

Speaker: Jason Capote

Topic: Beatrix Farrand, American Landscape Gardener

Sunday, October 15, 2023



by: Ronnie Brancazio

What could be better than a speaker with vast knowledge and expertise on an interesting topic? How about a speaker who shares those resources on TWO topics?

Jason Capote treated us to a lively, informative discussion of the life and achievements of Beatrix Ferrand, which was highlighted with many amusing and sometimes startling anecdotes about her public and private life.

This neatly segued into what is obviously Jason's most passionate horticultural interest, namely rose gardening!

We learned that while Beatrix Ferrand was a wealthy, well-connected woman, this did not guarantee her entry into the world of professional landscape design. It took great talent, courage and nerve to break the "glass ceiling" (picture a greenhouse!) and become one of America's foremost garden designers, who gave us, among other masterpieces, the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden and Dumbarton Oaks!

And about those roses! Jason recounted the "rise and fall" of the Great Neck Rose Garden restoration, which was a major professional achievement for him, but ultimately a major heartbreak due to natural and manmade disasters. He was assigned to restore and maintain a neglected rose garden in the community, which he proceeded to masterfully accomplish - as shown in a beautiful slide show of the various garden sections and individual plants in full bloom and excellent health. . Then came covid, several extreme weather events, and a loss of funds to maintain the garden, thus returning it to it's original, neglected state. Really tragic.

Nevertheless, Jason's love, enthusiasm, and knowledge of roses is undiminished, and he was extremely generous in sharing information and answering questions! This was a truly enlightening, entertaining, and informative presentation.