

Legislation recognized Northwest's 'living museum of trees'

As a child, I would spend hours playing near a big old sycamore tree by the creek, so I guess I could say I have always been a “tree hugger.” Accordingly, in the early 1990s when President Hubbard asked me, as one of my first assignments as his executive assistant, to get Northwest designated as the state arboretum, I was pleased but a bit overwhelmed. There was much to do before the legislation could be introduced – inventory and assess the trees on campus, establish committees to determine the direction and scope of the arboretum, visit other arboretums to formulate ideas of what we wanted and identify legislators to introduce and carry the bill.

Luckily, one of the best comprehensive arboretum networks could be found in nearby Nebraska. Dr. Hubbard had come from a presidency there, so he knew the importance of having a living museum of trees.

It took several years before we were ready to introduce the legislation. However, Northwest was extremely fortunate to have the expertise provided by Lezlee Johnson, one of only a few foresters in this area of the country. She was first a member of the Arboretum Committee and would later become the director of the arboretum. In addition, we were fortunate to have many other dedicated people, such as then-grounds director Randy Willis and horticulturist Syd Weybrew, sharing their expert opinions.


I was so proud when the legislation for the

arboretum passed, even if, regretfully, we could get no funding. It was at that time in 1993 that Northwest and its scenic grounds officially became the Missouri Arboretum.

I think most Northwest alumni and friends would agree that we have one of the most beautiful campuses in the state with an incredible number of species of trees that are a great resource for students, area schoolchildren and anyone who visits the Northwest campus. I am proud about what was accomplished on behalf of our campus and arboretum.

With the devastation from the December ice storm, 79 trees were lost and hundreds more were damaged. Please consider supporting the arboretum to rebuild the collection. A gift of \$300 to Northwest will commemorate a tree for its lifetime. After my father died, I commemorated a tulip poplar tree – one of his favorites. When my husband, Rick, and I retired, we gave money for additional trees to be planted. Think of giving a tree for a birthday, anniversary, graduation, or just because it's good for the environment. This is a gift that really makes a visible difference.

Sincerely,



Annelle Weymuth

Former Executive Assistant to the President



Dr. Annelle Weymuth, former assistant to the president and self-proclaimed “tree hugger,” was instrumental in establishing Northwest's campus as the Missouri Arboretum. In their retirement, she and her husband, Dr. Rick Weymuth, professor emeritus of music, continued fulfilling their passion for nature during a trip to the National Botanical Gardens of Australia.

The mission of the *Northwest Alumni Magazine* is to foster connections between alumni, friends and Northwest Missouri State University. The offices of University Advancement and University Relations strive to inform readers of the accomplishments of Northwest's alumni, friends, faculty, students and administration and to positively position the University in the hearts of its many constituents to increase public and private support.

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