

**Please join your fellow Norwich residents
for a Rededication Ceremony on the
Sixtieth Anniversary of the Norwich
Memorial Rose Garden**

Where: The Rose Garden, Mohegan Park (corner Rockwell & Judd streets)

When: Thursday, July 10, 2008, 6:30 p.m.

Why: To celebrate the installation of a specially commissioned memorial plaque honoring Norwich's veterans—to whom the Rose Garden was originally dedicated in 1948—and the garden's beautiful new ornamental fence.



Tentative program

Invocation: Rev. S. Scott Hankins, Rector, Christ Episcopal Church

Color Guard

National Anthem: Norwich Arts Council Symphonic Band

Rededication Remarks: Mayor Benjamin Lathrop

Honoring earlier generations: Miss Rose of New England 2008 (Marissa Ranalli)

Veterans' Response: Walt Sekula (*invited*)

Unveiling of the Memorial Plaque: alderman Christopher d. Coutu

America the Beautiful: Norwich arts council symphonic band

**The Norwich Memorial Rose Garden—
The Symbolic Heart of the 'Rose City' TURNS 60**

As Norwich in 1859 was marking the 200th anniversary of its settlement, a local gentleman named James Lloyd Greene suggested the city be called the "Rose of New England" because its rolling hills resembled the petals of a rose. In the 1940s, a group of civic-minded Norwich residents decided the "Rose City" should have a suitably beautiful rose garden.

After World War II delayed plans, the city in 1946 set aside a two and one-half acre plot off Rockwell Street, at the entrance to Mohegan Park, for a rose garden. Bulldozers leveled the hillside plot, removing about 100 tons of rock and spreading some 2,400 yards of loam.

Thomas H. Desmond, of Simsbury, who designed the landscape for the Pentagon, just outside of Washington, DC, designed Norwich's rose garden. Henry D. Johnson, chairman of the city's board of park commissioners, planted the first rose bush—a Lady Stanhope—on April 16, 1947.

Private citizens, nurseries and others donated rosebushes, fence posts, stone steps, a sundial, seats, trellises and volunteer labor. One farmer who contributed a large load of manure to the project said, "I can't get money to buy roses, but I can give something to make them grow."

The Norwich Memorial Rose Garden was officially dedicated on July 11, 1948. Two hundred people attended the 30-minute ceremony that designated it a "memorial to those who gave their lives and in honor of those who served in World War II."

The Rose Garden became the symbolic heart of the Rose City. Residents took great pride in it, and thousands visited it over the decades. Mayor Richard F. Marks at the dedication said the rose garden was "one of the most beautiful and restful spots in New England."

Norwich in 2008 erected an eight-foot-high ornamental fence around the circumference of the rose garden to enhance its beauty and protect its 1,500 prize-winning plants against the deer that have been known to feast on their tender leaves and damage the bushes.

To mark the installation of the fence and celebrate the rose garden's 60th anniversary, a rededication ceremony is planned for Thursday, July 10, 2008, at 6:30 pm. Reaffirming the garden's ongoing role as the symbolic heart of the Rose City, and the special place OF the city's veterans in its citizens' hearts, a commemorative plaque will be dedicated during the ceremony.

Donated by the AmericanWarrior.ORG organization founded by Alderman Christopher D. Coutu, the bronze plaque will read, "To honor those who have served to protect our freedom and democracy, the citizens of Norwich rededicate Norwich Memorial Rose Garden on its sixtieth anniversary, July 11, 1948 - July 11, 2008."

—JOHN-MANUEL ANDRIOTE