

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden



Catherine Faragher

In the Friends Annual Secretary's Report for 1967 Martha Crone wrote "We look forward to some day having an administration building housing an office, Museum and Herbarium of specimens." The following May 18th, Catherine (Cay) Faragher joined the Friends Board of Directors and was elected President, succeeding Ken Avery who was president in 1966-1968. These two things are related.

Martha Crone's statement indicates the Friends were already discussing a new office and shelter building for the Garden and the Friends would have to be the ones pushing the idea to the Park Board. Since Ken Avery was also the Garden Curator and Gardener he may have felt he should not be the one speaking for the Friends. Cay Faragher undoubtedly knew what she was about to help manage.

The events that follow in building the Martha E. Crone Shelter are all described in detail in the annual histories and in summary form in the article on the Shelter History, so those should be referenced for the details.

Catherine served as president until May 1971 at which time she became an honorary and ex-officio director until 1975 at when she rejoined the Board.

More Garden improvements were being planned and those members who had dealt with the Park Board during the Shelter planning and construction were no longer on the Board.



She hosted the first Friends Board meeting of January 20, 1975 at her home at 3401 East Calhoun Blvd. Park Board Coordinator of Environmental Education Gordon Morrison and Park Board Landscape Architect Gary Criter were in attendance. The meeting was to discuss the latest plans for new steps to the Garden, new railing, a new gate and entrance sign. Cay Faragher was on the 1976 Bi-centennial Commission and suggested that the Friends part of this new upgrade to the Garden be considered the Friends contribution to the bi-centennial year. That was approved. The remaining details are in the 1975 history.

Catherine then dropped off the board in 1976 but made all the arrangements for the Friends 25th anniversary meeting in May of 1977. Then she returned to the board for one more year of service in 1979. Her last appearance was at the Friends 30th anniversary annual meeting when she and other past presidents spoke of their remembrances.

Former Friends President **Robert Dassett**, concluded his recollections about being on the Friends Board by adding "and finally the rather feverish, hectic, but rewarding activity of the past several years when, under the leadership of the human dynamo, Cay Faragher, the new Martha Crone Shelter was planned, built and opened."

She apparently served good lunches also at the many board meetings held at her home. Dassett, who recorded the minutes of the Nov. 6th, 1969 meeting ended the text with this: "The Board members present then did do justice to a lunch modestly described by our president and hostess, Cay Faragher, as just a bite, but which indeed did prove more than ample to stay the beast within us."

Cay had a direct and personable way of writing to the Friends membership. In the Spring of 1969 she wrote "We are hoping that you members who treasure this unique little oasis within our fast expanding city will dig into your pockets. We have paid for the plans. We have \$4, 000." This was quite a gamble as \$25,000 was needed. "We can do this, do it right now and do it the way we want to, if we all get in there and pitch. There are only 200 of us; some will be unable to contribute, but those of you who can will be richly rewarded with the knowledge that you have helped to safeguard and keep for future generations the Eloise Butler Wild Flower and Bird Sanctuary." (1)

In October she added "A trip to the Garden will make you feel proud and happy that you had a part in this great project. I want you all to know that we never could have gone ahead, as we have, without your hard working, enthusiastic, single-minded officers. Mr. Tusler, Building Chm., Mr. Witt, Building Fund, Mr. Thorn & Mr. Dasset. Mrs. Crone who has been kept spinning with so many new memberships to process and two large memorials funds to acknowledge."(2)

In April of 1970 "We have accomplished what seemed impossible. Your Directors hope that you will be as pleased as we are with the "Shelter" as you are the ones who have done this through your enthusiastic contributions. We are leaving a few of the exciting finish up "frostings on the cake" until the bills are all in and paid. Our heartfelt thanks to our Honorary Board for their wise council and to all of you who have been a great help to me personally, and to others of your Directors. God bless you all. Cay Faragher." (3)

In her private life she was married to Reginald Faragher who was publisher of the Minneapolis Athletic Club *Gopher Magazine* for 35 years. For 22 years until 1962 the Faraghers had a 61 acre hobby farm on the Rum River near Anoka where they spent summers and raised Shetland Ponies. They had no children. Cay was active in many organizations such as the Minnesota United Nations association and especially the Minneapolis Woman's Club where several times she chaired the annual Art Salon.



To Be in Salon Sculptor Peter Lupori (left) holds the sculpture he calls "Fruit," which will be shown in the 29th annual art salon sponsored by the Woman's club. With him are (from left) Thomas Earl, salon chairman Mrs. Reginald Faragher, and Harlan Boss, holding "St. Francis," another entry by Lupori.

Above: At the 29th annual art salon sponsored by the Woman's Club in April 1959, Cay is pictured with sculptor Peter Lapori at left. Tribune photo.

Reginald passed away on August 19, 1987 and Cay on May 2, 1991. The Friends noted her death in *The Fringed Gentian*TM of July 1991 and at the annual meeting on May 18th that year. A number of people sent in memorials for her.

Reference: Minutes of The Board of Directors and other documents of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. Text by G D Bebeau.

Note 1: *The Fringed Gentian*TM Vol. 17 No 2 April 1969

Note 2: *The Fringed Gentian*TM Vol. 17 No. 4 October 1969

Note 3: *The Fringed Gentian*TM Vol. 18 No. 2 April 1970