

Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden Dedication

On Sunday, April 9, 2000, Stephen F. Austin State University and the SFA Mast Arboretum officially dedicated the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden at a reception for the garden's major benefactor, Mrs. Dorothy Mize Wisely and members of her family. The Garden is named the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden to honor Mrs. Wisely's mother.

The dedication ceremonies were attended by members of the SFA Board of Regents, representatives from the SFA administration, and about 150 invited guests. The reception was held in the garden under a cloudless and cool spring sky. Mrs. Wisely unveiled a bronze dedicatory plaque mounted on a native East Texas iron ore rock in the garden's focal point, the Council Ring. She especially noted the plaque's inscription, which she felt captured the way she and her mother felt about gardens:

*With the kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth;
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.*

Mrs. Wisely thanked all the well-wishers who continue to support the use and growth of the garden, and asked, "Now, isn't this just a little piece of Heaven?" The dedication ceremonies closed with brief tours around the garden.

[Editor's note: The quotation is from poet Dorothy Francis Gurney, 1858-1932.]