

The Louisburg College board of trustees is pleased to announce that the Allen de Hart family has donated the 91-acre De Hart Botanical Gardens and its estate to the College. The nature preserve, located five miles south of Louisburg on U.S. Route 401, is one of two botanical gardens owned by the De Harts (the other is a 165-acre wilderness area near De Hart's birthplace and the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia).

"The gift of the De Hart Gardens will mark one of the greatest historic developments in the 225-year history of the College," says Louisburg College President Dr. Mark La Branche. "It represents an extraordinary legacy created by God, and fashioned through the mind, heart, and

hands of Allen de Hart. This gift will more than double the land mass of our campus, and significantly expand our learning environment."

During the remainder of De Hart's lifetime, he and his family will continue living in the property's ranch-style home and serve as caretakers of the Gardens' forests, trails, lakes, and historic sites, and will monitor events such as concerts, weddings, and special educational tours.

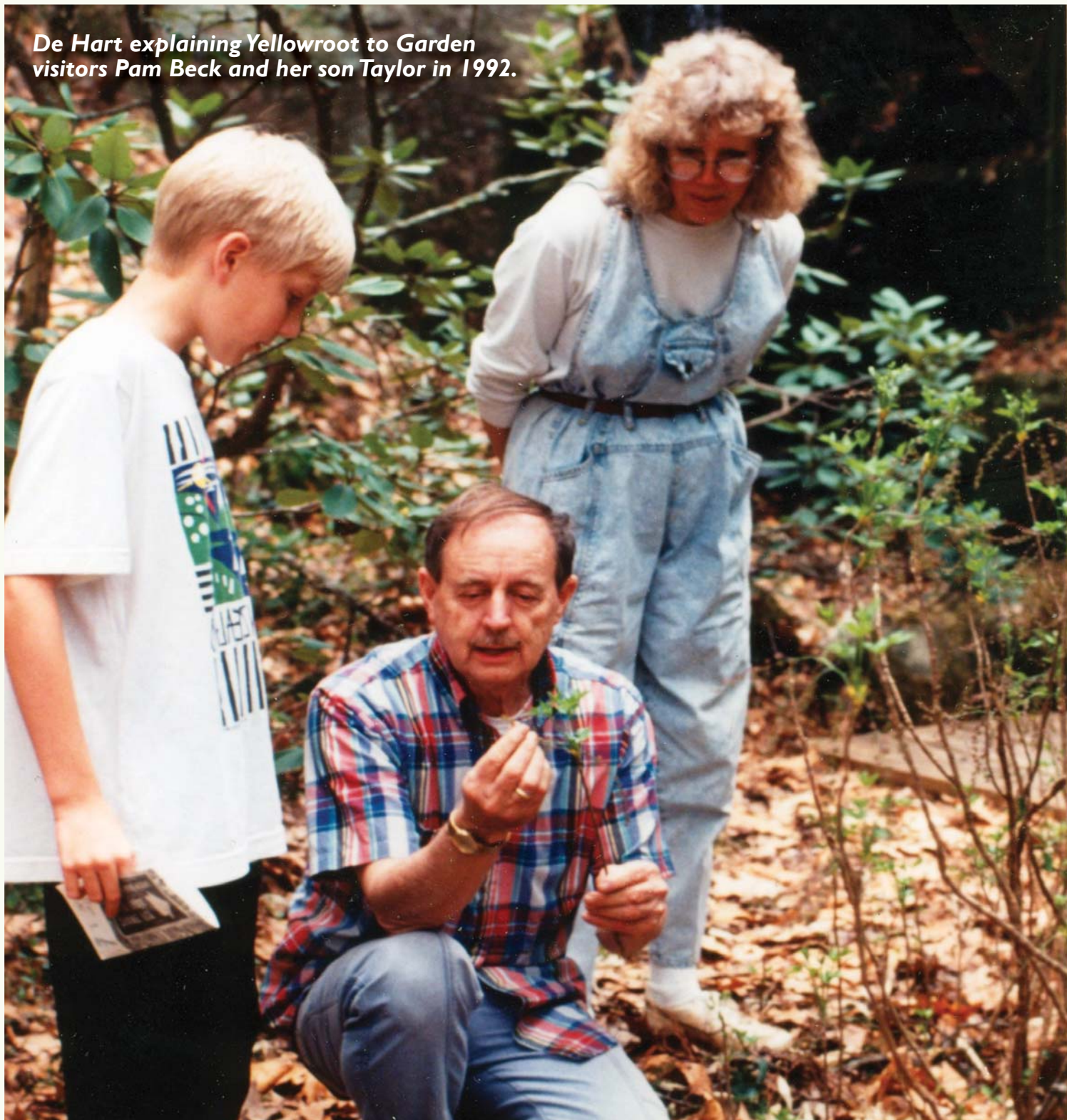
On the following pages, you will learn more about De Hart, the Gardens, and his lifetime of service to the College. We hope to see you at the Gardens one day soon!

A Natural Gift

by Amy Scoggin McManus



De Hart explaining Yellowroot to Garden visitors Pam Beck and her son Taylor in 1992.



WHAT STARTED AS A YOUNG BOY'S FASCINATION

with the natural environment and hiking trails steadily grew into a passion that has spanned nearly 80 years and spurred the creation of two botanical gardens, collegiate courses in outdoor recreation, and nationally-known trail guidebooks.

FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS

If you've ever hiked any of the hundreds of trails in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, or Florida, you've probably walked in Allen de Hart's footsteps. After all, this 85-year-old hiker has measured more than 57,000 trail miles—more than twice the circumference of the world—using a wheel and topographic maps to calculate the distance. He has hiked another 10,525 miles on trails measured by others, including the Appalachian, Florida National Scenic, Grand Canyon, and shorter trails in over 38 states of the U.S.A., along with several in Europe. For the past four decades, he has tackled the immense challenge of mapping some 4,142 trails for his guidebooks and is known throughout the country as an expert trail designer and construction guide.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

De Hart and his wife Flora moved from Virginia to Louisburg in 1957 after accepting professorships at the College. They lived in campus housing while their permanent home was constructed based upon their own design. In 1962, they were thrilled to move into the 11-room ranch house with its surrounding two acres of untouched woodlands in a serene and mostly uninhabited strip of land along U.S. Route 401 in Louisburg.

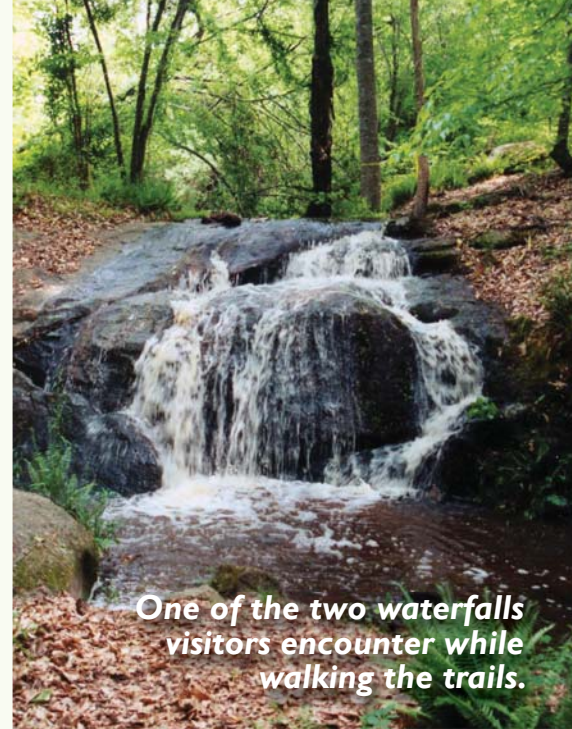
"It was a spring afternoon in 1962 when Flora and I explored additional acreage of forest east of our new home," says De Hart. "We found huge boulders covered with Wild Pink, a species found in only about 10 counties of North Carolina." Wild Pink thrives on the ingredients of granite rocks, often grows in rocky seams, and blooms during the last three weeks in April and the first week of May.

In the early days, the couple called the Gardens "Greencroft" in honor of their first home near Charlottesville. By 1978, the Gardens were renamed the Franklin County Nature Preserve, and, in 1984, the State of North Carolina created a charter that would officially change the name to the De Hart Botanical Gardens Inc. Eager to share the beauty of their expansive gardens with the community, the couple decided to purchase more land—91 acres in all—and eventually constructed lakes, trails, and picnic areas. They held concerts for the public and welcomed botanists to research and explore the grounds, which boast some 300 plant species. The Gardens are also home to a waterfall, Paleozoic rock formations, indigenous groves of 200-year-old Beech Nut and Oak trees, patches of native orchids garnished with ferns, a bird sanctuary, the foundation ruins of a historic plantation home, and a haven for wildlife.

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

De Hart says his main commitment and dedication has been in service to Louisburg College. From the time he and Flora arrived on campus in 1957, they were instant campus organizers. De Hart served as a full-time faculty and staff member for 36 years and another 16 years as a part-time employee.

During the decade of growth and expansion under the leadership of then-President Dr. Cecil W. Robbins, De Hart established programs for cultural arts, testing and guidance, public relations, and publications. He formed a concert series which now bears his name, a lecture and foreign film series, a folk festival, and a visual art series. His establishment of a College and Community Arts Council developed into the Franklin County Arts Festival in 1978, and the International Whistlers' Convention and



One of the two waterfalls visitors encounter while walking the trails.



Wild Pink (Silene Caroliniana)



Fall foliage reflected in one of the two lakes on the property.

Music Festival developed in 1974 from the College's Folk Festival, which De Hart founded four years earlier. "We are all better off by his efforts in bringing quality entertainment in arts programming," said then-President Dr. J. Allen Norris Jr. in 1990.

During the summer of 1960, De Hart received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study psychology at Florida State University. That experience, combined later with advanced studies at Duke University, led him to establish the Office of Testing and Guidance at the College, out of which grew a developmental reading course and a learning skills program. By 1970, he and Flora had written a textbook entitled *Systems Approach to Learning*. In the same year he published *Cultural Arts Programming in the Two Year Colleges in North Carolina*, a textbook developed from a graduate course at UNC-Chapel Hill. It was from the Florida State studies that he created the textbook *Introduction to Experimental Psychology*, a companion to the four-hour course he taught in Louisburg's Department of Science.

Involved in other services to Louisburg College during the 1960s, he and several faculty who were members of the American Association of University Professors organized a chapter for the College. This led to the creation of the College's pension plan, faculty rank, and health insurance benefits. It was also in the early '60s that De Hart joined seven other college representatives from North Carolina to form the nucleus of the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA), a collegiate marketplace for campus entertainment in the USA and Canada.

During the 1970s and '80s, De Hart formed the Appalachian Trail and Whitewater Club within the College's Department of Recreation. Participants included faculty, staff, and students who had an interest in hiking, backpacking, camping, whitewater rafting, and cave exploring. "Hiking and camping have been important rec-

reational activities for me since my childhood," says De Hart. "I often followed my older brother, Moir, fishing and camping, and later led my two younger brothers on explorations of the large forests on our farm in Patrick County, Va."

Retired since 2008, he continues to write and give talks, and is active in the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST)—a program he conceived and helped create in the 1970s. Officially founded in 1996, the MST has over 500 miles of footpaths, roads, and state bike routes already developed, and more planned in the coming decade. When completed, the 1,000-mile trail will connect Clingman's Dome of the Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge State Park at the Atlantic Ocean.

"It was a spring afternoon in 1962 when Flora and I explored additional acreage of forest east of our new home. We found huge boulders covered with Wild Pink, a species found in only about 10 counties of North Carolina."

"Allen de Hart is a person who cares deeply about his community and volunteerism," says Jeff Brewer '97, De Hart's former student and Friends of the MST board member. "From the MST, Whistlers' Convention, LOU-U Arts, to his hiking books, and his Gardens, this man has done it all for his community and nation. He is the college professor who stands out as the one who taught me the most about myself and my life."

In December 2011, De Hart was granted professor emeritus status by the College.

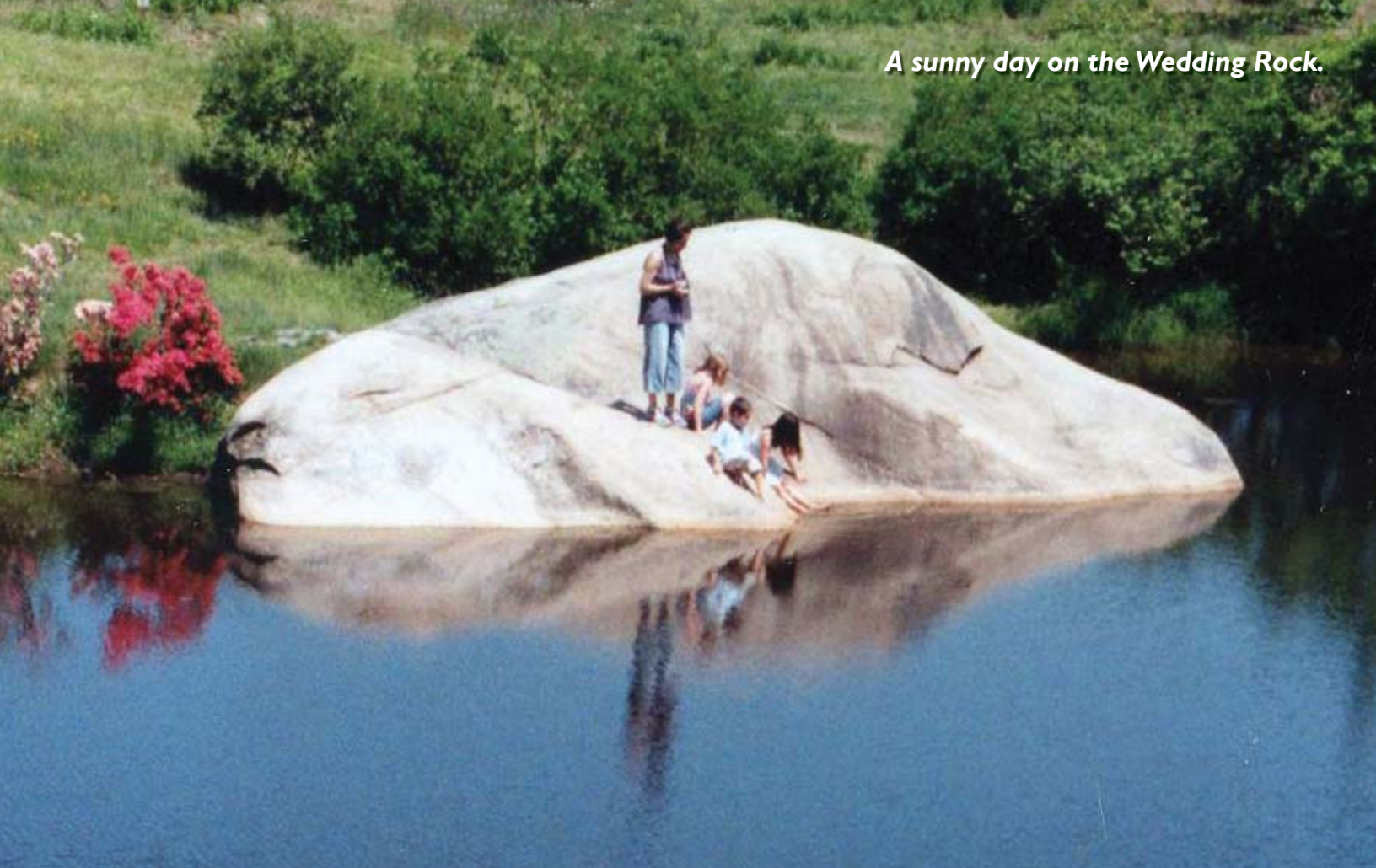
A PLACE FOR ALL TO EXPLORE

Located within a 10-minute drive from Louisburg and a 20-minute jaunt from Raleigh, the Gardens are free and open to the public seven days a week. The De Harts ask that you sign the guestbook at the entrance just inside the gazebo, refrain from smoking and littering on the grounds, and never dig up or purposely disturb the plants. Leashed pets are allowed and children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

READ MORE

In addition to many newspaper and magazine articles, De Hart's published outdoor recreational books include: *Hiking and Backpacking* (1979, 1983, 1994, 2000); *North Carolina Hiking Trails* (1982, 1988, 1996, 2005); *South Carolina Hiking Trails* (1984, 1989, 1994, 2001); *The Trails of Virginia: Hiking the Old Dominion* (1994, 1995, 2003); *Hiking and Backpacking Basics* (1985, 1992); *Monongahela National Forest Hiking Guide* (1988, 1993, 1999, 2006); *Hiking the Mountain State*; *The Trails of West Virginia* (1986, 1997); *Adventuring in Florida, Georgia Sea Islands and Okefenokee Swamp* (1991, 1995); *Trails of the Triad* (1997); and *Trails of the Triangle* (1997, 2007).

A sunny day on the Wedding Rock.



Friends of Allen de Hart have established an endowment fund in his honor at Louisburg College. The fund will support enhancements to the Gardens. For more information and to contribute, please contact Kurt Carlson, vice president for institutional advancement, at 919.497-3325 or kcarlson@louisburg.edu.

Seasonal serenity on the Gardens' lakes.

