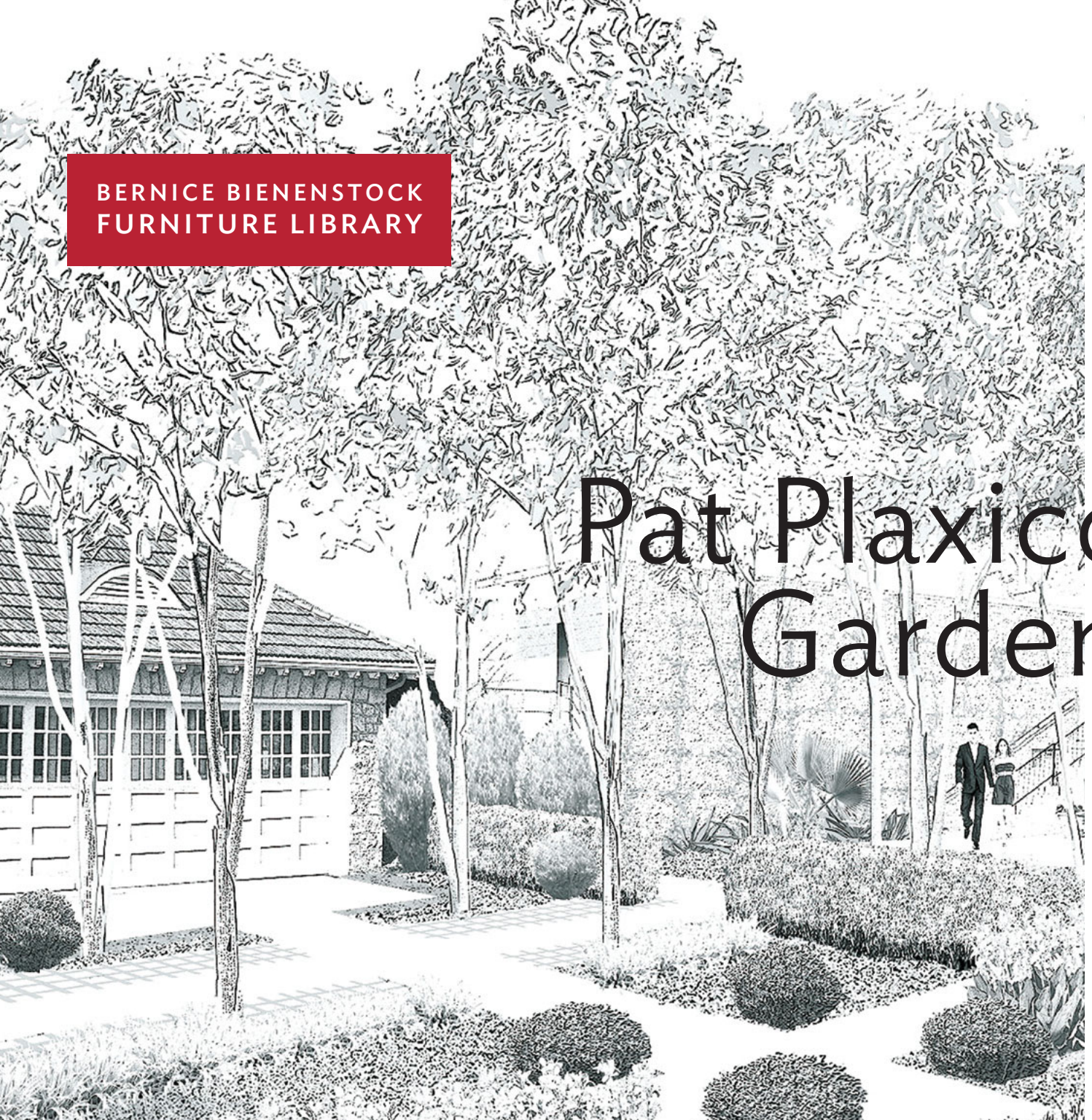
BERNICE BIENENSTOCK
FURNITURE LIBRARY



Pat Plaxico Gardens

PAT PLAXICO
CURRICULUM VITAE

Pat Plaxico is a nationally recognized interior designer renowned for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings—adapting old structures for new purposes. Her portfolio includes Historic Market Square, the E.J.Victor Building, The Phillips Building (now High Point Convention and Visitors Bureau), Bienenstock Furniture Library (Grayson House), The Golf Club at Roaring Gap; preservation of Old Guilford Courthouse, High Point, as law offices; and restoration of the library at the North Carolina Governor's Mansion. Plaxico color-styled the entire downtown of Stanford KY, founded 1775, one of the oldest settlements in Kentucky. She has furnished and appointed several distinct buildings at High Point University.

Plaxico attended the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and received Bachelor and Masters of Science degrees in Interior Design / Historic Interiors at Iowa State University. She studied French architecture and furniture at Parson's in Paris, and fashion merchandising at Tobe Coburn (now a part of NYU).

Among her recognitions are the award for valuable service in decorating The Ronald McDonald House at Duke University Medical Center – the first in North Carolina; the first Luminaire Award bestowed by the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA); the McGraw-Edison award of excellence for lighting design; and Designer of the Year award from the Carolinas chapter, American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

Plaxico serves on the High Point University Board of Visitors and the boards of Piedmont Opera, Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library, and the Alexander Martin Chapter, NSDAR. She is a lifetime member of Wachovia Historical Society of Winston-Salem, and a member of the Historical Book Club of NC, NC Museum of History Associates, High Point Museum Guild, Wilson Quarterly Book Club, 1859 Club at High Point Museum, High Point's Tuesday Study Club and Midweek Garden Club. For her contributions at High Point University, the institution's Climbing Rose Garden is named in Plaxico's honor.

BERKELEY REPERTORY
FURNITURE LIBRARY

Pat Plaxico
has been a valuable friend to the furniture industry, the design community, the Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library, and the Bienenstock family for many years. I am pleased that the Pat Plaxico Gardens at the Library will give permanent recognition to her talent and generous spirit.

The Gardens will be a wonderful place where students, designers, and all visitors with an interest in design, can find inspiration.

RUSSELL BIENENSTOCK
Vice President, Board of Directors, Bernice Bienenstock Furniture Library
Editor-in-Chief, Furniture World Magazine, established 1870

PAT PLAXICO

GARDENS

AT THE BERNICE BIENENSTOCK FURNITURE LIBRARY

PAT PLAXICO: HOW I MET THE BIENENSTOCKS

In 1975, I was a designer at Alderman Studios, now Alderman Company. One of my major accounts was Sherwin-Williams, the nation's largest specialty paint retailer.

In anticipation of the U.S. Bicentennial Celebration, Sherwin-Williams developed a program of regionalized color palettes for exterior paints—with charts representing The Southern Region, The North Atlantic States, and so forth. They also wanted do-it-yourself projects utilizing multiple lines of stains and glazes. It was my job to conceptualize photography, and I thought constructing an actual outdoor village of regional home facades might be a wonderful way to tell the story.

I had one week to pull the art direction together. Back then, we had limited access to books and magazines and very few sources. I knew of The Library at Winterthur, so I called to see if I could visit to research historic paint colors and architectural details. Of course, I got nowhere, because I lacked the credentials Winterthur required.

At the same time, I was helping Carson and Helen Stout with the design of their new home. I told Helen of my desire to use Winterthur Library. She quickly advised me that Sandy Bienenstock was a member of the Winterthur board and offered to introduce me to the Bienenstocks. Mr. Bienenstock was eager to write a recommendation for me. Thus, I left by train to explore the older parts of cities along the East coast—Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Wilmington, Delaware—and Winterthur Library.

With sketchbook and camera, I noted front doors, brick patterns, shutters, roof lines, architectural features, and color combinations. Arriving at Winterthur, it was like navigating the restrictions of Fort Knox to gain admittance. The Library was (and remains) underground. But once inside, there were all of these wonderful books laid out—just for me—including several 18th and 19th century books with hand-colored paint swatches. This extraordinary opportunity was the beginning of my lifelong friendship with Sandy and Bernice Bienenstock.

Sometime later, I made a trip to England. Among the stalls of London, I came across a silversmith's journal filled with wax impressions of silvermarks and rubbings of engravings. I paid about a pound—several dollars—for two books. Upon my return, I gave the books to the Furniture Library. For tax purposes, Mr. Bienenstock wrote me a letter of value for around $750. "How do you know they are worth that much?," I asked. "I am the authority on this subject," he said. I never questioned him again.

continued

After 15 years at Alderman, I left the company in 1981. Shortly after that, Jake Froelich asked me to help with the restoration and adaptive reuse of Market Square, then the Tomlinson Building. My office was in the building along High Street—in the original Tomlinson offices created in the early 1900s.

In the beginning, to meet the deadlines of furniture markets, my hours were really long and non-stop. Every morning around 10:00 a.m., Mr. Bienenstock would drive up in his big black Cadillac. He would enter and, very formally, he would say, "Mrs. Bienenstock and I would like you to join us for dinner."

The pattern was always the same. At the end of the day, I would come to their apartment above the Furniture Library, and we would have a glass of wine and some cheese. Then, the stories would begin.

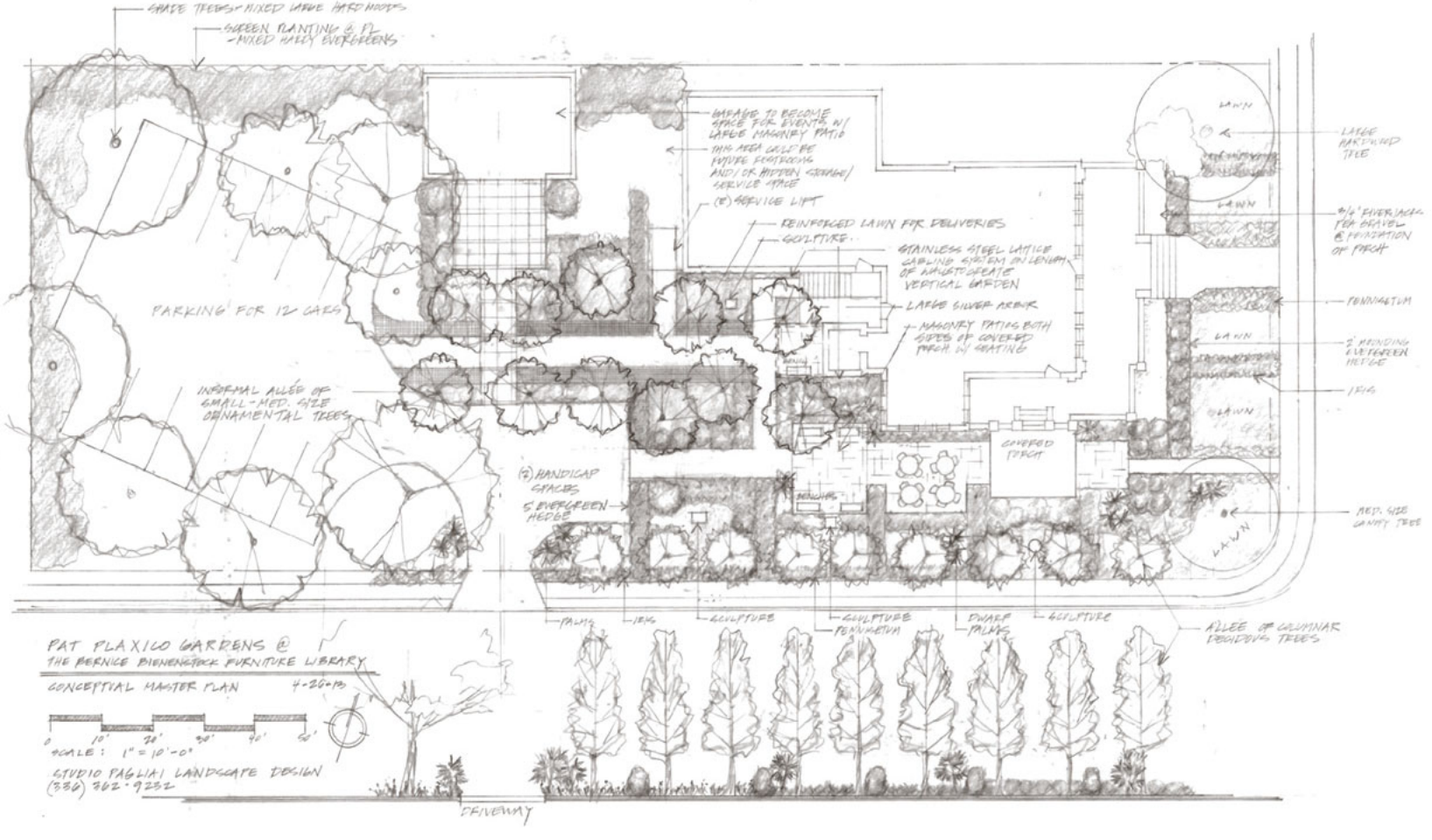
Sandy Bienenstock was a great storyteller. There were many episodes about their early years in the furniture business, when he conducted seminars for salesmen. There were stories about their worldwide travels in third world countries. He spoke of his quest for books and artifacts. Bernice Bienenstock, being an authority on roses, recalled her wide travels as a judge in international rose competitions. Then we would go to dinner.

Nothing was ever said about the following evening, but around 10:00 a.m. the next morning, he would stop by my office again. "Mrs. Bienenstock and I would like you to join us for dinner." And I never got tired of being with them.

When we were working to develop the Century showroom, there was a large restaurant on the building's first floor. Around 6:00 p.m., Mr. Bienenstock would come up to the fifth floor (Century) and say, "Your dinner is ready. Come down and eat with us." How wonderful it was to have such loving, caring people in my life.

In 1975, I was asked to join the Furniture Library board. I've been a member for 38 years. Working on the recent restoration and renovation of the Library was a real treat. This gardens and grounds project will further enhance the property—and invoke the interests and passions of the Library's founders. The Main Street location will be an oasis of beauty and respite, a gathering place, and a destination for learning in the uptown area of High Point.

Pat Plaxico, May 2013



PAT PLAXICO GARDENS @
THE BERNICE BIENENSTOCK FURNITURE LIBRARY

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN 4-26-13

0 10' 20' 30' 40' 60'

SCALE: 1" = 10'-0"

STUDIO PAGLIAI LANDSCAPE DESIGN
(336) 362-9232

PAT PLAXICO GARDENS

AT THE BERNICE BIENENSTOCK FURNITURE LIBRARY

High Point . North Carolina

Garden design, master plan, and installation by Studio Pagliai Inc

Color renderings by Philip Gibbs, Alderman Company