

# The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden



## The Memorial Tablet for Eloise Butler

The Memorial Tablet for Eloise Butler was dedicated on Arbor Day, May 4th, 1934. The idea for a memorial tablet is mentioned in the April 19, 1933 minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners and was spoken of at the memorial service on May 5, 1933. It was planned, created and presented by some of her friends and some of her former pupils from her years as a botany teacher in the Minneapolis Public Schools. An association had been formed at the suggestion of Theodore Wirth, General Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park System, in mid-1933 following Eloise's death. It was called the Eloise Butler Memorial Association with Miss Jennie Hall as head. A governing committee of five persons, headed by Clara Leavitt (retired teacher), with Martha Crone, Elizabeth Foss (North High teacher), Dr. Otto Schussler and Gratia Countryman (Minneapolis Librarian) were in charge of forming other committees and designing the memorial. There were several suggested dedications which were submitted to Martha Crone (who replaced Eloise as Garden Curator) for her approval and for her to sample the preferences of garden visitors as to the wording. A fund raising campaign was initiated with the suggested donation being limited to no more than one dollar. The committee felt that they must raise the funds independently so as to "prove to Mr. Wirth and the Park board that the Reserve (The Wild Flower Garden) has many friends."(1) The dedication as shown below, was the one recommended by the committee. Martha and all interested others approved and the bronze tablet was cast, using the design of Mr. Melchior of Flour City Iron Works.

On April 30th 1934 Superintendent Theodore Wirth sent a brief memo to the Board of Park Commissioners that on Arbor Day, May 4, the dedication ceremony would be held and that the Memorial Association had invited the Board and its officers to attend. The program was introduced by Miss Jennie Hall, head of the Memorial Association. The outline was that Miss Hall and ten children would do some bird calls; an original poem would be recited by Mrs Florence Hadden (former pupil); Miss Elizabeth Foss would present the tablet; and Francis Gross, Vice President of the Board of Park Commissioners would accept the tablet. (note 2)



The tablet today is found at the end of the path from the front gate of the Garden to the Martha Crone Shelter on a large granite boulder. The boulder, placed specifically for the tablet, sat in front of a pin oak tree that was planted in her memory on May 4, 1934. The pin oak is no longer there, but a magnificent Leatherwood shrub now shades the tablet.

The text of the dedication tablet reads as follows:

In loving memory of Eloise Butler (1851-1933), teacher of botany in Minneapolis Schools, Founder and first curator of this native plant reserve. This oak has been planted and this tablet erected by a grateful public.

To this sequestered glen Miss Butler brought beautiful native plants from all sections of our state and tended them with patient care. This priceless garden is our heritage from her and its continued preservation a living testimony of our appreciation. Here her ashes are scattered and here her protective spirit lingers.

Dedicated Arbor Day 1934

**Below:** At the dedication of the memorial tablet are (l. to r.) Miss Elizabeth Foss, Botany teacher at North High School (She made the presentation of the tablet); Clara Leavitt, fellow teacher of Eloise; Minneapolis Parks Superintendent Theodore Wirth; Audrey Kelly; Parks Vice President Frances A. Gross (who accepted on behalf of the Park Board); Dolores Hoiby and Jennie Hall, Science Supervisor of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Kelly and Hoiby are shown lifting away the green boughs which covered the tablet before the unveiling. *Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society, Martha Crone Collection 142.J.1.8F*





The poem recited by by Florence Hadden:

**Poem for Eloise**

This glen is now a hallowed spot,  
A shrine, where wild flowers meet –  
We come as friends, with forest birds,  
To render tribute in this wild retreat –

A tribute due to one held dear,  
By all the wildings in this glade,  
From all the pupils she has taught,  
And all the friends she's made –

We all unite with one accord  
To sound her praises high,  
She surely hears the song above  
As these tributes reach the sky,

The perfume of these flowers, wild,  
Is like wafted incense, rare,  
It floats above through "Pearly Gates"  
To the Heavenly Gardens, there.



**ELOISE BUTLER, FOUNDER OF GLENWOOD PARK GARDEN, IS HONORED TODAY**

Park commissioners, visiting Glenwood park in preparation for today's ceremonies honoring the late Eloise Butler, founder and curator of the garden, paused to inspect a clump of anemones. Kneeling are Lucian C. Miller and Theodore Wirth. Standing are John H. Jepson, A. F. Pillsbury, Francis A. Gross, A. W. Ingenuhutt, C. A. Bossen, W. H. Bovey, Alderman A. B. Fruen, C. L. Stacy and Charles E. Doell.

**Below:** Prior to the dedication ceremony the Park Commissioners, the Superintendent and the local Alderman visit Glenwood Park.

References:

- (1) Letter to Martha Crone from Clara Leavitt (fellow teacher of Eloise Butler) dated September 15, 1933. Minnesota Historical Society, Martha Crone Collection
- (2) Following are the documents from the period outlining the ceremony and the Memorial Association.