

# **GARVAN WOODLAND GARDENS**

## **Bob Bledsoe, Executive Director**

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Verna Cook Garvan, a long-time resident of Southern Arkansas, was founder and benefactress of Garvan Woodland Gardens.

The site for Garvan Woodland Gardens was purchased in the 1920's after a timber clear-cut in 1915. Mrs. Garvan loved this beautiful place so much that she never allowed it to be cut again. In 1956, as a self-taught gardener, she began to develop it as a garden. She was intimately familiar with the land and laid out each path, marking every tree to be removed. Verna also personally chose each new plant and selected its location.

Over the next forty years, Mrs. Garvan planted thousands of specimens which now form an impressive collection. There are hundreds of rare shrubs and trees, some more than 40 years old.

Upon her death in 1993, Mrs. Garvan bequeathed the property to the School of Architecture through the University of Arkansas Foundation. Now an independent department of the University's Fay Jones School of Architecture, the Gardens continue to flourish and grow.

It was Mrs. Garvan's wish that the Gardens be used to educate and serve the people of Arkansas, providing them the joy and repose it had offered her. She noted the devastation of the environment that had taken place in her lifetime and wished to preserve a remnant of the twentieth century's natural grandeur for generations to come.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Garvan Woodland Gardens furthers the university's mission of teaching, research, and public service through its own mission:

- Preserve and enhance a unique part of the Ouachita Mountain environment;
- Provide people with a place of learning, research, cultural enrichment, and serenity;
- Develop and sustain gardens, landscapes, and structures of exceptional aesthetics, design, and construction; and
- Partner with and serve the community of which the Garden is a part.

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### **PROGRAMS AND DEFINITIONS**

#### *General Administration*

General Administration includes activities related to planning, co-ordination, budget adherence and management of the mission of Garvan Woodland Gardens through the outreach in the areas of Volunteer Co-Ordination, Development, Wedding Co-Ordination, Facility Rental, Education Programs, Special Event Co-Ordination and Membership Supervision.

The following are examples of services provided to external constituencies by General Administration:

- Co-Ordination and Planning of 200 Group Tours.
- Co-Ordination and Planning of 150 Weddings and 55 Receptions.
- Presentation of 10 Special Events.
- Management of over 400 Volunteers providing 17,500+ volunteer hours.
- Outreach to 3,500 member families and millions raised in Development Outreach.
- 50 Adult Educational Programs presented.

#### *Operational Administration*

Operational Administration includes activities related to the care, maintenance and presentation of natural displays in a 210 acre woodland garden.

The following are examples of services provided to external constituencies by Operational Administration.

- The annual planting of 125,000 tulip bulbs for spring "Tulip Mania".
- Oversight of 2 million holiday lights on 10 acres for the 60,000 + visitors to Holiday Light Event.
- Arborists and Horticulturists maintaining a safe and pleasant visitor experience for over 130,000 guests.
- Construction of new features within the Gardens.

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**GENERAL REVENUE REQUEST**

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board has recommended \$500,000 in general revenue funds for Garvan Woodland Gardens. These funds will be used to further grow our outreach to the state and beyond through enhanced programmatic features, greater professional services and strategic long range planning. Funding would also include further refinement of the Operations Administration to build upon its World Class status as a premiere botanical garden within the United States.

**PERSONNEL REQUEST**

No additional positions over authorized have been requested.