

Grape Arbor beam structure restored

The grape arbor has been a prominent feature of Green Lake Conference Center since it was constructed by the Lawsons in 1910. The grape arbor's beauty has drawn people as a place of spiritual reflection. President Ben Mott remarked, "One can step away from a conference and in minutes be sitting in the arbor reflecting upon how a speaker's teaching might be implemented in the ministry God has given them."

Over time, the grape arbor had become a decayed space as the wooden horizontal beams had rotted at the joints and whole sections had started to collapse. As God would have it, three donors stepped forward and gave in honor of their families' memories of walking the arbor over the past 80 years. Because of their generosity, the arbor was revived with a new beam structure with a focus on longevity and historical authenticity. Bob Staricka, the project's architect, highlighted using Douglas fir in the restoration, mirroring materials from the early 1900s. "We didn't have architectural drawings from that period," Bob noted, "but old photographs helped guide us to create a structure well within the nature of what would have been done." Staricka's attention to detail and focus on quality led him to add key features like seamless plugs that fill the bolt holes, wood sealant for weather resistance, and a galvanized metal cap that prevents water penetration. These restoration techniques, implemented by wonderful craftsmen, will ensure that the grape arbor endures for the next 50 years.

We are now seeking donors to restore the broken steps in the arbor and add subtle lighting to the walkways, and then to restore the Judson Tower and boathouse roofs. More information on our historic restoration work and that of our partner Preserve Lawson Landmarks team can be found at LawsonLegacy.org.

