

Telling the story of our tree donors wouldn't be the same without the story of Sue Chabot's designs. Since 1995, even before the Festival of Trees was in existence, Sue has been decorating trees for Ann's Place's fundraising events. In 2002, the Festival of Trees began as an opportunity for people to financially sponsor a tree, and all the trees featured in the Festival for the first 6+ years were decorated by Sue Chabot and a committee of dedicated volunteers including Ann's Place's former CEO, Wilda Hayes and her daughter Liz Hayes and Sue's daughter, Jennifer Chabot. "During those early

years, we four often designed and decorated between 35-45 trees in the weeks before opening night. My porch was a glitter factory... it took years for the glitter to finally disappear from the flagstone. There were a few other talented contributors who did multiple trees on site the lead-up week to opening night. We generally had all decor planned and purchased ahead of time and delivered on the Sunday to our venue. The Big Trees were decorated that week within the few days before opening. Linda Pickwick, Claudia Coopersmith, Christy Saffi, were of utmost importance for their beautiful handling of materials and on-the-spot creativity."- Sue



Roaring 20's Themed Tree

Over the years, under Wilda Hayes' leadership, the Festival of Trees shifted to a raffle system that encouraged the public's participation. This meant that Sue's job shifted as well- she was to plan for those trees supported by sponsorships at levels \$500 and above. That still meant planning for 15-18 trees of various sizes each with a different theme that was determined early in the year.

This year marks the 21st year that Sue has been designing trees for the Festival, and over the years she has designed or decorated close to 200 trees for Ann's Place. We asked Sue about her experience decorating over the years:

How did I decide on themes?" So many ways!! Anything could be inspiration... a movie, a song.. a beautiful ribbon, something humorous...(Smurfs, I love Lucy,) hobbies, sports, food, books, ... often just a single item got the whole idea rolling"

What were your favorite trees to decorate?" "I often made trees into "people" ... I made a fisherman, a golfer, a jogger, a "Betty Crocker baker", dancers, and I think my favorite of these was the big tree with two faces... Zelda and FScott.

Did you have a favorite theme?" "One of my very favorite themes was Tarrywile in memory of its director Sandy Moy. It contained original watercolors done by the deceased groundskeeper of Tarrywile, Richard Gunn.

Thank you, Sue, Wilda, Jennifer, Liz and the MANY volunteers who have contributed to the success and growth of our Festival of Trees. Please keep an eye out for Sue's trees this year- we can't wait to see what themes she will come up with in November!



Zelda & F. Scott Tree