



# postscript. The Rose Sharp Rose Garden

The University of Oklahoma's only traveling flower garden has settled into its latest home—with spectacular results. The Rose Sharp Rose Garden is enjoying its most prolific blooming season yet, thanks to diligent preparation and constant oversight by OU landscapers, who hope that its current location is its final one.

Now found west of Bizzell Memorial Library and north of Ellison Hall, the rose garden was established in 1995 at the former home of OU presidential families on the corner of Pickard and Lindsey streets. A new presidential couple, David and Molly Shi Boren, was then living temporarily in the home during the months of planning and reconstruction required to reclaim historic Boyd House. As a foreshadowing of the extensive University landscaping that lay just ahead, Molly Boren could not live any place without flowers—lots of flowers.

The garden seemed to the Borens the perfect tribute to former first lady Rose Sharp, who shared Mrs. Boren's love of delicate, colorful roses. The intent was eventually to move the garden to the Boyd House property just north of the campus. When moving day came, however, a more public site was chosen on the corner of Boyd and Elm, where it was bracketed by the Catlett Music Center, which contains the Paul F. Sharp Concert Hall, and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art.

In 1998, the garden was reconfigured to surround *Mustang*, the fiberglass sculpture of a rearing horse by Luis Jimenez, a gift to the museum from Ardmore's Jerome Westheimer. The joint tenancy did not last long. A year after construction began on the Mary and Howard Lester Wing of the museum in 2003, the rose garden was on the move again.

The new site by the library was carefully selected for maximum exposure. Landscape director Allen King estimates that two-thirds of OU's students pass by every day. His staff invested considerable



Robert Taylor

Former First Lady Rose Sharp, inset, was photographed in 1995 in the original rose garden named in her honor, now located west of Bizzell Library and north of Ellison Hall.



time and effort building the garden's base, both in the soil mix and the drainage pattern. But the museum's construction schedule evicted the garden in the hottest part of the summer of 2004, dooming any transplant attempts and causing King to acquire all new bushes.

In spite of Oklahoma's unseasonably wet late spring and early summer, the Rose Sharp Rose Garden has thrived this year, thanks in large part to the diligent, daily attention the labor-intensive roses receive from their caregivers. Rose Sharp acknowledged need for such meticulous stewardship at the garden's dedication 12 years ago when she compared her favorite flower to the institution she and her husband had served:

"Roses are really like universities. They both need a good, solid foundation to

reach their full potential.

"Then they need tender, loving care. They need to be fed, to be nurtured and to be cultivated. They will thrive with creativity and experimentation.

"Sometimes both need to be pruned—very carefully. You must know when, where and how much pruning to do.

"Finally they need protection. It is important to take action as soon as you notice a blemish or any other sign of damage. You must not allow the damage to spread and destroy the vitality of either the rose or the university.

"If all these steps are followed, both roses and universities will produce a dazzling display of beauty." —CJB