



Contact: Shelley Shaw  
Tel: (401) 851-8949  
Email: [sshaw@americanillustration.org](mailto:sshaw@americanillustration.org)  
Website: [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org)

FOR WEEKEND EDITION RELEASE  
June 3rd, 2016

### **A SUCCESSFUL CELEBRATION OF TREES at the NMAI & F. L. OLMSTED PARK AND ARBORETUM**

The **Frederick Law Olmsted Park and Arboretum** at the world-renowned **National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI)**, located at Vernon Court (492 Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI 02840), held a gathering on **Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>** to celebrate their recent arboreal accomplishments. **"A Celebration of Trees"** commemorated the accreditation of the NMAI grounds as a Level I Arboretum, honored the Museum and Park Founders, Judy and Laurence Cutler, and announced the designation of four trees on the property as Champion Trees of Rhode Island.

Jim Rugh, Director of Special Projects for the NMAI and organizer of the Celebration, kicked off the event by welcoming the crowd and introducing Senator M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D) and Representative Lauren H. Carson (D) for opening remarks. Senator Paiva Weed mentioned the struggle the Cutlers endured to open the NMAI and Olmsted Park to the public. "I do recall the folks at City Hall being a little skeptical about just what [the Cutlers] might be up to," she said, "and 20 years later, reviews come in from all over the World about what a gem this Museum is and what an asset it is, and most importantly, what an asset the Cutlers have become to the community." Representative Carson also discussed the valuable resource—historically, artistically, and horticulturally—the NMAI has become. The Cutlers have restored and maintained both Vernon Court and the F. L. Olmsted Park & Arboretum, turning the National Museum of American Illustration into one of Newport's top attractions; earlier this year, FlipKey, a TripAdvisor company, honored the NMAI as **Rhode Island's 2016 "Top Museum Worth Traveling For"**.

Dr. Brian Maynard, Professor of Horticulture at URI, discussed the significance of the trees and woody plants within the F. L. Olmsted Park & Arboretum, and presented the Cutlers with their official Arboretum Certification from ArbNet and the Moreton Register of Arboreta. The Rhode Island Tree Council's Technical Director, John Campanini, explained the specifications required for trees to be designated as "State Champions", and officially designated the NMAI's Cucumbertree Magnolia (*Magnolia acuminata*), Fernleaf beech (*Fagus sylvatica laciniata*), Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*), and Yeddo Spruce (*Picea jezoensis*) as the largest and oldest of their species in Rhode Island. The Cucumbertree Magnolia in particular, at 82ft tall, is thought to be the largest in the World. In October 2015, Largess Forestry installed a copper rod system in the Cucumbertree Magnolia to prevent it from potentially deadly lightning strikes.

A Blue Atlas Cedar and Eddie's White Wonder Dogwood were dedicated in memory of fine art publisher Arnold Quinn and filmmaker Gary Meyers, respectively. Dr. Maynard and Tina Dolan (Executive Director of the Newport Tree Society and Arboretum) made remarks about the two newly planted trees, and Judy and Laurence Cutler expressed their sympathies and celebrated the lives of two great friends and colleagues.

Matthew "Twig" Largess and his son Pete Largess, of Largess Forestry, demonstrated proper tree planting and climbing techniques. Throughout the event, four new trees—of four different species—were introduced into the Olmsted Park & Arboretum. The Largess crew demonstrated both traditional hand-planting techniques with a young redwood, and a more modern technique using a large, truck-mounted tree spade to plant a red maple. Pete Largess demonstrated his climbing techniques, using ropes and a harness to quickly ascend the NMAI's Tulip Poplar.

The event was a stupendous success, drawing visitors from all over New England, and even as far abroad as Chile. Children and adults alike joined in the festivities and visitors enjoyed discounted admission to the NMAI after the Celebration. Additional photography and video coverage of the event can be viewed on our website ([www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org)) and our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/illustrationmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/illustrationmuseum)).

For more information, contact the NMAI at (401) 851-8949, email [art@americanillustration.org](mailto:art@americanillustration.org), or visit our website at [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org). Summer hours (Memorial Weekend-Labor Day): Thursday through Sunday, 11am-5pm. Guided tour on Fridays at 3pm, year-round. \$18 adults, \$16 seniors/military, \$12 children ages 5-12. Children under 5 not admitted. Schedule subject to change; please call to confirm.