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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Founders' Day celebrates Huntsville Botanical Garden's 35th anniversary

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (April 25, 2023) – When 14 community members met in December 1979 to discuss forming a botanical garden in Huntsville, they each made a commitment to “dream no small dream.” Their dream garden became a reality when Huntsville Botanical Garden (HBG) opened to the public in 1988. The public is invited to celebrate HBG’s 35th anniversary on Sunday, May 21, from 1-3 p.m., with complimentary cupcakes and lemonade. During that time, the Garden will also unveil a plaque dedicated to those 14 individuals who founded HBG.

“The Garden’s continued growth is a testament to the founders’ vision as well as the hard work of staff and volunteers over the decades.” HBG CEO Susan Wagner

The Founders wanted to grow something beautiful in the Huntsville/Madison County community, and their persistence in acquiring land, fundraising and developing plans paid off.

According to Harvilee Harbarger, one of the surviving Garden founders, the group attended every Huntsville City Council meeting in 1980.

“The [Huntsville-Madison County Botanical Garden] Society was given 35 acres and three years to raise \$200,000, which the City generously said they would match to start the garden,” said Harbarger. “We schlepped concept drawings around town to raise interest, and more importantly, funds from the community. Imagine the Council’s astonishment when the seemingly unreachable goal was raised in only six months!”

Enthusiasm for the Garden has never waned. Since its humble start, the Garden has grown to 118 acres, a staff of more than 120 and hundreds of volunteers. In March, HBG was ranked #6 by USA Today’s 10Best Botanical Gardens in the nation, and hundreds of thousands of guests each year visit the Garden for recreation, celebration, education and reflection.

“This Founders’ Day celebration is to remember the hard work and dedication of the Garden’s opening 35 years ago,” said Wagner. “The plaque is a permanent reminder for all of us to dream big and work together for the good of our community.”

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About Huntsville Botanical Garden

Huntsville Botanical Garden is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that exists to connect people to plants in order to support a healthier quality of life for the region. Open year-round, the Garden contains diverse ecosystems to explore within its 118 acres. From grassy meadows to woodland paths, aquatic habitats to stunning floral collections, the Garden invites guests of all ages to discover the beauty and wonder of the natural environment. For more information, visit hsvbg.org.