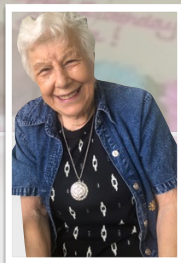


LAUREL HILL MANSION NEWS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SYLVIA



On Saturday, June 17, 2023, many WTGP members gathered on the back porch of LHM to celebrate the 99th birthday of Director Emeritus, Sylvia Myers.

Sylvia is a long time WTGP member who served many years as the chair of the Garden Committee and also as an organizer, decorator, and hostess for special events. Thank you Sylvia for all you have done for LHM and see you next year for #100!



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As summer is upon us once again, I think about sitting on the back porch at Laurel Hill Mansion watching the scullers on the Schuylkill River gliding gracefully down the river below, and how lucky we are to have such a lovely view. I try to imagine what it must have looked and sounded like at the time when Rebecca and her family lived there so many years ago (no expressway noise or squealing tires).

Women for Greater Philadelphia continues to try to make Laurel Hill Mansion the best that it can be. Karen Phinney, our Park House Guide, welcomes visitors as if they were guests in her own home. Christine Mifsud, with the help of Nancy Werner, tries to keep up with the plantings on the grounds in spite of a lack of rain, and Jacqui Martin looks out for all manner of repairs and maintenance needing to be done. I am so grateful for all of them and all of you who are trying to make Laurel Hill Mansion the finest it can be and look forward to starting up our seasonal concerts later this summer. I hope you all will join us as we gaze out at the river and enjoy each others company.

Barbara Frankl, President, Women for Greater Philadelphia

**The WFGP 2023-2025
Board of Directors:**

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MonaLisa Fiorentini

Athena Flamporis

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Zabeth Teelucksingh

Kelly McShain Tyree

Kathleen Vissar

Jennifer Warfield

Directors Emeritus:

Sylvia Myers

Elizabeth Young

The 2023-2025 WFGP/LHM Executive Board

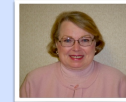
President: *Barbara Frankl*



Vice President: *Nancy S. Cohen*



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Assistant Treasurer: *B. B.*



Corresponding Secretary: *Smokie Kittner*



Recording Secretary: *Terri Jones*



Join a WFGP Committee: [https://
www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/pages/](https://www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org/pages/)

WFGP extends a warm welcome to our newest members:

JOANNE HARTSHOME (Sponsor and life member)

MAURA JOYCE COLEMAN

JOYCE DOUS

MARY LYNN GULLETTE

SEQUOYAH HUNTER-CUYJET

SALLY MORBECK

JESSICA PERRONE

KELLY McSHANE TYREE

GAYLE WIEAND

MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Laurel Hill Mansion

2023 Summer Concert Series

Sunday July 20, 2023, 2:00 pm

THE WISTER QUARTET: Nancy Bean, violin;
Michener Liao-Barnes, violin; Men Wang, viola;
Lloyd Smith, cello

www.1807friends.org

Sunday, August 6, 2023, 2:00 pm

DANIEL ADAM MALTZ, pianoforte

www.danieladamaltz.com

Sunday, August 20, 2023, 2:00 pm

ALLEN KRANTZ, classical guitar

www.Allenkrantz.com



All Concerts begin at 2:00 pm in the LHM Octagonal Music Room followed by a reception on the back porch

Tickets are \$30 per concert or \$75 for the series
www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/concerts.html

MEET THE NEW WFGP BOARD MEMBERS

SEQUOYAH HUNTER-CUYJET,



Vice President of Determined by Design, is a culture cultivator with a unique ability to breathe narrative into any design, giving voice to community, people and places. Sequoyah is a multifaceted design professional who was raised on the eastern shores of the Shinnecock

Indian Reservation. She received a B.A. from Sarah Lawrence and a M.F.A. from Moore College of Art.

ZABETH TEELUCKSINGH



is President of Global Philadelphia Association, an award winning international executive, and a longtime member of WFGP. Under Zabeth's leadership, GPA partnered with the City of Philadelphia for membership in the Organization of World Heritage Cities.

Zabeth is highly skilled in all aspects of strategy, communications, and branding with a global vision. Zabeth is a citizen of both France and the U.S. and is a WFGP Women's History Month Honoree.

KELLY McSHAIN TYREE



loves Philadelphia neighborhoods and seeks to preserve and showcase their diverse architectural character and intrinsic beauty. Kelly has restored architecturally and historically significant residential and commercial properties. In New York, Kelly

was a professional stage actress and an interior decorator. She is currently a member of the Advisory Council for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and is a realtor in the Philadelphia area.

EN PLEIN AIR at LAUREL HILL MANSION

Artists and other creatives are invited to pack their supplies and spend a day painting or sketching on the grounds of historic Laurel Hill Mansion in East Fairmount Park, 3487 Edgley Dr., Philadelphia, PA. 19121. (215) 235-1776. Plein Air dates in July 2023: July 2, 16, & 23 plus dates in August & September. These free events are from 10:30 to 3:30 [https://www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/plein air.html](https://www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/plein_air.html)



Additionally, Plein Air instruction with Joe Sweeney of Cerulean Arts will be offered October 6 and 7, 2023 from 10 am to 2 pm each day. Contact events@laurelhillmansion.org

CHESS DAYS on the grounds of LAUREL HILL MANSION



Free outdoor chess at Laurel Hill Mansion is ongoing. Dates include July 1, 8, & 22, 2023, 10:30 am-3:00 pm; plus dates in August & September. Please see: <https://www.laurelhillmansion.org/Pages/chess.html>

The Laurel Hill Mansion SPRING TEA was a sold out affair on April 30, 2023. Thank you to all who made the event possible.

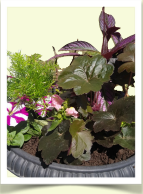


America 2026 and the WFGP 250 Committee

On July 4, 2026 our nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The WFGP America 250 Committee is dedicated to recognize this 250th anniversary. The commemoration period is ongoing, culminates on July 4, 2026 and officially concludes December 2027. The goals of the WFGP 250 Committee are to host events that increase the visibility of LHM, increase the membership of WFGP, honor the Women of the Bicentennial, & educate and engage the public with programs about LHM and colonial history. Some of the WFGP America 250 activities will be in collaboration with other organizations including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

If you would like to participate in this exciting, historical project, contact s.kittner@womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org

GARDENING IS THE BEST RELAXING ACTIVITY



Growing up on a farm north of Allentown, PA, I was born with a spade and trowel in hand. I come from a long line of farmers and my maiden name George does mean “farmer.” We had a huge farm and there were endless tasks in the many gardens. Putting my hands into the damp soil and getting dirty occurred every day. We tilled the soil, planted the seeds, watered the plants, and pulled weeds forever from early Spring to the first frost of Autumn.

We had a huge strawberry patch of a few acres. It would be in mid-June when we picked the strawberries for customers. We would fill our little red wagon and walk to all the neighbors to sell our produce. We kept quite a lot to ourselves because making strawberry jam was a special treat like none other. There was sweet corn that we planted with the pumpkin seeds among the stalks. Corn was ready in July but kept on giving until September. We had the huge vegetable garden that seemed to have Jack’s magical beans as the string and limas never stopped giving until you pulled the plant out of the soil. There were the early peas, the lettuce patch, radishes, cabbages and even carrots that grew crooked because we didn’t have sandy soil. Oh, we had the tomato plants staked and once you start to pick them, they kept coming too. We always had tomato sauce and we learned about picking green tomatoes and placing in newspapers to continue ripening. But my favorite was making those little mounds of ground and sticking the cucumber and zucchini seeds in the little hills. I was always amazed how the vines would weave around each other and you always had to lift the leaves to find the ripening veggies. We even had an apple orchard of a dozen trees and by September we were picking the apples to store in our root cellar. But making the jarred apple sauce was the best. I will always be appreciative of my six sisters and two brothers as we made a gardening a “family activity.”

But gardens aren’t only about fruits and vegetables but about flowers. My mother loved her roses. They all had names from Queen Elizabeth, Peace, Eisenhower, etc. I can still see their vibrant colors and smell their fragrance. Now as a gardener you must learn how to keep the aphids at bay and how to prune. My mother taught us all the tricks of pruning so the thorns wouldn’t win. But she had over 36 rose bushes and we all took pride in their growth. We always had visitors as she would always take a moment to cut her blooms and send them home with our guests. She loved their smiles of appreciation every time.

My oldest brother, Bill, was known for his acres of gladiolas that we sold to those who stopped at the farm. He also had prize winning dahlias that were shown at the Allentown Fair. Now he had a day job, so the weeding came to us his sisters. We worked hard at keeping those flowers healthy. We enjoyed the bragging rights as much as he did. We loved those flowers, but it was in early October when we needed to dig them up and place them in baskets to survive the winter. Then let’s say, we weren’t so fond of his hobby.

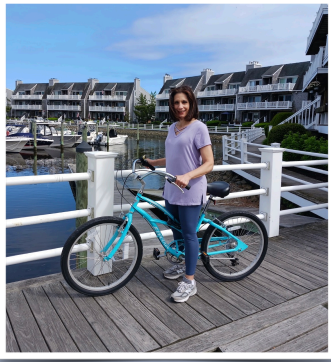


Learning about the Laurel Hill Mansion and its history has been heartwarming. I can only imagine the hard work that Rebecca Rawle Shoemaker experienced as she worked on the soil growing strawberries and cabbages at the Laurel Hill Mansion. She had purchased the house back from Major Parr in 1784. Then she negotiated to pay the French Ambassador Chevalier de la Luzerne for the remainder of his three-year lease to the mansion house. What a businesswoman creating her own “truck farming” skills. She would be able to take her produce to inner Philadelphia to sell. The money that she earned helped to pay the French Ambassador’s rent. (Her strawberries were a hot seller.)



As I look at the grounds of the property today, I enjoy the mountain laurel bushes, our box woods and the roses bushes that are in full bloom around the mansion. It is fulfilling to see the smaller plants that we have planted starting to grow. Back in the colonial days, plants did not adorn the outside of the houses. They were the borders of the four-square gardens. We didn’t start that practice until the Victorian Age when it became the “in” thing to do and we are still doing. But I have been working with Christine Mifsud, who is a master gardener, as we plant and enhance the grounds. Following the lead of Toni deGeorge with the gardens, we are thankful for Jacqui and Karen, our members, who help with the watering. We also have Ascencio Landscapers who come and assist with the chores. But I learned early that many hands make work light. Might I entice you to join us in the relaxing garden work? If so, please contact Christine Mifsud at drmifsud@comcast.net

WFGP Spotlights ATHENA FLAMPORIS



It must have been fate. It was the summer of 1976, the Bicentennial celebration. Athena was nine years old and attended an event with her family. Conestoga wagons were touring the country and made a stop in the Philadelphia region. She didn't know it at the time, but this event was sponsored by Women of the Bicentennial. Thirty-five years later, while touring the Fairmount Park homes, she entered LHM and was impressed by the warmth and hospitality of Women for Greater Philadelphia, formerly known as Women of the Bicentennial. Always interested in historic homes and preservation, Athena was inspired to join the organization. It was during a conversation with the late Alma Jacobs that Athena made the connection and later showed Alma the photograph of her family in front of one of the Conestoga wagons.

Athena was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania and moved to New Jersey when she was eleven. She returned to Pennsylvania to attend Millersville University where she majored in elementary and early childhood education. Upon graduating, Athena was hired as a preschool teacher for Gloucester Township Public Schools in Blackwood, NJ. While teaching, she resumed her studies and received her master's degree in special education from Rowan University. Athena has served the Gloucester Township community for 33 years. In addition to preschool, she taught first grade and currently teaches children with learning disabilities.

Athena has always been active at her church and has served in various organizations. In 2000, she co-chaired a national conference for the Greek Orthodox Young Adult League which was held at the Marriot in Philadelphia. Athena has also been involved in mission work. She assisted in two home building missions in Mexico and taught at a Bible camp in Alaska. Currently, she is vice president of a philanthropic organization at her church known as the Daughters of Penelope and is a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center.

At Laurel Hill Mansion, Athena, a long time Women for Greater Philadelphia Board Member, is co-chair of the Planning Committee and is well known for her innovative and successful fundraising projects, especially the *Girls Day In* and the *Wine Tasting* parties. During her free time, Athena enjoys spending time with family, friends, and her three cats. She enjoys traveling, golfing, biking, and the beach.



JAMES FORTEN, Sailor, Investor, Businessman, Essayist and Abolitionist

A few months ago, pianist Stephen Page recorded the music of black Philadelphian composer and musician Francis Johnson (1792-1844) on Laurel Hill Mansion's 1808 Broadwood fortepiano. Johnson was a friend and neighbor of James Forten and his music was popular in the Revolutionary and Antebellum eras. The music was recorded on the LHM fortepiano to replicate the instrument Johnson used. The Johnson track can be accessed at the listening station of the Museum of the American Revolution which is part of the special exhibit:

Black Founders: The Forten Family of Philadelphia. The exhibit continues through 11/30/2023. <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/exhibits/black-founders-the-forten-family-of-philadelphia>

JAMES FORTEN



by Robert Douglas, Jr.;
Housed at HSP

James Forten (1766-1842) was one of Philadelphia's most distinguished and important citizens of his time. Forten was sailor, sailmaker, merchant, investor, businessman, landlord, essayist, and abolitionist who used his wealth and social standing to work for civil rights and the abolition of slavery.

James was born along the Delaware River in Philadelphia to free black parents, though his grandparents were slaves. As a child, he worked with his father as a sailmaker in Robert Bridge's sail loft. At age fourteen, James joined the Continental Navy as a cabin boy on the Royal Louis which was later captured by the British. James became a British prisoner but was eventually released in 1782 through a prisoner exchange. Forten returned home and to the sail making shop where he quickly rose to foreman and eventually became owner of

Philadelphia's most innovative and profitable sail making business.

Forten became one of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia and began his career as a civil rights activist writing pamphlets entitled *Letters From a Man of Colour*. Through his work, he met and befriended the abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison. Forten wrote editorials and helped fund Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*.

James Forten continued his fight against slavery until his death in 1842 at age 75. Forten's nine children and grandchildren continued his legacy with important work supporting temperance, women's suffrage, and equal rights for African-Americans.

"It seems almost incredible that the advocates of liberty should conceive of the idea of selling a fellow creature to slavery." James Forten, circa 1820

Compiled by Nancy S. Cohen, M.B.A., Newsletter Editor

Women for Great Philadelphia, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation of volunteers. The goals of the corporation are to promote and enhance the historical, philosophical, educational and cultural value of Greater Philadelphia and to maintain and preserve Laurel Hill Mansion.
www.womenforgreaterphiladelphia.org