

Full

Circle

HISTORIC ARMILLARY SPHERES RETURN TO THE WINTERTHUR GARDEN

The spheres now grace the garden at Mr. Weymouth's home, "The Big Bend."

by Kristin deMesse

In the first half of the 20th century, Henry Francis du Pont created the magnificent garden at Winterthur. Following a practice he observed while visiting English country estates, du Pont included gazebos, furniture, statuary, and sundials. These thoughtful additions provided quiet places to contemplate nature's beauty and introduced delightful vistas.

Unfortunately, many of the original objects suffered damage from rodents and the environment, causing them to be removed. However, a new plan is under way to restore some of these treasured artifacts and return their replicas to the landscape. Garden and Conservation staff have established a list of priority reproductions, many located on the East Terrace and near the former du Pont swimming pool. Several statuary have already been reproduced, including Child with Swan and Child with Stylus. Next will be the Hippocampus. Winterthur gratefully accepts gifts in support of these impor-

tant restorations. For more information, please call the Leadership Gifts Office at 302.888.4712.

One such restoration project is the impressive armillary spheres that du Pont purchased to flank the Conservatory's western doors. The original spheres were made in Europe in the 1800s. Reproductions of them now adorn the terrace, thanks to the generosity of George A. ("Frolic") Weymouth, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Brandywine River Museum and a member of the Winterthur Garden and Landscape Society Steering Committee.

Weymouth saw the armillary spheres in July 2001 while on a tour with Tom Buchter, former Deputy Director for the Garden. The two men were on the hunt for artifacts to enhance Enchanted Woods™. Spotting the striking instruments in one of the estate barns, Weymouth remarked on their beauty and expressed interest in helping return copies of them to the garden.

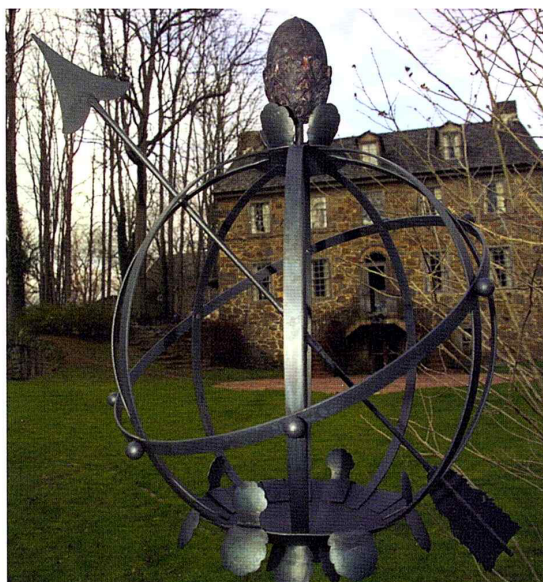
John Feliciani and George A. Weymouth joined Matt and Jon White of Heritage Metalworks for the unveiling of the reproduction armillary spheres.

A careful and lengthy search for a fabricator ultimately focused on Heritage Metalworks, Ltd., based in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Owned by brothers Matt and Jon White, Heritage specializes in antique reproductions and custom metalworks, as well as the restoration of antique metal objects. The Whites' insistence on precision and quality required many visits to Winterthur to measure and photograph the original spheres.

A generous donation by Weymouth ultimately funded the reproduction project, resulting in a set of spheres for both Winterthur and his own garden. At a ceremony on December 8, 2004, John Feliciani, Interim Deputy Director for the Garden, presented the spheres to Weymouth, who expressed his appreciation and delight: "I am so thrilled to have had a hand in helping bring these magnificent objects back to the Winterthur Garden. This garden has always been very special to me, and now I will have a small part of Winterthur in my own garden."

And we express our sincere gratitude to George A. Weymouth, whose generous spirit has helped bring us one step closer to restoring H. F. du Pont's vision for the Winterthur Garden. ❖

Kristin deMesse is Business Development Manager in the Licensed Products Department at Winterthur



Laszlo Bodo



Laszlo Bodo