

Design elements included a small octagonal pool at the rear of the arbor left open at the center of the arbor for a medallion with a Celtic cross and scriptural passage from John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." A systematic scheme was created for transfer of names from the old bronze plaques to new granite panels. These new granite panels for the names of deceased members interred in the garden would line a brick wall.



And so from the early months of 2004, following untold efforts involved in the redesign and reformation of the original Memorial Garden, the newly built and planted garden was rededicated on Sunday, May 20, 2007. The precise service of rededication was integrated into the normal 11:00 a.m. service led by Pastor Bob Dunham. Central to this ceremony was the participation by all in the Litany of Dedication. All were invited to a reception in the Fellowship Hall to commemorate the rededication, to visit the new garden and celebrate its renewal.

In Conclusion

A journey of beauty, joy and pain began with Clara McClamroch's vision to turn an unattractive service area into a Memorial Garden in memory of her daughter.

This grew into renewal and hope for our church family. As the garden has evolved, it remains very centrally a place for the burial of cremated remains of our deceased loved ones and for their remembrance.

But for all members it offers a place for meditation and prayer, a quiet oasis from a busy routine and a reminder of the beauty of nature in our lives. As with all gardens, ours has grown and changed through the years. It also has become integral both to the architecture and life of the church, offering something to all of our members, for in the beauty of nature, we find one more expression of God's love.



The complete text of the of the Memorial Garden history may be found on our website.

Anne McClamroch McFall

Memorial Garden



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From Courtyard to Garden

In December 1978 our newsletter announced, "Church Courtyard Becomes a Garden." The garden is a gift to the church from Mrs. Roland McClamroch, in memory of her daughter, the late Anne McClamroch McFall." The article described the varied uses of the garden and stated that the garden would be formally dedicated in the coming spring.

Previously, Mrs. McClamroch had designated in her will that a generous amount of her estate be used to establish an endowment fund for the creation and maintenance of a garden in the brick courtyard of the church. She imagined a place of natural beauty to serve as a memorial garden where the cremated remains of church members could be buried. The McClamrochs had two children: Sandy, their son who later served as Mayor of Chapel Hill and Anne, their daughter whose life was cut short by illness in mid-life. Anne was married to Walter McFall. The garden would be named in her memory.

Mrs. McClamroch appointed three Trustees of the endowment fund and entrusted them with its management. Ben Courts took care of the finances. Much of the planning and creation of the garden was shared by Mrs. McClamroch, Mrs. Thelma Boyd and Mrs. Betty Caldwell. They began a study, visiting other memorial gardens for ideas.

In 1978 Lewis Clarke Associates from Raleigh was employed as the landscape designer and architect for the project. Later, Mrs. McClamroch awarded the contract to two local young women. Catherine Chandler and Holly Snyder were partners in a registered NC Landscape Contractor firm known as Outdoor Craftswomen.

The work began in May 1978. The first task was to remove and re-route the many utility structures for the operation of the church buildings that were housed in the courtyard. The large church bell from the original sanctuary, which burned in 1958, had been kept in the courtyard and at that time was moved to its new location in the church front yard. The hardscaping continued through the heat of summer and the project was completed by late October. Plans were made to formally dedicate the garden the following spring.



Mrs. Boyd, Mrs. Caldwell and Mr. Courts submitted a policy statement on the use of the Garden to the Session on May 1, 1979, and it was adopted by Session on August 30, 1979. Guidelines are listed, including that ashes must be buried in a biodegradable container or without any container, and that individual bronze plaques would display the names of the deceased.

A Service of Dedication for the Memorial Garden was held at 9:00 a.m. Easter Sunday, April 15, 1979. A presentation was made by Mrs. McClamroch. The service ended with a hymn and the benediction. Bob Dunham recalls the following: "Vance Barron, on that occasion led the congregation in a Litany of Dedication praying that the beauty of the garden might remind us of the goodness of God's creation, that it might be a refuge for meditation, reflection, and for experiencing God's holy peace, and that it be a resting place for the mortal remains of our loved ones as we trust in God's promise of resurrection to eternal life."

For the twenty years after its inception, till the late nineties, the garden continued to evolve. There was an ongoing effort to keep up the memorial plaques, which would weather and need cleaning. In 1996, after thoughtful consideration, the decision was made to transfer the McClamroch McFall Memorial Garden Funds to the UPC Endowment Fund.

From Tragedy to Renewal

On July 19, 2003, in perhaps the greatest single family tragedy in the life of UPC, George and Julia Brumley, son George and daughter Jordan were killed in a horrific accident. Julia was the daughter of members Dr. Edwin and Nancy Preston. When she and George married in the church sanctuary he too became a member. Both children were baptized in the church. That July they were traveling in Africa with eight other Brumley family members, and all were killed when their chartered plane crashed into Mt. Kenya. These losses deeply stunned our community and presaged a new era in the life of the Memorial Garden.

From Task Force to Renovation

Unrelated to this tragedy, in November 2003, Mindy Douglas Adams, UPC Associate Pastor, was concerned that space in the Memorial Garden was limited for adding plaques to the garden wall. She convened a Task Force to consider this and other issues related to the garden. The Task Force met over several months reviewing the garden's history and existing documents and many recommendations resulted. Nancy and Ed Preston were involved in this phase and their focus evolved into an interest to improve the current garden with a view to having it as a final resting place for the remains of their lost loved ones. This goal came into alignment with the recently articulated need for renovation of the garden. As a result, profound suffering in loss began its transformation in an act of generosity creating beauty and benefiting others.

On March 21, 2004, The Garden Committee and Nancy and Ed Preston met in the church parlor with Chip Calloway, a landscape designer from Greensboro. Bob Dunham assumed leadership and provided gentle, wise guidance. Both structural and horticultural issues were involved making it necessary to have an architect. Meetings were held with Robert Hayter of Pinehurst, and Mr. Calloway. They would work together to produce conceptual drawings and sketches. The aim was to accomplish needed changes while maintaining the existing structure to the greatest extent possible.