



Dedicated to Forest Hills

Residents Give Lasting Tribute

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"The Spirit of Forest Hills - Catch it!" used on Forest Hills t-shirts, hats, and cups, originated from Neoma Twining. Twining has been pitching that spirit for years and it has been caught by many! The Children's Network, Seniors Group and Animal Alert! were ignited by that enthusiastic spirit. Twining has served in practically every volunteer position there is in Forest Hills and at one time, she brought back to life the governing board, when it was near extinction.

The trees were what sold Kevin and Neoma when they first moved here in 1991. She is quick to state, "My passion for trees is a bit obsessive, but if you live here long enough, you get it! Forest Hills is unlike any other neighborhood in Dallas. It's a treasure and needs to be preserved and continually cared for." Another passion is their two daughters, Olivia at SMU and Sophia soon to be in high school at Parish Episcopal, who were raised in the San Benito home. Last year, 21 years later, the Twining's picked up and moved to their newly built house. Next door! They just couldn't leave what attracted them in the first place to Forest Hills, the trees; large yards; quiet streets and the small community feel.

Back in 2006, Neoma had another spirited idea. She envisioned placing welcoming memorial benches throughout the common areas of Forest Hills, which would provide residents a place to rest and reflect. Says Twining, "Take the time to sit on any one bench, look around and take it in. It's right here for the taking. The trees, the eclectic homes and the friendly families. When people drive into our neighborhood, I hope they see one thing and that is, the residents care. The benches add a special touch making it more homey and friendly. Community matters."

Barbara Clay looks back.

"Ken and I have lived in Forest Hills since Halloween (literally) 1997. Very odd way to meet your new neighbors; they recognize you, but you don't recognize them without their costume.

When I was a kid growing up in Hollywood Heights, I used to take my Grandfather's not yet an antique Mercedes convertible on Sunday drives through Forest Hills. I loved the space and the green, two commodities that are rare, yet often taken for granted.

I thought the bench program was a nice idea for all the walkers and it gave the median a tended/finished look. The bench sits in the shade of a tree and faces our home.

The phrase 'Because neighbors and neighborhoods matter' just came into my head and is the reason we contribute to the Association and the Security program. (It was also in the midst of the discussion of a proposed 25-story condo on the lake....). Just as Twining believes, we must protect the integrity of life as it exists here in Forest Hills. A peaceful, safe, friendly neighborhood located in a huge, growing metropolis."

Andie Comini knew exactly.....

"Thirty years ago I was thumbing through a real estate book and saw a picture of this cute little modern looking house located somewhere in a neighborhood called "Forest Hills". After some work (long before computers and Google map were available!), I made my way over here to see the house. The trees! The hills! The creeks! The nature! The diversity in homes! I was hooked and immediately put down a contract on the house. From day one I was in love with my surroundings.

Working from home, I would often take a break with my dogs and go for a walk up Whittier Avenue to the little park at San Pedro/Whittier. This short walk in the nature of Forest Hills helped me unwind and spend quality time with my dogs.

About 10 years ago I wanted to do something to help unite lost pets with their families and initiated Animal Alert! When it was announced in our newsletter that Forest Hills would be selling benches to raise money for the neighborhood, I knew exactly where I wanted mine to be and what I wanted it to say. "Support the Forest Hills Animal Alert! PooChini and Bear Comini!"

When time allows, I walk my new pups over to that little park, soak up its beauty and relax. I'm glad I could contribute something so special to Forest Hills for all to enjoy!"

Marci Novak jumped all over it.....

"I moved to Forest Hills on Thanksgiving Day, 1977. It was a sleepy little neighborhood then, with modest ranch homes on huge tree-filled lots. I love the forest in Forest Hills! And of course, it goes without saying that I love our beautiful White Rock Lake!

Neoma Twining wrote an article about benches and I jumped all over it! She was terrific at shepherding the idea into reality. I loved the project of people providing benches throughout the neighborhood and wanted to be a part of it. So many folks enjoy walking through Forest Hills and it seemed like a lovely way to let people stop and "sit a spell."

Continued



Image and Bench Plaque Key		
"Because neighbors and neighborhoods matter."	In Memory of my sweet, smiling brother Arnold Gans March 28, 1937 - March 28, 2007	Support the Forest Hills Animal Alert! PooChini and Bear Comini
"Kasha", Barbara Clay & Ken Bernstein	Marci Novak	Andie Comini & her Japanese Chins
In Loving Memory of Pa and Granddaddy Aracelis, Dorian, Eddy and Will	In honor of Isaac and Alena Payne Christmas 2007	In Memory of Maurice Fern Collins Born July 28, died July 23rd, 1982 Son of Nancy, and Father of six
The Foerster Family	Isaac & Lena Payne	Fia & Bella Collins
In Memory of Julie Ivarz Grant, Kelly, Jordan and Mackenzie Wall May 26, 1987	Mike and Kelly Miller 8154 San Cristobal June 4, 2007	The Wells Family 1981
Kathy, Grant & Mackenzie Wall	Kelly & Mike Miller with "Cupcake" & "Precious"	Bob, Kelly & Susan Wells

Dedicated to Forest Hills (continued)

I love that peaceful little park where Arn's bench is. It seemed like it would be a beautiful spot for someone to stop, sit under a canopy of tall trees, and have some quiet time in nature. Sometimes there's even a little water gurgling in the creek. My brother would have loved that setting!

My brother, Arnold Gans, was the most fun, joyous person that I've ever known. Hilarious and full of life, he brought laughter wherever he went. Everything that I know about being a good person in the world I learned by watching him. When he died in November, 2004, I wanted to spread a little of Arnold's happy, playful spirit around my community and to remember him by making things a little nicer in our parks.

I go to Arn's bench all year round, several times a week. Each season has its beauty, but my preference is summer, when the trees are totally green and the shade coupled with the breezes make it seem 10 degrees cooler than anywhere else!

There are things that I seem to always do, perhaps a ritual. I relax, breathe in the air, and look up at the trees. I talk to my brother there, cry a little and laugh a lot. Share some music from my iPod. Clean up spider webs or bird poop on the bench. Pick up any little trash. Once in awhile I bring a friend to introduce them to that little park and to Arn's bench."

A bench located at the San Rafael entrance, reads "The Wells Family -1981" Susan Wells remembers.....

"Although Bob purchased the home on Santa Clara in 1980, he, son Kelly and I became a family upon our marriage on February 21, 1981. Our wedding reception was actually held in our new home, while we were in the remodeling process. I remember being in my wedding dress, lighting luminarias in a drizzling rain. We invited several of our new neighbors, which was a beginning of many Forest Hills friendships. Bob then was head of lending at the old Lakewood Bank and soon after, I was coordinating the first Dallas Blooms and remained with the Dallas Arboretum for another 10 years. If memory serves, we raised 10 dogs on Santa Clara!

There were very few kids in the neighborhood at that time, but it didn't stop our son, Kelly, from developing some close and life long friendships. At age 45, Kel now lives in one of the most beautiful places on earth, Newport Beach, but not a week goes by when he doesn't say he is moving back to Forest Hills. He still remains in contact with his old Forest Hills gang!

I was one of the original members of the Forest Hills Service League. While I was at a Forest Hills Board meeting I heard Neoma talking about the benches. I just thought it was a wonderful way to give back. Its location welcomes us home every day. Forest Hills is a special place for The Wells family and yes, on occasion, we do sit on the bench we donated. Seems like just the other day that I was lighting those luminarias on my wedding night!"

Fond memories linger daily; remembrance keeps them near for Kathy Wall.....

"We have lived in Forest Hills for the past 20 years. We moved here when I was expecting our second child, Mackenzie, when we were growing out of our 2-bedroom home. Grant grew up in Lakewood, so we knew of this neighborhood and fell in love with the large lots and abundance of trees. Grant and I had both been involved with the board in the past and learned of the bench program through Neoma. She had mentioned that she wanted to place one on the median in the 8100 block of Forest Hills. I knew then, that would be the bench we would purchase in honor of our friend, Julie Bourne who had passed away in March of 2007 after a long five-year battle with breast cancer. The bench would face her home and honor her.

We had become friends with Julie and her family after our daughters, Mackenzie and Annie, formed a strong friendship in their early years at St. John's Episcopal School. A lasting bond developed with Julie and her family after many hours on the sidelines of the soccer field watching our daughters play together. Julie had a friendly and giving personality. She never met an enemy. She had a courageous spirit and loving nature. We do sit on the bench in memory of her from time to time."

Marty Collins reflects on the bench that he and Josy gave to Forest Hills.....

"Josy has lived in Forest Hills for 20 plus years and I moved to join her in the neighborhood when we were married. Josy's mother lives here, as does Zac's father; so it is not only beautiful, but convenient for our family. We all love the lake.

The bench honors my father, who died prematurely at age 60. His 4 grand kids in our immediate family never really got a chance to know him.

As the marker says, he is a son of Kentucky where his and wife's extended family grew up. The bench sits under a flowering pear tree facing the house. I like that, and imagine him watching us, hopefully with some satisfaction. I miss him and all the rest of my family, none of whom live in Texas. The bench maybe helps all that?"

Kelly and Mike Miller have lived in Forest Hills for 8 years.....

"The trees and our neighbors here are what we like most. We heard about the bench project, thought it was a great beautification idea and were one of the first to contribute. We stop and sit on the bench often when we are out walking our Pomeranians, "Cupcake" and "Precious."

David Payne reminisces about neighbors.....

"Carol and I moved to Forest Hills in May, 1995. We were instantly attracted to the trees, the lot sizes, the adjacency to White Rock Lake (heavy users) and the involvement of everyone in taking care of the neighborhood. We valued Forest Hills as much as our home.

Our neighbors, Richard and Deb Allison introduced themselves the day we moved in and we shared lives until they moved away. Our two kids, Isaac and Lena grew up waving at them and talking with them through the fence. Richard always opened up his garage and experience. He was still active in the Naval Reserve and I was out of the Army National Guard, so we swapped stories. We both had German Shepherds and both of our families loved dogs. Deb worked at Baylor until she retired right before they moved. They both loved our kids and thought they would get a kick out of having a bench to remember them. We still email, update, write and swap Christmas cards and photos of the kids (and dogs) and share stories of the neighborhood as it continues to evolve. They love hearing about the kids growing up stories. They were probably the nicest neighbors we've ever had.

They called us one day around Christmas in 2007 and said they were giving the bench in honor of our kids. They always walked down to that park with their dog and we did, too. We both loved the "viscosity" of the neighborhood when everyone gets out, walks around and bumps into each other. I think the choice of the spot was just serendipity. We walk by and sit on the bench about once a year and think of them."

The Foerster family donated a bench to Forest Hills in loving memory of their father and grandfather. Bill Foerster recalls.....

Both Charles (Granddaddy) and Roger (Pa) loved the neighborhood and would take walks through our forest. Mindy and I have been residents of this wonderful neighborhood for 21 years. Wow a long time when you put a number to it! It seems like only yesterday that we moved into our first Forest Hills home on Santa Clara (they are currently at a second home on San Fernando).

Neoma Twining was a big factor in bringing the bench program to fruition. We decided to give this gift to Forest Hills because our father and grandfather loved the outdoors and our neighborhood. Being able to honor two of the most important men in our lives, while contributing a benefit to the neighborhood was a win-win that we could not pass up. We decided on the Breezewood/Santa Clara location because it looked down the street towards our house.

The two men were alike and different in many ways. Both were veterans, granddaddy, a navy lieutenant from WWII and Pa, an Air Force Lieutenant during the Korean conflict. While they both played golf, Granddaddy's passion was fishing, while Pa's was golf.

Both loved teaching their children and grandchildren the fine art of both sports and musings on life. They dedicated their lives to their families and were always there to support and provide guidance. We think both would have enjoyed taking a rest if they came upon the bench and chatting with our neighbors as they strolled by. We occasionally sit on the bench and recall the memories of time with our fathers here in Dallas and earlier in Houston and Davenport."

Neoma Twining's beautiful idea has become a gift of welcoming warmth to all. Sit down, rest a while, take in the beauty and catch the spirit of Forest Hills. **Thanks, Neoma!**

Judy Whalen, Story and Sharon Shero, Photography

Benches in the Ground



If there were service hours awarded to adults, this month's recipients would be Grant Wall and Kevin Twining. Both men were on hand to install FH's first dedicated median bench.

The aluminum benches are beautiful and blend nicely with our landscape and trees. The actual color of each bench is coffee/copper blend. The name plates appear at the top of the benches arc giving credit to the residents who invested in FH's beautification program.



We thank Grant and Kevin for their time.