

# Full



Laszlo Bodo

The spheres now grace the garden at Mr. Weymouth's home, The Big Bend.

# Circle

HISTORIC

ARMILLARY SPHERES

RETURN TO THE

WINTERTHUR GARDEN

by *Kris deMesse*

In the first half of the 20th century, Henry Francis du Pont created the magnificent garden around the mansion at Winterthur. Following a practice he observed while visiting English country estates, du Pont included gazebos, furniture, statuary, and sundials in his garden plan. These thoughtful additions provided quiet places to contemplate nature's beauty and introduced delightful vistas and visual surprises.

Unfortunately, many of the original objects that once graced the garden have suffered damage from rodents and the environment, causing them to be removed and placed in storage. However, a new plan is under way to restore some of these treasured artifacts and return their replicas to the landscape.

John Feliciani and George A. Weymouth joined Matt and Jon White for the unveiling of the reproduction armillary spheres.

One such project is the restoration of the impressive armillary spheres that H. F. du Pont purchased to flank the Conservatory's western doors. The original spheres were made in Europe in the 1800s. Their reproductions now adorn the terrace, thanks to the generosity of George A. Weymouth, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Brandywine River Museum and a member of the Winterthur Garden Committee.

Mr. Weymouth saw the armillary spheres in July 2001 while on a tour with Tom Buchter, former Deputy Director for the Garden. The two men were on the hunt for artifacts to enhance Enchanted Woodstn, the new children's garden then under development. Spotting the striking instruments in one of the estate's barns, Mr. Weymouth remarked on their beauty and expressed interest in helping return copies of them to the garden.

A careful and lengthy search for a fabricator ultimately focused on Heritage Metalworks, Ltd., based in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Owned by brothers Matt and Jon White, Heritage specializes in antique repro-

ductions and custom fabrication of metalworks, including lighting and architectural hardware, as well as the restoration of antique metal objects. The owners' insistence on precision and quality required many visits to Winterthur to measure and photograph the original spheres.

A generous donation by Mr. Weymouth ultimately funded the reproduction project, resulting in a set of spheres for both Winterthur and his own garden. At a ceremony on the Conservatory Terrace on December 8, 2004, John Feliciani, Interim Deputy Director for the Garden, presented the spheres to Mr. Weymouth, who expressed his appreciation and delight, remarking, "I am so thrilled to have had a hand in helping bring these magnificent objects back to the Winterthur Garden. This garden has always been very special to me, and now I will have a small part of Winterthur in my own garden."

And we express our sincere gratitude to George A. Weymouth, whose generous spirit has helped bring us one step closer to restoring H. F. du Pont's vision for the Winterthur Garden. ❖



Laszlo Bodo

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