

For Immediate Release

March 25, 2014
Norfolk Botanical Garden
6700 Azalea Garden Road
Norfolk, VA 23518

NORFOLK BOTANICAL GARDEN
A Natural Beauty.

Kelly Welsh
Public Relations Manager
Office: (757) 441-5830 ext. 346
Cell: (757) 404-8269

WPA Garden Heritage Celebration



Announcement

NORFOLK, VA– Join Norfolk Botanical Garden (NBG) for the 6th annual Works Progress Administration (WPA) Garden Heritage Day Celebration, *A Garden for All* on Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to noon. Enjoy complimentary admission between 10am -11am for this event. Regular admission applies before and after. This year's celebration features Rev. Dr. Linda Clark, granddaughter of a WPA worker, as the keynote speaker and the invocation presented by Rev. Dr. Helen Bessent-Byrd. The event also includes God's Trombones, a reading of known WPA names and Benita Adams will serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies.

The WPA Garden Heritage Day event began in 2009 with the unveiling of the commemorative sculpture *Breaking Ground* and dedication of the WPA Memorial Garden. The memorial honors and celebrates the contributions of the 220 African American workers whose labor created the Garden.

On June 30, 1938, Representative Norman R. Hamilton announced a Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant project to create Norfolk Botanical Garden. A group of more than 200 African-American women and 20 African-American men were assigned to the project. The workers cleared dense vegetation and planted the first azaleas around what is now called Mirror Lake. In just one year, thousands of azaleas, rhododendrons, shrubs and trees were planted. Laborers were paid twenty-five cents an hour.

The Garden is presently an oasis of more than 40 themed gardens, including *WOW- World of Wonders: A Children's Adventure Garden* encompassing 155 beautiful acres and is the only WPA garden in existence today. It is a diverse garden with stunning plant collections that can be explored by tram, boat, or walking tours. Join the celebration that honors the dedication of the WPA workers and the accomplishments of the Garden over the past 76 years!

About Norfolk Botanical Garden

The Garden is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is recognized as a Virginia Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a Virginia Green attraction, and is managed by the Norfolk Botanical Garden Society supported by the City of Norfolk. Norfolk Botanical Garden is dedicated to enriching life by promoting the enjoyment of plants and the environment through beautiful gardens and education programs. Admission is \$11 for Adults, \$10 for seniors and military, \$9 for ages 3-17, 2 and under are free. For more information, visit www.norfolkbotanicalgarden.org

###



The 200 African-American women and 20 African-American men planted the first plants in the Garden and left a remarkable legacy for all of Hampton Roads and the nation. By 1941, the Garden displayed nearly five thousand azaleas, and seventy-five landscaped acres that were encompassed by five miles of walking trails.



Left Photo: (taken by Donna Krabill at last year's WPA Garden Heritage Celebration Ceremony)
Mary Elizabeth Ferguson is the only known WPA worker living today. She is quite the celebrity in the community and to all of the NBG family. We honor her and all of the African-American men and women who first cleared the land and planted the first plantings 76 years ago.