

FRIENDS OF

Florham

FDU PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGES FRIENDS OF FLORHAM BOARD MEMBERS

One of Fairleigh Dickinson University President Michael Adams last official acts was to award Presidential Medals and Citations to Friends of Florham Board members Suzy Moran and Linda Meister. Dr. Adams was an enthusiastic advocate and supporter of the Friends of Florham. During his tenure, the Friends initiated and completed a record number of worthy projects, most recently the renovation of Sarah Sullivan Lounge, Hartman Lounge, the Great Hall and the President's Office.

Presidential Medals are presented to individuals whose dedication to the University is deemed worthy of public acknowledgment. On June 5, 2012, the medals were presented at a gathering of faculty, administrators and members of the University's Board of Trustees. FDU's Interim President Sheldon Drucker read the citations that accompanied the medals.

Mrs. Moran was cited for the time and talent she generously provided to the restoration of the public interiors of Hennessy Hall, "ensuring that the furnishings of Hartman and Sarah Sullivan Lounges and the Office of the President reflect the period in which they originated and the distinction of a global university." Mrs. Moran is one of those



BOARD MEMBERS SUZY MORAN (LEFT) AND LINDA MEISTER

people whose time and talents make the world more beautiful, in every way.

The citation read to President of the Board of the Friends of Florham Linda Meister acknowledged her as "an accomplished preservationist who provided the leadership and knowledge needed to restore the first floor of Hennessy Hall to its former glory and provide a suitable setting for a global university." Under Mrs. Meister's leadership, the Friends of Florham have increased community awareness of the College at Florham in general, and the historical significance of Hennessy Hall in particular.

Both women were also cited for their outstanding efforts

within the community, as well as their mutual dedication to the poor and homeless of Guatemala through their affiliation with From Houses to Homes, a New Jersey-based nonprofit founded in 2004 to build homes and provide health care and education to disadvantaged communities in Guatemala. They are amazing ambassadors to our community and the world, and richly deserve Fairleigh Dickinson University's acknowledgment.

In response to Mr. Drucker's presentation, Mrs. Meister and Mrs. Moran said they were pleased with what the Friends of Florham accomplished in Hennessy Hall, and they look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with Fairleigh Dickinson University.

SPRING 2013

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Our Gala in late September was a great success. The cuisine featured autumnal dishes, and guests danced to the soft music of the Bucky Pizzarelli Trio. Once again, we thank Audrey and Henry Parker for their assistance in procuring Bucky for our event. And, of course, we are so grateful to the co-chairs, Kathy Atencio, Suzy Moran and Dawn Dupak, for pulling the gala together and creating such a wonderful evening in the Twombly tradition.

Proceeds enabled Friends of Florham to begin work on the Provost's Office. Formerly Hamilton Twombly's personal library, and perhaps a retreat from the stiff dinner parties favored by Mrs. Twombly, the space features an extraordinary Carrara marble mantelpiece and outstanding Beaux

Arts moldings. With the help of Suzy Moran, Friends of Florham board member and interior designer, the rooms are now being refurbished in keeping with other mansion renovations.

Last October, author Carol Wallace entertained a large audience with a witty lecture on the marriages of rich American beauties to impoverished English peers. Ms. Wallace, whose work has been incorporated into the famous PBS series, "Downton Abbey," was awarded a New Jersey State Legislature Resolution for her literary endeavors. Friends of Florham also received a New Jersey State Legislature Resolution for their work in historic preservation in New Jersey.

Friends of Florham's lectures are now drawing a sizable audience. On March 17, we will compete with

St. Patrick's Day activities, when we present Ulysses Dietz, the Newark Museum's chief curator and curator of decorative arts, who will speak on "Beauty, Money and Power: The Transformation of Taste in the Gilded Age." The Gilded Age, while short lived, made a lasting impression on American cultural history. You can be sure that Mr. Dietz, an expert in this field, will treat us to a fine analysis of this period.

Speaking of resolutions, the Resolutions and Presidential Medals Suzy Moran and I each received from Michael Adams were so meaningful. Written in his final days, they praise our work at FDU. I must point out that we could never have achieved what we have without the contributions of our many dedicated donors. Thank you again.

— Linda Meister

BEAUTY, MONEY AND POWER IN THE GILDED AGE

Overwhelmed or even hooked on the opulence of "Downton Abbey?" Join the Friends on Sunday, March 17, in Hartman Lounge, Hennessy Hall, to hear Ulysses Grant Dietz, chief curator and curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum, give a provocative talk, "Beauty, Money and Power: The Transformation of Taste in America's Gilded Age." Dietz will bring the story closer to home as he discusses the idea of how wealthy Americans should live was changed forever by the explosion of wealth in the aftermath of the Civil War. Rather than talking about particular movements, however, Dietz will focus on the rise of the mansion in America, and more specifically, on the

somewhat surprising shifts in concepts of taste and style during the period.

Style during the Gilded Age also underwent a couple of developments. At first, as Dietz explains, newly minted American millionaires sought out things there were luxurious, costly and modern — and they emphasized the Americanness of their houses and the furnishings of their interiors. By the late 1880s, however, those at the top of the American social pyramid — such as the members of the Vanderbilt family and the related Twomblys of Florham — began to see that old foreign things with aristocratic histories were even more desirable than anything modern, no matter how opulent, because they were rarer and had an aura of power about them.

By 1900, even as the Arts and Crafts movement was gathering momentum in America, the country's financial elite rejected the modern and embraced everything old and European. Of particular importance, this shift dramatically changed the way their houses appeared, but it also changed the evolution of American museums. Even after World War I ended the party, the idea or definition of "good taste" in America had changed for the next century.

The Friends look forward to seeing you on Sunday, March 17, 3 p.m. in Hartman Lounge, Hennessy Hall, College at Florham. Admission is \$15 at the door, and refreshments will be served. Mr. Dietz will also sign copies of his book, *Dream House: The White House as an American Home*.

— Carol Bere



ULYSSES GRANT DIETZ



PAULA GASH (LEFT), SAMUEL M. CONVISSOR AND SARAH GREENBERG



SHELDON AND SANDI DRUCKER



(FROM LEFT) STEVEN AND DANIELLE LINDNER, KATHRYN DOUGLAS AND PETER WOOLLEY



RICHARD AND ANN WELLBROCK



RUTH AND EDWARD L. HENNESSY, JR.



SUSAN ADAMS (LEFT) AND BETH QUEEN



HENRY PARKER, LINDA MEISTER (CENTER) AND AUDREY PARKER



ELEANOR FRIEDL AND ARTHUR T. VANDERBILT, II



A VANDERBILT WEDDING

Florence Vanderbilt Twombly's niece — Consuelo Vanderbilt — considered herself at 18 an “ugly duckling,” but she was head over heels in love and engaged to Winthrop Rutherford, the son of a prominent New York family, who at six feet two, athletic and handsome, would be described today as a “hunk.” Consuelo's domineering mother did everything in her power to break this engagement and to arrange for her daughter what she considered a suitable marriage: to royalty. She was able to arrange a marriage with the impoverished ninth Duke of Marlborough who desperately needed Vanderbilt money to save his family home, Blenheim.

The first realization of what was happening to her hit Consuelo on the morning of her wedding: November 6, 1895.

Consuelo looked outside and realized her marriage to the Duke of Marlborough had become a spectacle. Her family's mansion was being patrolled by 50 policemen and 12 detectives holding back the crowds. By 10:30 there were 2,000 onlookers, mainly women, armed with opera glasses, camp stools and lunch bags, thronging the streets around the mansion.

Whenever it was rumored that Miss Vanderbilt was about to ap-

pear, the women would sweep across the street in a wild rush to see the future Duchess of Marlborough. For several hours, small lively battles were waged between the police and curious women, all the way down Fifth Avenue.

Outside of St. Thomas Episcopal Church at Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street, 300 policemen struggled to maintain some semblance of order. The sidewalks and streets around the brownstone church were mobbed with 7,000 sightseers.

At 10 o'clock, the two big front doors of St. Thomas opened, and at once there was a rush of favored persons holding the coveted invitations. They pushed their way into the fragrant church.

Eighty decorators and florists had been working in the church for several days. From the dome of the church, 95 feet above the pews, six massive garlands of greens, intertwined with lilies, roses and chrysanthemums, draped all the way down to the galleries. The columns supporting the church were entwined with pink and white chrysanthemums and ropes of white roses. Trellises of lilies of the valley and laurel, interwoven with pink chrysanthemums, banked the walls of the church and hid the chancel rail. At the end of every fifth pew was a four-foot-high floral torch, composed of bunches of pink and white roses, with ribbons of pink and white satin tied in a bow and flowing to the floor.

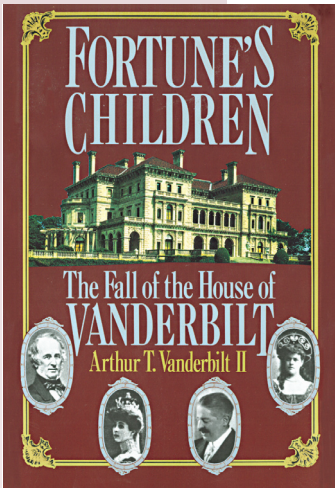
Within minutes, the pews were filled with wealthy members of New York, Washington, Philadelphia and Boston society.

“I spent the morning of my wedding day in tears and alone,” Consuelo remembered, “no one came near me.”

Not even her wedding gifts, which filled her room, consoled her. Not all the pearls her mother had given her: the three-foot ropes of evenly matched pearls, each half an inch in diameter, that had graced the neck of Catherine of Russia, or those that had once been the Empress Eugenie's. Not the diamond tiara with pear-shaped stones that her father had given her, or the diamond belt from Marlborough. Not any of the gifts, which were said to be “more numerous and valuable than the entire stock carried in many jewelry stores that do business in New York City.” Consuelo picked up the pair of antique silver candlesticks from Winty, held them to her, and cried, feeling she had “betrayed the love of another man.”

“Like an automaton,” Consuelo “donned the lovely lingerie with its real lace and the white silk stockings and shoes” and slipped into the wedding dress with “its tiers of Brussels lace cascading over white satin,” its “high collar and long tight sleeves,” and the “court train, embroidered with seed pearls and silver,” which “fell from my shoulders in folds of billowing whiteness.” Consuelo

(continued on page 5)



UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, MARCH 17, LECTURE

Beauty, Money and Power: The Transformation of Taste in America's Gilded Age, Ulysses Grant Dietz, Senior Curator and Curator of Decorative Arts, Newark Museum, Hartman Lounge, Hennessy Hall, 3–5 p.m., includes reception and book signing.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, FRIENDS OF FLORHAM GALA

Lenfell Hall, Hennessy Hall, 7–11 p.m.

CAROL WALLACE LECTURES ON HER BOOK, 'TO MARRY AN ENGLISH LORD'

Downton Abbey aired its third season beginning in January, but Friends of Florham beat them to it. On October 21, in Lenfell Hall, author Carol Wallace, lectured on her book, *To Marry an English Lord: Tales of Wealth, Marriage, Sex and Snobbery*, one of the inspirations for the astonishingly popular BBC series.

Ms. Wallace, author of other books, the most recent being

the historical novel, *Leaving Van Gogh*, was living in London when she undertook the co-authorship of the book that serendipitously served as the basis for the series. The character of Lady Cora Grantham is an amalgam of the many young, rich American heiresses eagerly sought by impoverished English peers at the turn of the century. The young women were not averse to gaining

an English title, and the English peers were not averse to their wealth. (continued on page 6)



MILA JASEY (LEFT) PRESENTS CITATIONS TO CAROL WALLACE (CENTER) AND LINDA MEISTER. ACCEPTING FOR THE FRIENDS.

A VANDERBILT WEDDING

(continued from page 4)

walked downstairs to meet her father, who was to drive with her to the church. She “felt cold and numb” as if this were not happening to her, as if she was going into shock. Her father took one look at his daughter and realized that something had to be done before they could proceed to the church. “We were 20 minutes late, for my eyes, swollen with the tears I had wept, required copious sponging before I could face the curious stares that always greet a bride.”

Outside, down on Fifth Avenue, a great shout arose: “The bride is coming!”

Four carriages carrying the bride and her bridesmaids proceeded down Fifth Avenue.

As the driver of William Vanderbilt’s carriage called to the horses and stopped with a flourish in front of St. Thomas, the church chimes were merrily pealing. The sun had broken through the morning mist.

Her father stepped out of the carriage carrying Consuelo’s enormous bridal bouquet of white orchids and then helped his daughter step down from the carriage and disentangled her 15-foot train. The crowds went wild.

Tall, slender, erect and graceful, her dark brown hair brushed back in a pompadour, Consuelo looked very much like the duchess her mother had so long groomed her to be.

After the wedding ceremony, the bride and groom, followed by the father of the bride, proceeded into the vestry room.

There, the duke’s attorneys showed Marlborough, Consuelo and her father where to sign the marriage contract they had drafted to “profit the illustrious family” — the illustrious family, of course, being the duke’s.

In addition to setting aside \$2.5 million for the young couple, William Vanderbilt signed a separate agreement memorializing his obligation to pay both the duke and the duchess \$100,000 every year for life.

As the march from “Tannhauser” resounded through St. Thomas Church, and the chimes outside rang the news to the city, the bride and groom walked down the aisle and out to the waiting carriage. “People were surprised to discover that she was fully half a head taller than the bridegroom,” the papers noted. As the gossip sheet *Town Topics* summed it up: “Winty was out-

classed. Six-foot-two in his golf stockings, he was no match for five-foot-six in a coronet.”

As Consuelo and Marlborough settled themselves into the carriage, Consuelo was informed by her new husband that he had no intention ever of revisiting the United States, for he despised “anything that was not British.” Marlborough immediately informed his new wife, “tragically,” that to marry her he had had “to give up the girl he loved,” but that “a sense of duty to his family and to his traditions” — the preservation of Blenheim — “indicated the sacrifice of personal desires.” Consuelo thereupon told her new husband that “her mother had insisted on her marrying [him], that her mother was strongly opposed to her marrying Rutherford, that she had used every form of pressure short of physical violence to reach her end.”

Later, the *New York World* pictured all 27 of England’s dukes, with those who were still “eligible” outlined in white. “Attention, American heiresses,” the caption read. “What will you bid?”

Excerpted from *Fortune’s Children: The Fall of the House of Vanderbilt* by Arthur T. Vanderbilt, II

— Arthur T. Vanderbilt, II



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FROM LEFT: LINDA MEISTER, FRIENDS OF FLORHAM PRESIDENT; CAROL WALLACE, AUTHOR; AND DEBORAH FALK, DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, NJTV PUBLIC MEDIA NJ

WALLACE LECTURE
(continued from page 5)

The most notable of these heires-esses was Consuelo Vanderbilt, whose mother, Alva, married her off to the Duke of Marlborough. As Consuelo was Florence Twombly's niece, Ms. Wallace was delighted to use her as an example, but her slides introduced us to many other women who followed in Consuelo's footsteps. Some, like Jennie Churchill, were happier in their new life than others.

As Ms. Wallace concluded her talk, Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey, presented her with a Resolution from the New Jersey State

Legislature, praising her literary work. Ms. Jasey also presented a similar Resolution to Friends of Florham, thanking them for their contributions to historic preservation in the state of New Jersey. President of Friends of Florham, Linda Meister, accepted the resolution for members, saying that it had been a pleasure to help preserve the Beaux Arts gem once known as "Florham."

After the talk, Ms. Wallace signed copies of her book, while guests enjoyed wine, cheese and conversation. A special bonus was the presentation of video trailers generously supplied by Debra Falk, director of Communications, NJTV, Public Media NJ, which is responsible for PBS presentations in New Jersey.

BECOME A FRIEND

Join the Friends of Florham. Participate directly in our efforts to preserve the architectural history of Florham, and support our informative program series. Your support will make a difference.

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