

## The Frank and Betty Wright Reading Garden



Alexandria resident Betty Wright and her late husband, Frank Lester Wright, Jr., established a foundation in their names in 1978 for the express purpose of "giving the gift of literacy." For 20 years the foundation has funded the Wright to Read literacy program at the Campagna Center. The program recruits, trains and supports interested tutors to work with under-achieving children in kindergarten through third grades. Tutors work one-on-one with the children while working closely with the students' teachers and the Wright to Read staff.

### A Dream is Born

When Betty Wright heard that funding was not available for the library's reading garden, part of architect Michael Graves's overall concept for the Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, she approached the Alexandria Library with a proposal for her foundation to build it. Her foundation board enthusiastically supported the idea and offered

the gift to then-City Manager Vola Lawson in 1998. Unlike most brick and mortar gifts, the Wright Foundation has also established a perpetual fund to maintain the beauty of the garden. The Alexandria City Council formally accepted the gift on April 27, 1999 and the garden was dedicated on June 25, 2000.

### The Reading Garden



The 4,500 square foot garden features a 14-foot high wooden lattice pergola which defines the area. The pergola is painted in Graves's signature light blue to complement the tan and rose colored pavers of the patio. The garden is furnished with teak benches, tables and chairs. Large pots contain hornbeam trees and smaller pots are filled with colorful annuals. The ground-lit pergola is surrounded by river birches, oak leaf hydrangea, Virginia creeper, white rugosa roses and Christmas ferns. The garden provides a smoke-free environment for reading and contemplation and serves as the venue for public programs from children's storytelling to chamber music recitals.

### Alexandria Library

Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library  
5005 Duke Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22304

