THE POST SERIAL

A SPECTACULAR HOLIDAY

Ami Wilber, Floral and Event Décor Designer

This holiday season will mark my first anniversary as the Floral and Event Décor Designer at Hillwood. It has been an amazing year and I am grateful every day. The Horticulture staff and volunteers have become my second family and their unwavering support has provided me the creative energy to flourish in my new role.

Spectacular Holiday will reflect our current exhibition *Spectacular Gems and Jewelry from the Merriweather Post Collection* now on view in the Adirondack building. The trees are inspired by five different pieces of jewelry from the exhibition. Here is a sneak peek of the Christmas tree themes you will see starting November 21.



Entry Hall | Ruby Tree

Nestled amongst orchids, the rubies glimmer like the iridescent wings of a hummingbird.

Inspired by the Hummingbird Brooch



Pavilion | Amethyst Tree

The Siberian amethyst and diamond brooch evokes the cold winters of Russia. Icicles and snow glitter like diamonds.

Inspired by the Amethyst and Diamond Brooch



French Drawing Room | Turquoise Tree

A Palm Beach ocean breeze captures the imagination. The turquoise reflects like the water and the diamonds like the bright sunlight.

Inspired by the Turquoise and Diamond Necklace



Dining Room | Conch Pearl Tree

Bursting with pink conch pearls and nestled with diamonds, this brooch echoes the aesthetic of the place settings.

Inspired by the Pink Conch Pearl and Diamond Brooch



Visitor Center | Moonstone Tree

Ona starry night, the Baroque pearls, moonstones and diamonds shine even brighter.

Inspired by the Pearl, Moonstone and Diamond Necklace

HILLWOOD HAPPENINGS FOR VOLUNTEERS

All Hillwood volunteers are invited to take advantage of the educational offerings listed below. **Please register in advance:** on the sign-up sheets on the clipboard in the Horticulture building hallway or contact Drew Asbury at 202.243.3907 or dasbury@HillwoodMuseum.org. Advance registration is not necessary for continuing education events in the visitor center theater unless otherwise noted.

Greenhouse Tour | Specialty Mums October 25-27, 11:30 a.m.

Join grower Enrique Mendez on a greenhouse tour and marvel at the fascinating diversity of chrysanthemums. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office area as space is limited to 15 volunteers per tour. Meet in the horticulture break room.

Plant ID Walk | Fall Color Garden Walk October 31 & November 1, 11:30 a.m.

Join gardener Frances Vandenbroucke for a tour of the gardens as she highlights a few plants that beautify the fall season. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office area as space is limited to 15 volunteers. Meet in the horticulture break room.

Bountiful Harvest Floral Arrangement Workshop November 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Join Ami Wilber, floral and event décor designer, to create a contemporary Thanksgiving-inspired floral arrangement. The workshop is limited to 12 volunteers and will meet in the horticulture break room. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office for the workshop by Monday, November 14. Cost is \$35.

Holiday Wreath Workshop December 5, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

This year's wreath workshop will be a slight spin on a traditional holiday wreath. We will use wintery greens mixed with natural elements like fruit. Bring your creativity to this workshop as we push the boundaries of wreath making! We will only be offering one opportunity to create wreathes this year, as space is limited for the storing of supplies. The workshop is limited to 12 volunteers and will meet in the horticulture break room. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office for the workshop by Monday, November 27. Cost is \$40.

Hillwood Holiday Tour December 7, 11-11:30 a.m.

Get an intimate look at Hillwood's holiday decor with Ami Wilber, floral and event décor designer, as she highlights this year's theme inspired by Marjorie Post's spectacular gems and jewelry. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office area as space is restricted to 12 volunteers. Meet in the horticulture break room.

Holiday Floral Workshop December 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

This workshop will focus on creating a loose and whimsical holiday arrangement. We will be using wintery greens and beautiful flowers, and natural elements to create some yuletide cheer. Workshop is limited to 12 volunteers and will meet in the horticulture break room. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office for the workshop by Monday, December 4. Cost is \$35.

Garden Tour | Bones of the Garden December 19, 11:30 a.m.

The winter garden may not be as splashy as spring bulbs or summer blooms, but there is something equally amazing about a peaceful, winter garden. Join Director of Horticulture Brian Barr as he points out some of the highlights of the winter garden. Please sign up on the clipboard in the horticulture office area as space is limited to 15 volunteers. Meet in the horticulture break room.

MUSEUM SHOP UPDATE

Lauren Salazar, Head of Merchandising

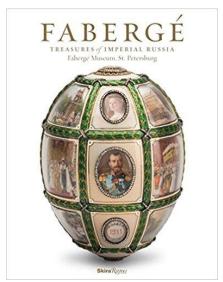
After a fabulously successful summer, we are restocking and gearing up for the fall and holidays. Exciting new finds are coming in daily. Some of my favorites include:

Margo Petitti scarves (see image on the right) – manufactured in Massachusetts and Italy, scarves are pieced together from menswear suiting scraps to create one of a kind pieces.









Left: Papaya Art – the gorgeous wallets, totes, and stationery celebrate living a bold and creative life, and loving who you are!

Center: Gloves, hats and scarves – we've gone all out to source unusual and lovely items for treating yourself or gifting.

Right: Fabergé, Treasures of Imperial Russia. Arriving at the end of November, a lavish volume on the most complete Fabergé collection in the world.

Upcoming Shop Events:

Special Hillwood Sale for Staff & Volunteers October 30 | 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Terrace Conservatory

After years of producing licensed products from Hillwood's collection, and storing the prototypes and samples in my office, my closet is overflowing! Join us at this special sale, and purchase Hillwood merchandise from our licensing partners, such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and others – enameled frames, jewelry, hand-painted ornaments, framed scarves and more. There is only one of each, so shop early for the best selection. Items are priced at a fraction of their original retail price, so no discounts will be given. No returns.

Strathmore Museum Shop Around November 9-12, Strathmore Mansion, Rockville, MD

Join us at the annual Museum Shop Around! Over 18 area museum stores will participate, selling the fabulous gifts they are known for. The event is open 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

Staff & Volunteer Holiday Sale December 1-31 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Museum Shop

Volunteers and staff receive a 30% discount in the museum shop; this is an additional 10% above the usual discount! Discounts do not apply to sale merchandise. Merchandise may not be placed on hold prior to Sale.

• Holiday Markdown Sale

December 19 - January 7, 2018 | 10:00 to 5:00, Museum Shop

Christmas merchandise and other select merchandise will be steeply discounted. Stock up on gifts and ornaments!

A NEW VISITOR GUIDE AND MAP WITH AUDIO TOUR

Audra Kelly, Head of Interpretation

A new visitor brochure began to be distributed to visitors in mid-October. This new Visitor Guide and Map with Audio Tour replaces the old printed tour brochure, which has been in use since the year 2000. Hillwood has changed a lot in seventeen years, and the new visitor guide features many enhancements, which were informed by visitor research and volunteer input.

Highlights include:

- One-stop-shopping, a comprehensive resource in one booklet
- The back cover: "Tips for Experiencing Hillwood" is a great place to start with visitors
 - It is an overview of the choices visitors have, spanning the orientation film to touring options to shopping and dining.
 - VSVs can use this list to run-through all visitors can do on-site.
- All garden and mansion audio tour stops are listed inside
 - all stops are listed in the booklet, including all on the highlights tour and the French and Russian collection tours (Kings, Queens, and Soup Tureens and Treasures & Traditions: The Luxury Arts of Imperial Russia).
- The family audio tour stops, in Russia: Stories of Hillwood's Russian Treasures, are not listed in the new guide. The booklet listing those stops will still be distributed to families.
- Updated maps (image on right) and floor plans, with easy-to-spot icons easily identifying amenities



Cover of new visitor guide and map



Updated estate map with new icons

- Table of contents, on inside front cover
- Not to be Missed sections—highlighting the highlights in the garden & mansion
- Lots of color photographs—to help with wayfinding
- New content incorporated: from Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post and 2015's souvenir book
- Complements the outdoor interpretive garden signs (installed in 2015)

We hope you enjoy engaging visitors with this new tool.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Judith Paska, Director of Development

There are two events coming this winter that we know you will want to have on your calendar:

Celebrate the holiday season Hillwood-style at the annual Members Open House and Reception scheduled to take place on Tuesday, December 5 from 10:30 a.m. through 7:30 p.m. There will be tasty treats and good things to drink all day, as well as special tours and discounts in them museum shop. Keep an eye on your inbox for your invitation and plan to attend and be merry!

On Wednesday, February 14, 2018, we will celebrate Valentine's Day with an opening night benefit celebration for the exhibition, *The Artistic Table*. This annual event is always fun and offers food, entertainment and the much anticipated silent auction. This year's co-chairs are Susan Bollendorf, Beth Odom, Liza Trey and Ed McAllister supported by a great, energetic committee. Participants will have the first preview of the new exhibition and enjoy this special day at Hillwood. Tickets start at \$100 for members with sponsorship packages starting a \$250.



Breakfast room table display from 2009

Development Staff Updates

After four record-setting June galas and February benefits, we are sad to announce the departure of Adrienne Starr, our Donor Relations and Special Events Manager. Adrienne's tenure at Hillwood ended September 8, but she and her family remain in the Washington area where she will be working for a private events company. We are currently in the final stages of a search for Adrienne's successor.

We are pleased to announce that John Sallot has joined us in the newly-created position of Head of Individual Giving & Membership. John joins Hillwood after thirteen years with the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix. He began his career there in 2003 as Institutional Giving Manager and in 2007 was promoted to Director of Marketing growing both attendance and membership to record levels. His work prior to DBGP involved a number of development and marketing roles for diverse organizations most notably the AIDS Project in both Los Angeles and Phoenix and a stint as a production assistant on the "Newhart" television series. John holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from California State University, Fullerton.

We are pleased to announce that Gigi Bregani has joined the Development team as Development Officer. Working in close partnership with the Executive Director, Director of Development, and Head of Individual Giving and Membership, Gigi will be charged with managing and nurturing essential relationships for the museum; maintaining and growing all aspects of institutional giving, including affinity groups, corporate sponsorships, legacy gifts, and specified support for Hillwood exhibitions and programs. Gigi brings 8+ years of development experience most recently doing similar work for the White House Historical Association and the Civil War Trust.

HILLWOOD RECEIVES COLLECTIONS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM GRANT

Estella Chung, Director of Collections & Co-Chair of Exhibitions

Hillwood received an American Institute of Conservation *Collections Assessment Program Grant*. In late July, a buildings assessor and collections assessor conducted a review of Hillwood's collection and the buildings that house collections. In fact, it took the assessors Michael Henry and Wendy Jessup a full day and a half to assess the spaces across our campus. They shared some initial impressions at a debrief meeting in July and then shared a summary of their final report with trustees at our September board meeting. Highlighted was the recommendation to conduct a space study to make best use of our spaces to care for collections. Hillwood will engage in a space study to make best use of our buildings relative to exhibitions and public events as well. The space study to be conducted by architects Ewing and Cole will help us amplify excellence in collections care and use of space on our beautiful and historic site, so we can delight visitors for generations to come.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES: HILLWOOD'S ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF COSTUMES AND TEXTILES RETIRES

Howard Kurtz, Associate Curator of Costumes and Textiles

December 1, 2017 will mark my twentieth year at Hillwood and, as of December 29, 2017, I will retire from my position as Associate Curator of Costumes and Textiles. My husband Howard Jaffe and I will be moving to Pennsylvania in the spring of 2018. Before we undertake this new phase, I certainly cannot forget my colleagues (staff and volunteers) at Hillwood. I wish to thank each of you for creating such a rewarding museum experience as well as to express my gratitude for your continued support and encouragement. After twenty years, I leave with so many memories to cherish, both personal and professional.

I will always remember and celebrate the remarkable legacy of Marjorie Merriweather Post. During my tenure at Hillwood, I discussed Marjorie Merriweather Post as a fashion icon through research, lectures, exhibitions, and publications. I was given the opportunity to curate four exhibitions that highlighted the Post family costumes:

- Invitation to the Ball: Fancy Dress Costume of the 1920s (2009), which also traveled to the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Montgomery Alabama, and The Society of the Four Arts, in Palm Beach, Florida.
- Wedding Bells: Three Generations of Post Family Dress (2011)
- Ingenue to Icon: 70 years of fashion from the collection of Marjorie Merriweather Post (2015)
- A Perfect Fit: A Fashion Designer, Oldric Royce & His Ideal Client, Marjorie Merriweather Post (2017)

I have also published two books, *Ingenue to Icon* and *Oldrich Rosenbaum/Oldric Royce* (2017). For the past ten years, I have proudly mentored thirty interns at Hillwood from the Smithsonian History of Decorative Arts program.

As I move forward to the next chapter of my life and welcome its challenges, I will miss working with all of you. It has been a wonderful journey! I hope you will keep in touch at howardvincentkurtz@gmail.com.



Celia Steingold mounting a dress for display in the mansion

PRESENTATION AT 2017 NATIONAL DOCENT SYMPOSIUM

Audra Kelly, Head of Interpretation

Lisa Leyh, Head of Volunteer Management, and I represented Hillwood as featured presenters at the National Docent Symposium (NDS) in Montreal in October 2017. We led a workshop where we shared Hillwood's docent organizational strategies, called frameworks, for creating engaging and focused tours of decorative arts collections. Session participants explored how the frameworks create a sound, reliable structure for communicating with visitors, and connect decorative arts objects to the stories about the people who owned, used, and created them. Both of us have attended the symposium before, and this marks our time presenting at it.



The <u>National Docent Symposium</u> (NDS) is a biennial event that promotes continuous improvement in docent practice. The NDS has provided a forum for museums of art, science and history to meet and exchange ideas, problems and solutions to the concerns of docents/guides. The 3 to 4-day symposium includes lectures, workshops, guest speakers, panel discussions, tours of local museums and highlights of the area.

Audra Kelly and Lisa Leyh presenting in Montreal at the National Docent Symposium

WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE GARDEN

Drew Asbury, Horticulturist and Volunteer Manager

Another growing season has passed, but the gardens have not slowed down quite yet. All can agree that the weather this past summer was lovely for both the garden and the gardener. Hopefully this trend will continue and a vivid splash of fall color will spread over the gardens in the weeks to follow.

Horticulture staff and volunteers have been busy in the gardens. In late September, thousands of mums, pansies, millets and other fall plantings transformed Hillwood from summer to fall over the course of two weeks. As a result, hundreds of tropical plants have found their winter hideout in the greenhouse while other dormant tubers and bulbs have been packed and stored away until next spring. Fall is not the season to relax though, as we will repeat this process in mid-November by removing the fall display and installing over 20,000 bulbs. These bulbs will fill the gardens flamboyant color next spring. Holiday preparations and decorating will immediately follow the bulb installation. All of this alongside a general fall clean up throughout the gardens will assure plenty of work for all involved.



Installing the fall seasonal display: Elena Furman, Kathy Aram, Gordon Cameron, & John Silvia.

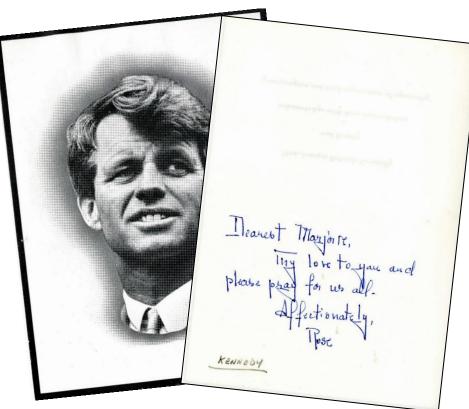
Other updates in the horticulture department include the progression of the stone path renovation. The patio flanking the north side of the putting green is now complete and open for visitors. The masons are now working on the main flagstone path running along the south side of the mansion between the armillary spheres. A new understory planting has been installed on the east side of the lunar lawn where the massive elm fell earlier this year. A new pump and motor for the Japanese Style Garden has been installed allowing for the waterfall to be once again up and running. Thank you to all the volunteers who help keep the gardens beautiful and as Jessica Bonilla always says, 'Keep Growing'!

HANDWRITTEN HISTORY: INTERESTING FINDS FROM THE POST FAMILY PAPERS DIGITIZATION PROJECT

Elizabeth Blackwood, Digital Assets Librarian

Every box from the Post Family **Papers** Archival Collection contains new and interesting surprises for those who work on the project. The most recent box from the Bentley Historical Library letters contains and notes documentina interactions between Marjorie Post and Rose Kennedy, matriarch of one of America's most famous families. A highlight from this box is the communication between the two surrounding the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. In her own handwriting. Rose Kennedy acknowledges Marjorie Post's thoughts and prayers after the death of her son. She wrote the note on the back of a printed card, bordered with black trim to symbolize the time of mourning. These materials tie directly to the current display in the mansion's

second floor library, documenting other interactions between Marjorie Post and the Kennedys.



Note to Marjorie Post from Rose Kennedy



Current display in second floor library

Also inside this box are materials relating to Hillwood and Marjorie Post's life, creating context around the items found inside the mansion. Metadata volunteers help the librarians at Hillwood describe and create this context so that the documents are discoverable by curators and Creating metadata researchers. for documents and folders from this collection offers a window into how Marjorie Post and her close associates reacted and responded to many major demonstrates Hillwood's events. lt also connection to many familiar names in recent history-sometimes in a person's own handwriting.

The Post Family Papers Digitization Project is ongoing, with many more boxes left to discover and describe. From the mundane interactions of Mrs. Post's daily activities to major historical moments, Hillwood's history is yours to explore. If you are interested in serving as a metadata volunteer for the project, please contact Abby Stambach (astambach@hillwoodmuseum.org) or Elizabeth Blackwood (eblackwood@hillwoodmuseum.org). There are many available timeslots, especially Monday-Thursday.

PLANT PROFILE: PYRACANTHA

lane Berger, Newsletter Volunteer

If you have not noticed the pyracantha before, slow down and take a good look the next time you drive down Linnean Avenue: it's the plant trained against the brick pillars of the fence. We lost a few during the extreme winters a few years back, but most have re-sprouted and are growing back, so they should soon be in full fall and winter glory. You will surely remember that pyracantha has evergreen leaves, showy clusters of white flowers in spring and brilliant red berries throughout the fall and winter.

The name pyracantha derives from the Greek pyr (fire) and akantha (a thorn) – thus its common name, firethorn. It surely has one of the longest and sharpest thorns (along the stems) in the plant world.

Despite this annoyance, pyracantha is a very versatile plant and is used for innumerable landscape purposes. Its profuse red or orange berries make it adaptable as a specimen, foundation planting, or hedge, and it is sometimes pruned and trained into formal espaliers. Its thorns make it useable as a barrier screen around the edge of a property.

Birds are attracted to the berries and take shelter among the branches, so it is a very useful wildlife plant.

Hillwood's pyracantha is the Formosa firethorn (Pyracantha koidzumii) native to Taiwan, and it is particularly valued for its bright crimson berries. It reaches a height of around 8-12 feet, has an irregular habit, and therefore takes well to pruning.



Pyracantha in the motor court



Pyracantha on the mansion adjacent to the port cohere

The most common species of the plant is scarlet firethorn, pyracantha coccinea, originally from southern Europe, Turkey, and the Caucasus. It grows to about 15 feet, has arching branches that spread to a six-foot width, and abundant fruit. The cultivar 'Lalandei,' with orange-red fruits, was developed in France in the 1870s'; 'Fructo Lateo' has bright yellow berries.

Many hybrids have been developed over the years by crossing different species and cultivars. Our own National Arboretum developed a number of disease-resistant cultivars, including the best-selling 'Mohave,' known for its long-lasting orange-red berries; 'Apache, a compact cultivar that reaches only about 4 feet in height, and 'Navajo' a low growing, spreading plant with orange-red berries.

Here at Hillwood, pyracantha is also planted in an espalier that wraps around the doors to the pavilion. It also suffered in recent winters, but it is growing back as well. Marshall Paquin takes care of the pyracantha along Linnean Avenue, and Jessica Bonilla looks after the ones at the motor court and the pavilion. They bravely keep them all in shape.

THE NEW RUSSIAN PORCELAIN DISPLAYS

Wilfried Zeisler, Chief Curator

Following the 2016 curatorial summer project of re-installing the Russian porcelain displays, Hillwood had the opportunity to receive a five year loan of additional Russian porcelain from American collector Kathy Durdin. Thirty-three pieces were carefully selected and installed at Hillwood on June 26, 2017.

This exceptional loan includes works from the Imperial Porcelain Factory belonging to services that were not represented in Hillwood's collection such as pieces from the Guriev service, which is "probably the grandest ever decorated in the factory¹" as stated by Anne Odom, Hillwood's former chief curator.

The loan also consists of a series of 1700s porcelain figures of the Peoples of Russia. Hillwood had only four of these porcelain figures, including two from the Popov factory made in the 1800s. Thanks to this generous loan, Hillwood displays what is probably the largest series of the Peoples of Russia on view in the United States.

A rare glass vase on view in the pavilion is also part of the loan. It is beautifully carved with flowers and foliage in the Art Nouveau style. This masterpiece made by the Imperial Glass Factory was owned by Dowager Empress Maria Fedorovna.

To learn more about the new Russian porcelain displays, watch the <u>September 11 lecture</u> now available on the volunteer website and Hillwood's YouTube channel. A <u>document</u> detailing the changes made to the Russian porcelain displays is also available on the volunteer website.

MANSION DOCENT CLASS GRADUATED

Audra Kelly, Head of Interpretation

Please welcome the following newly trained mansion docents:

- Amy Peck Abraham
- Carol Buckland
- Lara Dajani
- Didi DiVirgilio
- Louise Dufresne
- Joanna Edwards
- Eleanor Gease
- Paul Hildebrand
- Wade Kness
- Scott Lawrence
- Lynne Gustin Leimkuhler
- Angelina Lopez
- Isabell May
- Maria McDonald

- Lauren Menkes
- Frances Moghaddam
- Natalie Neviasky
- Penny Pollard
- Judy Reed
- Antonina Rodgers
- Michael Rodgers
- Lorraine Rose
- Margaret Simms
- Mary Slimp
- Vee Smith
- Christina Sprague
- Gail Troussoff Marks
- Margaret Vassilikos

All twenty-eight docents completed an intensive six-month training from January-June 2017, led by Lisa Leyh, head of volunteer management, and I. The 2017 class is the fifth mansion docent training since 2000. The training was well timed to keep pace with an increasing yearly attendance (80,746 in 2016, up from 39,325 in 2006) and natural attrition.

¹ Anne Odom, Russian Imperial Porcelain at Hillwood (Washington D.C.: Hillwood Museum and Gardens, 1999), 43.

Docents gained knowledge about Hillwood's collection, founder, and visitors, as well as a diverse set of skills and methods for engaging visitors. All volunteers have access through the volunteer website to many of the training materials, including <u>readings</u> and <u>video recordings</u>.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

We are delighted to welcome 11 new volunteers! Please join us in welcoming our newest volunteers to Hillwood:

Joining the Horticulture volunteer corps:

- Gordon Cameron
- Christie Costello
- Deborah Dixon
- Father Paul Dudziak
- Kim Ernst
- Elena Furman
- Alison Hutzler
- Elizabeth Nash
- Xavier Ponroy
- Andrea Tasan
- Ryan Travis

IN MEMORIAM: MARY "POLLY" LAWRENCE

Lisa Leyh, Head of Volunteer Management

It is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you that we have lost a beloved Hillwood volunteer this month. Mary "Polly" Lawrence passed away peacefully Monday, October 9, 2017 from post-surgical complications. Polly had been a Garden Docent with Hillwood for 16 years. As a Thursday docent, Polly shared her love of gardening and gentle, friendly demeanor with countless visitors over the years. She will be greatly missed by many.

A service of remembrance and thanksgiving will be held in the Bethlehem Chapel of the National Cathedral, Friday, November 17 at 3 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the National Cathedral or to Compassion & Choices, an organization dedicated to easing life's final days by recognizing everyone's desires to die at a time and place of their choice. Click here to view the Washington Post obituary.



Polly Lawrence



The *Post Serial* is published quarterly for Hillwood volunteers by Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens, 4155 Linnean Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. It is edited under the direction of the volunteer management team of Lisa Leyh, Drew Asbury, and other Hillwood staff members. Copyright 2017 by Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens.