

# ZIMMERMAN BROTHERS' PARK

Zimmerman Brothers' Park was conceived by candlelight with the approval of a drift of fireflies. The fireflies were right, the woods would be an ideal place to set out the overflow of azalea and other cuttings from my cold frames.

Once I had hung my lantern on the bough, support flowed in from the community. Even donations had been forthcoming. One autumn I naturalized a thousand bulbs. The next spring the family living nearest the park sent me a check. Winters, the principal of the local high school, offered me the use of windows with southern exposure for wintering tender plants.

I was never lacking volunteers from nature study classes to help me weed and transplant. Dry spells were never a problem with neighbors ready with hoses, and the vandals were kept at bay by my friends on Maple Avenue.

Best of all, the Park and Planning Commission let me putter in its greenhouse, where I was allowed to tend to plants brought in from as far as Stoke Poges in England, where Thomas Grey wrote his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

A letter greeted me one afternoon. It was from the White House. Even though it had been a full six years since I had sneaked out the gate past a White House guard with a sprig of boxwood in my pocket, I opened the letter apprehensively. But it said:

I was in Africa when my brother wrote telling me town officials had decided to name my floral playground Zimmerman Brothers' Park and had a bronze plaque cast to that effect. I hurried home for the dedication. The Park and Planning Commission hauled in a large boulder on which to affix the plaque.

But of all the promises and mementos, the one I most prized was a letter from the Park and Planning Commission promising to care for the park if I ever left Washington. In a few years, I did just that.

I remember taking a last look at the plaque while hearing geese winging their way overhead. We all flew on.

*Fred L. Zimmerman*

*In 1986, the Town of Chevy Chase assumed ownership of Zimmerman Park and since then has maintained it consistent with Mr. Zimmerman's plan.*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 9, 1970

Dear Messrs. Zimmerman:

It was with great pleasure that I recently learned of your splendid efforts to improve the quality of life in our area. I understand that you have held parties for underprivileged children at your home on many occasions and that you have undertaken the landscaping of certain public property in your neighborhood, with gratifying success. I want to commend you for your excellent community spirit and send you my best wishes for the continued success of your efforts.

Sincerely,



Mr. Carl D. Zimmerman  
Mr. Fred L. Zimmerman  
7605 Maple Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20015