

Eloise Butler Wildflower
Garden

IN WILDFLOWER GARDEN

Abe Remembers Eloise Butler

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LAKE CALHOUN—This is vacation time for the bald-headed fishing addict, but the weather keeps the shoreline loaded with bathers and I tie myself to an old, old haunt — the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.

Entering the garden through the gate at top of the hill off Glenwood-Camden Pkwy., I at once encounter *Helianthus Divaricatus*, which, translated into English, is the Rough Sun Flower.

Next to catch my eye is *Athyrium Augustum*, more commonly known as the Lady Fern.

I move from flower to flower until I reach a huge boulder with its bronze tablet. This reads:

"In loving memory of Eloise Butler, 1851-1933, founder and first curator of this native plant preserve, this oak has been planted and this tablet erected by a grateful public . . ."

The oak, however, is there in name only. As I recall, the



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location wasn't suitable for oak.

But the surroundings are very much the same as I remember them from way back when.

In its early days I was several times assigned to write feature stories about the garden. I remember the first assignment, and my thoughts as I presented myself to Miss Butler, then in command. She was a plumpish little lady who reminded me of England's Queen Victoria.

She was co-operative and gracious, and she knew her flowers as only a veteran botany teacher could. She led me among the flowers, telling of each as if it were a major treasure. What intrigued me most of all were the tongue-twisting scientific names.

On my second assignment I didn't find Miss Butler. So I proceeded on a self-directed tour, casting furtive glances at the signs which cautioned visitors against straying from the pathways.

About a year later I was given my third wildflower garden assignment. This time I found Miss Butler very much in evidence. Her greeting was a peremptory challenge:

"Young man!" The mien and vocal quality were those of a teacher addressing an erring pupil.

"Yes?" I said.

"Last time you were here you strayed from the pathways. You walked where you never should have without being accompanied by the curator!"

She knew of my transgression because of the names I had used in that second story. I believe she knew the exact location of every blade of grass in that entire garden acreage.

There was nothing I could

do but plead guilty. Whereupon she gave me a grand smile and told me I could consider myself forgiven, on condition I never transgressed again. I promised, and I never have broken that promise.

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