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Maxwell Arboretum Anniversary Celebration

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MAXWELL ARBORETUM ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
JULY 26, 2002
EAST CAMPUS UNION
JOHN C. OWENS
NU VICE PRESIDENT AND HARLAN VICE CHANCELLOR, IANR

What a pleasure it is to have this opportunity to welcome you to campus today as we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Earl G. Maxwell Arboretum.

Henry Van Dyke once wrote that “He that planteth a tree ... provideth a kindness for many generations, and faces that he hath not seen shall bless him.”

Certainly Earl G. Maxwell planted kindness for many generations during his 1934-1954 tenure as Nebraska’s extension forester. Today the Maxwell Arboretum is considered one of the most diverse plant-collections in the region – I’m told there are more than 250 woody plant species in the Maxwell Arboretum, as well as many herbaceous species. While I haven’t counted them, I’ve certainly enjoyed every-one as I’ve strolled through the Arboretum for some thinking time!

EMERSON'S PIRATE!

First-planted to oaks and evergreens, today the Maxwell Arboretum contains an extensive and diverse group of trees, shrubs, vines, and perennial plants. The one-acre managed-prairie, our wonderful collection of labeled lilacs, the old roses, hostas, other perennial plants, and more all add to the beauty of our campus, and are a valuable teaching-resource for pre-school to graduate students. We thank

"everyone who has contributed to the Earl G. Maxwell Arboretum over the years – so many wonderful gifts and vision.

It was in 1967 that the NU Board of Regents ~~authorized-designating~~ five East Campus acres as the Earl G. Maxwell Arboretum; in 2001 we expanded the Arboretum to include ~~about~~ three acres of historic grounds along Holdrege.

I am especially ~~pleased~~ to be part of this celebration today ~~because~~ it reminds me, in the midst of Nebraska's drought and the extremely-serious economic situation in which our state finds itself, that we must take the long view, as Earl Maxwell and ~~other-contributors~~ to this arboretum did, the long-view ~~necessary~~ to do our ~~best~~ to benefit this great state our ~~and~~ land grant university, to benefit ~~and~~ the people who, most certainly, will come after us at this great University.

We are working ~~especially-hard~~ in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and at the university ~~right-now~~ to try to determine ~~the ways~~ we can do the *least* long-term damage to our state and the university as we face ~~significant cuts~~ to our budgets. I emphasize the *least* damage because there is no way we can make these cuts without ~~sacrificing~~ ~~valuable-programs~~ and ~~good-work~~ that we know Nebraskans hold dear. Every cut ~~affects~~ someone. Every cut ~~diminishes~~ the work we can do. Every cut we face now is the kind of cut that leads to ~~sleepless-nights~~ and ~~heavy-spirits~~.

Yesterday the governor announced his budget cutting plan for the special legislative session which begins July 30. He recommended a \$XX million, or XX percent, cut to the university budget. We cannot make "such cuts" to this institution and not bleed. And, as we've all read in the newspaper, the state's deficit could swell to an estimated \$778 million in three years if "solutions" are not found. Solutions simply must be found. Solutions must be found, or we must all fear for Nebraska.

In the midst of "such-circumstances" it can be difficult to remember there are causes for celebration. So today I am "doubly grateful" to have this opportunity to be with you here, to celebrate the 35th anniversary and the vision of Earl G. Maxwell "and others" who years-ago planted trees that today provide us shelter, shade, and a sense of comfort AND PLACE,

I'm told that "when" Earl Maxwell spoke to garden and civic groups promoting tree planting, he often "ended" his talks by reciting "the poems" of James Whitcomb Riley.

I'd like to honor "Earl Maxwell" by closing my remarks today in that very same way. James Whitcomb Riley wrote about "summer" in his poem "An Old Friend," and "somehow" the feeling he engenders does, at least for me, also fit the Maxwell Arboretum to a tee:

Cyril Bish - Friend
Earl Maxwell -
Recorded the
POEMS
"INDIANA - TW AUG"
TEXAS - TW AUG

An Old Friend by James Whitcomb Riley

“Hey, Old Midsummer! Are you here again—
With all your harvest-store of olden joys —
Vast overhanging “meadow-lands” of rain,
And drowsy dawns, and noons when golden grain—
Nods in the sun, and lazy truant boys —
Drift ever listlessly adown the day,
Too full of joy to rest, and dreams to play.

“The same old Summer, with the same old smile —
Beaming upon us in the same old way —
We knew in childhood! Though a weary while —
Since that far time, yet memories reconcile —
The heart with odorous breaths of clover hay;
And again I hear the doves, and the sun streams through —
The old barn door just as it used to do.

“And so it seems like welcoming a friend —
An old, OLD friend, upon his coming home —
From some far country — coming home to spend —
Long, loitering days with me: And I extend —
My hand in rapturous glee: — And so you’ve come! —
Ho, I’m so glad! Come in and take a chair:
Well, this is just like OLD times, I declare!”

Earl G. Maxwell was 82 when he died in 1966. What a wonderful legacy he
left the University of Nebraska and the citizens of Nebraska, ~~_____~~

And how happy I am to be able to welcome you as we celebrate today! Thank
you.

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THE MAXWELL LEGACY