

DEDICATION OF THE INA BRUNDRETT CONSERVATION EDUCATION BUILDING

REMARKS BY DAVE CREECH

JANUARY 27, 2014

Thank you Dr. Patillo. This great facility is a brand new beginning for conservation education at SFA. We're about to take a great program and make it even better. This is an opportunity for all of us. Our goal is to educate, entertain and enlighten kids, students, and visitors to the values of clean air, clean water, healthy forests, diverse ecosystems, and the joy of gardening. A number of thank yous are in order.



THANK YOU'S

Ina Brundrett – There's little I can add to Dr. Pattillo's recognition of our lead donor and friend, Ina Brundrett. While we're sad Ina couldn't be here with us today, we are pleased to have Lynne and Larry Maddox here representing her family. Lynne is Ina's daughter: so thank you so much for being here. I can only add that Ina was a sweet co-conspirator for a greener world – she is a great friend to the garden . . . and that she's been a member of our group for over twenty years. We worked with her on the Ina Brundrett Azalea Garden at Tyler Junior College and provided plants for that garden – and I think she admired SFA Gardens for quality programs and quality staff.

While Ina provided the lead gift, two private Texas foundations and a group of donors contributed funds for the campaign, some large, some small. Some of those donors are here and some are not, but to all we say thank you. Without the strong local support given this project, we would not be here today.

I would like to recognize Ellen Temple for reasons I will touch on later.

We need to applaud SFA's Administration and Board of Regents for approving the campaign in Feb 2007. And, I'd like to recognize this Board and all the past Boards since 1985 that have supported the growth of SFA Gardens. The Mast Arboretum, the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, the Gayla Mize Garden, SFA's Recreational Trails and Gardens, the LaNana Creek corridor plantings and the Pineywoods Native Plant Center – none of this would exist if it hadn't been for the approval and support by this and past administrations and boards. They recognized the potential, understood our track record and likelihood of success, and then helped make it happen. We here at SFA Gardens think that was great foresight and wisdom.

I'd like to recognize Vice President Jill Still, Director of Development Trey Turner, and Craig Turnage in Development – over the last seven years, I can report we've become family. I certify these folks are professional, incessantly cheerful and have the hardest but perhaps most fulfilling jobs on campus.

I must acknowledge, Dr. Dale Perritt, Chair of the Department of Agriculture, and Dr. Steve Bullard, Dean of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. Over the years, they provided great counsel, wisdom and taught me the value of patience.

Jerry Sutton, our lead architect, for a quality design with tons of functionality and interesting architectural features . . . and Kingham Construction for the fast, efficient, high quality construction – and a spotless construction site for the entire process.

Physical Plant – Lee Brittain, Harold Hall, and Bruce Lanham - I have no idea how they manage the details, which come in thousands of pages . . . seriously, the details, specification sheets, and costing oversight makes for a huge responsibility . . . For SFA Gardens, they basically made building this building like a walk in the park.

STAFF – Dawn Stover, Elyce Rodewald, Duke Pittman, Greg Grant, Kerry Lemon, Barb Stump – there's no way we would be here if not for these competent, self motivated, free thinking and independent minded staff. Hire good people, get good results.

There's an army of volunteers to thank. I think the number of hours contributed is = to three full time staff!. Then, there's an active SFA Gardens Board of Advisors, a great Friends group, and like minded gardening enthusiasts in our region.

Finally, a big thank you goes out to students. It's the big reason why we're here. We should never forget that. I know there are some former students here for this dedication . . . we appreciate that greatly . . . whether they came through as interns, graduate students, student assistants, work study or volunteers . . . this place left a mark on them . . . and they left their mark on us.

HISTORY

There's a little history that's relevant. The idea of a Pineywoods Native Plant Center goes back to 1998, a thermos and two cups of coffee brought to the Mast Arboretum by James C. Kroll. After an hour, the idea of a Native Plant Center was born, and sealed by a handshake. The marriage between the SFA Mast Arboretum and the Forest Resources Institute made sense. Proposals were created for the Board of Regents, and this property, the 42-acre Pineywoods Native Plant Center, was approved by SFA's Board of Regents in February 1999 and dedicated March 27, 1999. Our starting budget was easy to understand: it was zero. With Ellen Temple's help, Lady Bird Johnson arrived in April 2000 to name the PNPC as the third garden affiliated with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. With Ellen Temple's help we contracted with Darrel Morrison, landscape architect, and in December 2001 we received the concept plan for the entire property which is here to my right. If you look closely, you can see we essentially followed the big design elements envisioned by this great landscape architect. Finally, in

February 2007, the board of regents approved the campaign for this building. Seven years later we are here!

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

To SFA Gardens, environmental education is about celebrating clean air, clean water, nurturing ecosystems, saving energy, reducing our carbon footprint, increasing natural bio diversity . . . it's all about forestry and agriculture . . . and it's all about gardening. This facility will be the command center for a program that enriches school kids. The mantra of our environmental education program – programs in forestry, horticulture, and the natural world . . . well, it's all in wrapped up in the contents of this book, Richard Louv's, Last Child in the Woods. It's one of the main reasons we're here today.

This facility is not just for kids. Adults need educating too. This facility will be home to all kinds of lectures, meetings, workshops, symposiums, and seminars.

Finally, we think this building is going to be a big part of the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture initiatives in creating curriculums and research with a focus on "conservation leadership". There's a fresh wind blowing in Forestry and Agriculture – and the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture is taking a lead. It's a smart, bold undertaking and it's one that integrates many disciplines to educate and train the next generation of conservation leaders. This building will be part of that mission.

THE BUILDING

This building is the greenest building in Nacogdoches and will be greener still. The list of all the green features is available in the work room. There are fifteen green elements involved and we're adding solar via a Green Mountain Energy grant . . . and we'll be adding gutters and rainwater capture in the near future.

THE LANDSCAPE

This is a low maintenance landscape of bullet proof native plants. Once established, we never intend to water again - except in the worst of droughts. The plantings include possumhaw hollies, parsley haws, silverbells, redbuds, dogwoods, pink muhly grass, Northwind switch grass, a wonderful colony of dwarf loblolly pines, bald cypress – and will feature our Purple Pride plum, a native Chickasaw with purple foliage.

THE FUTURE

So, where do we go from here?

Well, we make a great educational program even better.

We integrate this building into the fabric of this university and city.

Let's not forget this is the greenest building in Nacogdoches and will be greener yet. It offers an opportunity for the University, the City and interested citizens to see and replicate energy smart ideas – for the home, their business and for the future.

Thank you for all your support and now for the ribbon cutting !



For those interested, the entire dedication was filmed and that is available as a Youtube video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oup2xU42BKc>