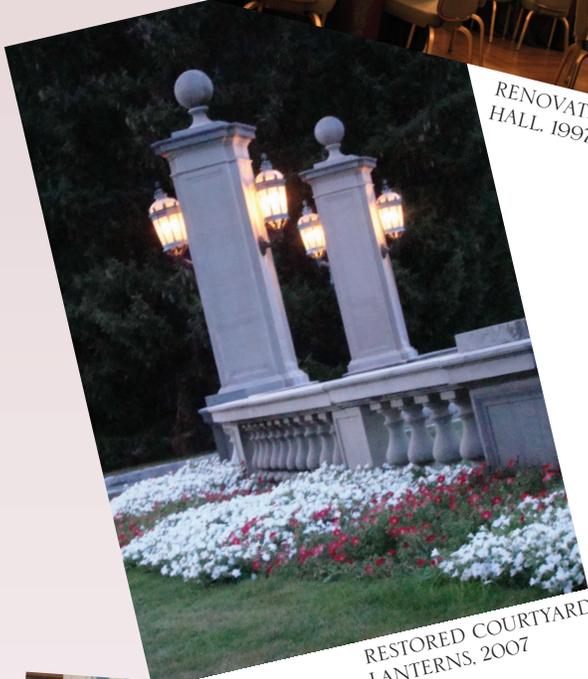


TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

25



RENOVATION OF LENFELL HALL, 1997-1999



RESTORED COURTYARD LANTERNS, 2007



REPLACEMENT OF HENNESSY HALL FRONT DOORS, 2008-2009



DIGITIZATION OF TWOMBLY HOUSEHOLD LEDGERS, 2009-2010



DEDICATION OF GOVERNOR RICHARD J. CODEY CLASSROOM, 2014

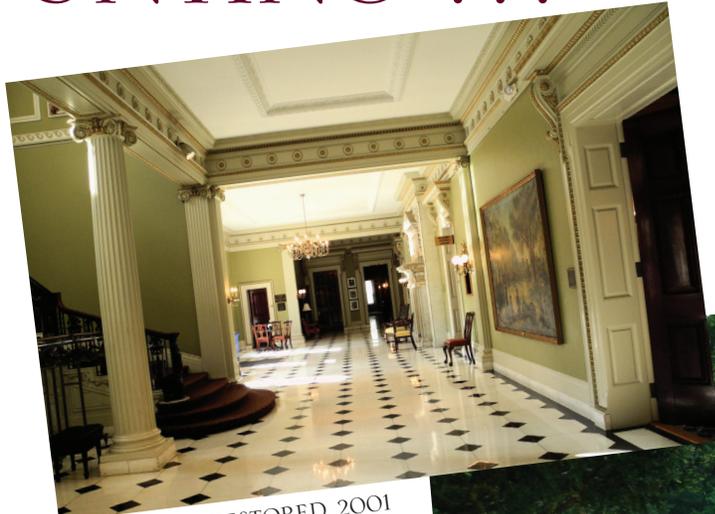


RENOVATED J. MICHAEL ADAMS PRESIDENTIAL SUITE, WROXTON COLLEGE, 2013



RENOVATION OF PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

AND COUNTING ...



GREAT HALL RESTORED, 2001



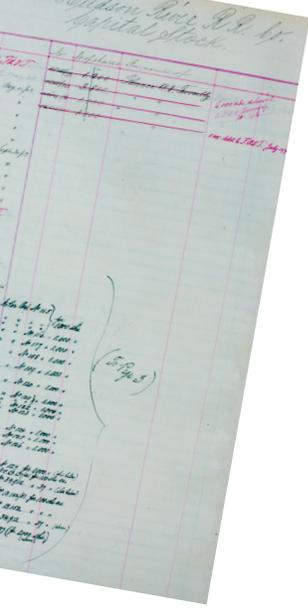
SARAH SULLIVAN LOUNGE "TRANSFORMED," 2011



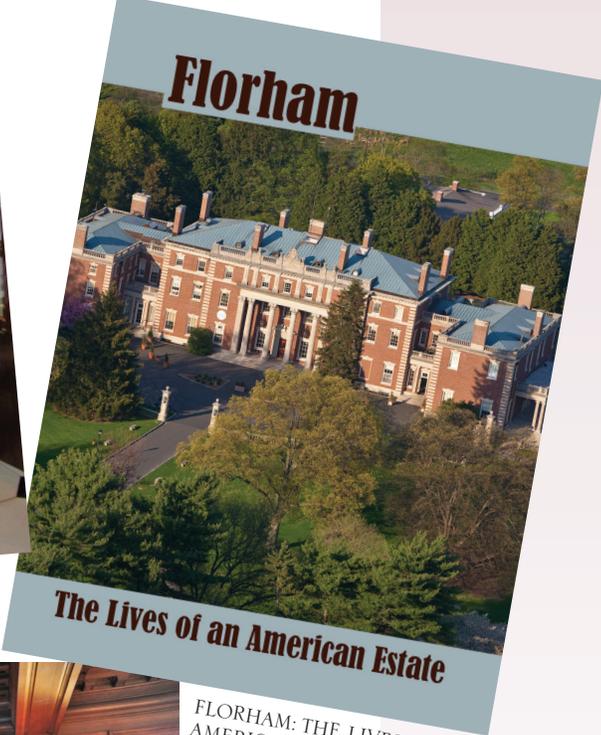
RESTORATION OF ITALIAN GARDENS, 1997



RETURN OF FLORHAM HEIRLOOMS, 2011



ICE, 2011



Florham

The Lives of an American Estate

FLORHAM: THE LIVES OF AN AMERICAN ESTATE, 2011



RENOVATION OF HARTMAN LOUNGE, 2012

TELLING THE BIGGER STORY: THE FLORHAM PORTRAITS PROJECT

While staying at FDU's Wroxton College in Oxfordshire, England, during my fall sabbatical in 2012, I was impressed with the way in which Dean Nicholas Baldwin and art historian Wendy Hart conceptualized a project of acquiring a dozen or so highest-resolution digital images of notable portraits to be printed on canvas and framed in period-appropriate frames. When I returned to teach summer courses at Wroxton in 2013 and 2015, these images had been strategically hung around this Jacobean manor house and helped to brilliantly (and rather affordably) portray the great figures who had lived at Wroxton Abbey, like Prime Minister Lord North of the American Revolutionary-era, and such notable guests as King James I, King Charles I, the Prince Regent (future King George IV) and even President Theodore Roosevelt, a close friend of the last Lord North to reside at Wroxton Abbey. The results visually captured so well the bigger historic narrative of this important Grade I Listed Building, thereby allowing the FDU community and guests to appreciate the importance of those who had made history at this great country estate.

The first task was to locate portraits relevant to the history of those who designed the Florham estate, and those who made it their home.

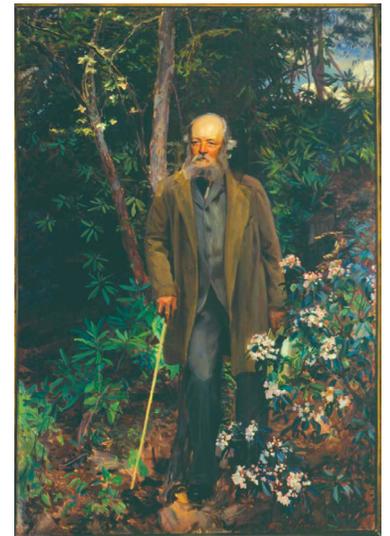
But Wroxton Abbey isn't the only great country estate in the portfolio of properties that comprise FDU. It crossed my mind that we could do the same for the "Mansion," which is known today as Hennessy Hall, at Florham. Upon my return from my sabbatical in England, Campus Provost Peter Woolley asked me to join the Friends of Florham Board as

the faculty representative and as a professional historian. Soon after, I proposed we look into the possibilities of a "Portraits Project" for Hennessy Hall on par with Wroxton. Many who arrive on the Florham Campus might have known that this campus was once the country estate of the prominent Vanderbilt-Twombly families. But there seemed to be opportunities to tell this story visually in a more museum-quality way. Portrait art displayed strategically on the ground floor of Hennessy Hall could illustrate the "who's who" of Florham's impressive past, linking the history of this estate with the larger narrative of American history from the Gilded Age well into the 20th century.

The first task was to locate portraits relevant to the history of those who designed the Florham estate, and those who made it their home. This took some homework, but the first trail led to the Biltmore estate in Asheville, N.C., where I had visited on a family vacation in 2011, and recalled certain Vanderbilt portraits. As the largest private home built in the United States, Biltmore was commissioned by George Washington Vanderbilt in the 1890s, the same decade as his older sister, Florence Vanderbilt Twombly, and her husband commissioned the renowned architectural firm, McKim, Mead & White, to build Florham.

The common design link to these two Vanderbilt siblings' estates was Frederick Law Olmsted, America's premier landscape architect who, having designed Central Park (with Calvert Vaux) in New York, late in his career designed the landscapes of both Florham and Biltmore. Olmsted's full-length portrait by the premier portrait artist, John Singer Sargent, sits prominently off the main hall past the entrance at Biltmore. Down the hall in the breakfast room, the portraits of Florence's father, William H. Vanderbilt, and her grandfather, Cornelius "Commodore" Vanderbilt

hang — both portraits were painted by Jared Bradley Flagg. Down the long gallery hangs the full-size Sargent portraits of Florence's mother, Maria Louisa Kissam Vanderbilt, and the patron of Biltmore, brother George. Finally, another gallery hosts the most famous family portrait of Florence,



PORTRAIT OF FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED BY JOHN SINGER SARGENT. (PERMISSION OF THE BILTMORE COMPANY, ASHEVILLE, N.C.)

her siblings and parents, *Going to the Opera*, by Seymour Guy. These six portraits best suited the goals of our project.

The next step was to reach out to the Biltmore curatorial staff, who could not have been more gracious and willing to work with a "fellow Vanderbilt estate," as aptly put by Laura Overbey, the collections manager. At nominal cost to the Friends of Florham, they hired a local photographer to capture the images for our single-use, and to print on canvas for public display in Hennessy Hall. Biltmore was able to add the latest digital image to their archives, while the Friends of Florham could add these six portraits to its own budding collection. Olmsted now hangs proudly in the Great Hall at Florham, while the other portraits will soon be ready to display.

With one solid relationship established, we subsequently
(continued on page 7)

FLORHAM PORTRAITS PROJECT *(continued)*

contacted Columbia University, whose campus was also designed by McKim, Mead, & White as well as Olmsted — a design team shared with Florham. In its landmark Low Library just off the rotunda is the Twombly-Burden Room, which houses more than half a dozen portraits of two generations who resided at Florham. At a history awards dinner in 2011 inside the Low Library, I literally stumbled upon the open door to the room, and recognized the portrait of Hamilton Twombly immediately. Upon entering, I saw a youthful portrait of Florence Vanderbilt as well as her daughter and namesake, Florence, and her husband, William Burden. I contacted the curatorial staff of Art Properties at Columbia Uni-

versity, who graciously agreed to contract the digital imaging and single-use printing on canvas for our public display.

Meanwhile, we are looking to obtain more portraits, particularly of those involved with the building and design of Florham.

Meanwhile, we are looking to obtain more portraits, particularly of those involved with the building and design of Florham. Future portrait goals include contacting the Breakers in Newport, R.I., the legendary estate of Flor-

ence's oldest brother, Cornelius Vanderbilt II, and the descendants of Stanford White who still own Box Hill, his landmark home on Long Island. Collectively, these portraits, along with those that FDU already has, will tell more fully the story about the Vanderbilts, Twomblys and Burdens over five generations from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries. The project will connect Florham with its design team and its architectural lineage with Biltmore and the Breakers, estates that defined the grandeur of the Gilded Age. These dozen or so portraits will also transform the Great Hall and Lenfell Hall into a museum-quality portrait gallery for generations to come.

— Prof. Gary Helm Darden, PhD

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS *(continued)*

well-designed website in 2010, <http://www.fdu.edu/fof>. With 7,046 views during the past ten months, the website is a popular go-to-site for information about the history of Florham, Hennessy Hall, grounds and events. In addition, an attractive photo-filled Facebook page was created in 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/fdufriendsofflorham>.

The Friends digital project with perhaps the greatest long-term impact for Vanderbilt-Twombly research, and knowledge of the period, in general, was the archiving and digitization in 2010 of the important bequest from Edward Burden, great-grandson of the Twomblys. This important trove included 12 household ledgers, business and financial data, family correspondence, and family photographs taken by Shirley Burden, professional photographer and grandson of the Twomblys.

This newsletter specifically celebrates the various preservation, restoration, and education projects of the Friends. The challenges were clear from the outset, but as former longtime president, Linda Meister, said, "The Friends

took a long-neglected treasure and brought it to life." The first project of the Friends was the restoration of the lower fountain garden in 1994, the Clowney Garden, which was dedicated to the memory of William D. Clowney, a member of the Friends board, and a trustee of FDU (*see page 1*). The centerfold of this newsletter displays selected highlights — significant projects completed by the Friends throughout their tenure (*see pages 4–5*).

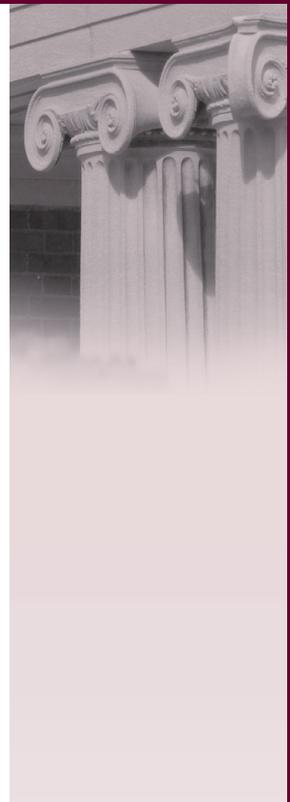
The strong support by the FDU community for the Friends' projects was instrumental from the beginning. We thank former president, the late Dr. J. Michael Adams, who recognized early the importance of the Friends' work, and his wife, Susan, who worked in the trenches with us. We also thank former Florham Provost Kenneth Greene, former Associate Provost Marilyn Rye, and former Treasurer Susan McConville for their support. We are most thankful that Eleanor Friedl, reference librarian, and Gary Darden, history professor, currently serve as University liaisons to our board, and that

Valerie Adams, recently retired director of career development, is continuing to serve on the board.

And we are most grateful for the efforts of Barbara Dawson, Carol Black, Bill Kennedy, Walter Cummins, and Brigid Burke on our behalf, and Chris Johnson and Hollister Construction for their exquisite restoration of the Sarah Sullivan Lounge. We appreciate the interest, enthusiasm and help of current Florham provost, Peter Woolley, and most especially current President Sheldon Drucker, for their cooperation and interest in our projects and events.

We also remember and thank Friends' board members, past and present, for their dedication and generosity. We will always remember with great fondness and appreciation the late Barbara Keefauver, Shannie Doremus, Walter Savage, and Friends co-founder Dr. James Fraser, among others. And our deepest appreciation goes to our founding president, Emma Joy Dana, who will always be among "the Best of Friends."

— Carol Bere



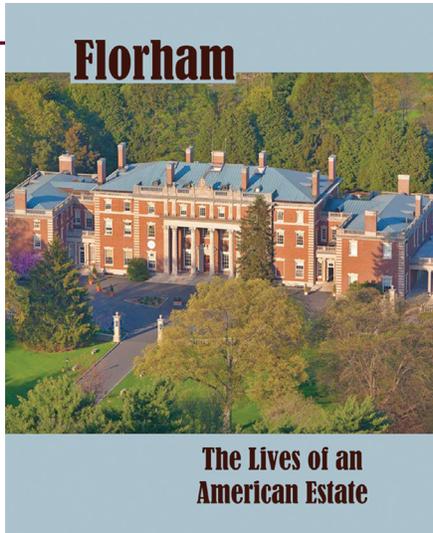


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Copies may be purchased at the Florham Campus bookstore and online through Amazon.com. the Friends' website <http://fdu.edu/fof> or through the Fairleigh Dickinson University Alumni Association website at www.myfdu.net.fofbook. For questions concerning your order, please contact Claudia Bunimovich at (201) 692-7017 or vidal@fdu.edu.

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Join the Friends of Florham. Participate directly in our efforts to preserve the architectural history of Florham, and support our informative program series. Your support will make a difference.

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