

Director of Restoration retires after more than four decades at Monticello

WILLIAM L. BEISWANGER, the Robert H. Smith director of restoration, has studied Monticello's landscape and architecture for longer than Jefferson himself actually lived on the mountain. In December, Beiswanger will retire after more than four decades at Monticello.

"Bill is a person of virtue and talent. He possesses the kind of intelligence and accomplishment that Jefferson hoped would flourish in the new American republic," said Susan Stein, Richard Gilder senior curator and vice president for museum programs.

Beiswanger has inspired many with the remarkable range of his knowledge, intellect, astuteness, professionalism, astonishing memory, and generosity. In 1969 he came to Monticello from the University of Virginia School of Architecture to make measured drawings of Monticello's furniture.

"Many times we have been dazzled by his recall of the minutest detail and his ability to locate the most obscure source, whether it is the date construction began on the south terrace wing or a reference to Thomas Whateley's *Observations on Modern Gardening*," said Stein.

With his fine eye for color and design, Beiswanger is known at Monticello for his superb taste, visual talents, and

speaking and writing abilities. With courtly manners and considerable charm, Beiswanger is exceedingly good company. Still, characteristically self-effacing, he is happiest, like Jefferson, when surrounded by his own books on garden design and architecture.

Beiswanger's many accomplishments have literally transformed the mountaintop. Every Monticello preservation effort of the last four decades was the product of his assiduous study, among them the grove, the vegetable terrace garden, the orchard, the vineyard, the berry patches, *ferme ornée*, the garden pavilion, the roof, the dome room oculus, the garden pavilion, the corner terraces, the Venetian enclosures, and the soon-to-be-completed-reinstatement of Jefferson's original mountaintop road scheme. Beiswanger's careful scholarship documenting the history of individual spaces and his legendary record-keeping will provide future generations with a superb resource.

"We thank Bill for charting the course of Monticello's restoration and for helping us recover Jefferson's lost world," said Leslie Greene Bowman, president and CEO of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

If you would seek his monument, look around Monticello.

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