Beall Family Rose Garden a Scentsational Success

Margot Emery and Andy Pulte
For rosarians—those who love roses—the new Beall Family Rose Garden in Knoxville is about as close to heaven on earth as one can get. Some 120 roses live there, making it the largest public rose garden in East Tennessee. This special place also includes a 22-foot gazebo and two cascading waterfalls supported by 60 tons of Tennessee sandstone.

The garden was officially launched on Sept. 13, 2009, with a ceremony that dedicated the Garden and expressed gratitude to its creators: Sam and Mary Anne Beall and the entire Beall family.

The idea for this beautiful garden began with a question. Sam Beall approached Professor Mark Windham, distinguished professor of plant pathology, at a rose seminar. Sam asked Dr. Windham why there weren’t plantings on the Knoxville campuses of no-spray and minimum care roses identified by Windham and Research Assistant Jim Mynes of UT AgResearch. “We don’t have the room,” Windham remembers saying. But Sam and his wife Mary Anne knew a site—at the center of the UT Gardens. Windham, Gardens director Dr. Sue Hamilton and Curator James Newburn took a look and soon they were busy starting from scratch figuring how the garden might look. “We had the best fun talking about what it might be like,” Newburn says.

Sam and Mary Anne also had ideas and they brought landscape designer Mark Furman and his partner Jeanne Lane on board. Lane (OHLD ’79) developed a breathtaking design with double rows of roses, sandstone steps, the water feature, and a koi pond.

The end result is a new rose garden that has three purposes: a beautiful garden for people interested in plants to enjoy or use the gazebo for weddings and other events; a research garden to evaluate how varieties are performing in Knox-area conditions; and, finally, a teaching resource for students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

At the Beall Family Rose Garden dedication, Gardens Curator James Newburn said “On behalf of Director Sue Hamilton, the Friends of the Gardens, the Staff and the entire University, I want to thank you for all being here to help us celebrate this very special occasion.

“It’s special because we get to officially dedicate this beautiful new addition to the UT Gardens and because we get to honor some very generous friends of the gardens—Sam and Mary Anne Beall and the entire Beall Family.”

Vice President for Agriculture Dr. Joseph DiPietro praised the garden and said it symbolizes the magic that can happen when you bring programs, people, and passion together. “It takes all three to conduct research to discover the best roses to grow in your garden. And passion and Extension to get the word out about those roses. This will be a teaching, discovery, and learning resource as well as a place for inspiration for generations to come.”

Natalie Haslam, co-chair of the Campaign for Tennessee, traces the friendship her family has had with the Bealls for three generations. “And I am very blessed to consider Sam and Mary Anne my very, very dear friends.

Over the years, the Beall family name has become synonymous with style, creativity, and beauty,” Haslam said. “All done with innovative ideas, and class. Thank you all so much for all you’ve done and for this, you’re gratefully appreciated.” —Margot Emery