

A Garden of Eden at Bascom Palmer

When Miami philanthropist Charlotte Breyer Rodgers learned that a plaza was being built in the area adjacent to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, one of her first concerns was that this area reflect the beauty that the Eye Institute has brought into so many people's lives. She feels that people who are helped at Ann Bates Leach Eye Hospital should have the earliest opportunity to feast their eyes on an inspiring sight.

So was born the concept of the "Breyer Patch." Created and endowed in perpetuity by Mrs. Rodgers, the 2,600 square foot garden area connects the McKnight Vision Research Center with Ann Bates Leach Eye Hospital. Landscape architect Michael Weeks, of Post Buckley Schuh & Jernigan, Inc., whose credits include the Metro Zoo, designed the garden. The Breyer Patch will feature 1,200 individual, seasonal flowering plants, flowering trees, and sabal palms.

"The size of this garden alone makes it unique," notes Weeks. "It's also unusual in that it is endowed in perpetuity."

An individual walking between the hospital and research institute will be delighted by the color and beauty of the raised planters and ground-level flower beds. The Breyer Patch, named in recognition of the Breyer Ice Cream Co. briar leaf trademark designed by Mrs. Rodgers' grandfather, Henry W. Breyer, will be completed in the Fall.

"In providing this garden, which will delight visitors for years to come, Mrs. Rodgers is clearly sharing our goal of enabling thousands to enjoy the earth's beauty," said Dr. Edward Norton, Medical Director of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. "Her generosity in creating this garden, as well as a research pavilion and research professorship, epitomizes an individual's ability to make a difference in the lives of countless others."

Charlotte Breyer Rodgers

Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy wrote: "The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity." These words could well describe the philosophy of Charlotte Breyer Rodgers. Well-known throughout South Florida for her philanthropy, Mrs. Rodgers was a 1987 recipient of Bascom Palmer's People of Vision Award. She has been a long-time partner in the Eye Institute's mission to eradicate eye disease and fight blindness.

Her \$5 million commitment to Bascom Palmer will enhance the Institute in the following ways: \$2 million to endow a research professorship; \$2.5 million to endow the Charlotte Breyer Rodgers Research Pavilion in the William L. McKnight Vision Research Center; and \$500,000 to create and endow a garden – to be known as the "Breyer Patch" – to connect the McKnight Vision Research Center with the Anne Bates Leach Eye Hospital.

Born in Philadelphia, Mrs. Rodgers is a member of the Van Bomel and Breyer families, names associated with charitable causes in New York and Philadelphia. The Breyer name is also familiar to millions of Americans for its famous ice cream. Mrs. Rodgers moved to New York as a young child, and lived there until moving to Miami more than 20 years ago.

In addition to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, Mrs. Rodgers generously supports the Miami Ballet Company, Miami Heart Institute, Mount Sinai Medical Center, University of Miami and the American Cancer Society.

