



City of  
**WOODWAY**



## Carleen Bright Arboretum

**ATTN: TRAVEL, GARDENING, BIRDING & RELIGION EDITORS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Massey Meditation Grove Dedication Set for 2 p.m., April 12**

*Newest addition to popular Carleen Bright Arboretum is a serene sanctuary.*

**WOODWAY TX (March 29, 2018)** – The public is invited to the dedication of the newest attraction at the Carleen Bright Arboretum (CBA) – **The Massey Meditation Grove** – a ¾-acre sanctuary of serenity bounded by a creek and split rail fencing and populated by Texas trees and shrubs, crushed granite footpaths and attractive benches.

The event, set for **2 p.m., Thursday, April 12**, will feature brief comments by city leaders and the benefactors, followed by a reception in Whitehall Center at the Arboretum. Location is the intersection of Bosque Boulevard and Estates Drive, 1.3 miles from U.S. Hwy. 84.

The 16-acre Arboretum (<http://www.woodway-texas.com/carleen-bright-arboretum/>), carved out of native woodland and meadows, is already a popular retreat for nature lovers, master gardeners, walkers/hikers, picnickers and wedding-bound couples. Open daily without fee, it was recently mentioned in *The Boston Globe*.

“Since its establishment in 1999, the Arboretum has been blessed with many individual and community partnerships in its careful development as a family venue,” said Janet Schaffer, Director of the City’s Arboretum, Tourism and Recreational Services.

“To such wonderful people as the McLennan County Master Gardeners, Cactus & Succulent Society, Central Texas Herb Society and Waco Rose Society who help maintain our beautiful gardens, and many private benefactors, we now add **Preston and Ronda Dale (Massey) Kirk** of Spicewood, TX,” Schaffer said.

The project, more than a year in the making, honors Ronda’s parents, **Rondal M. and Mildred T. (Armstrong) Massey**, both deceased. The Masseys were lifetime residents of Waco and Woodway. He was an amateur Waco tennis champion and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps in WWII. Both worked for the U.S. Postal Service and loved nature, particularly trees.

“Our goal was to provide a natural setting that welcomes all to find solace, redemption and renewal,” said Kirk, a former journalist and PR-marketing executive who grew up in Bellmead, TX. “We want Massey Meditation Grove to be a place where visitors can unplug from their devices and reconnect with their own thoughts, aspirations or higher power amidst nature.”

Ronda Kirk, who has worked for federal and state agencies and run her own bed-and-breakfast and a gourmet cookie store, added, “I hope it becomes an ideal place for prayer, reflection and inspiration.”

The Kirks, who met at and graduated from Baylor University, married at Woodway Baptist Church in 1968. They operated Kirk Public Relations for 32 years and are now part-time actors.

Depending on weather, the reception will be at Whitehall Center at the Arboretum, a replica of the historic Whitehall Church, or its adjacent 1100-sq.-ft. terraced patio. The Center features beautiful stained glass and has hosted festivals, weddings, society meetings, business luncheons, art exhibits and memorials.

### **Ornamental Arch, Landscaping, ‘Recycled’ Benches**

Massey Meditation Grove lies within the northwestern extent of the Arboretum, just beyond the amphitheater and covered gazebo. It is bordered on the front side by the Todd Willis Nature Trail. The Grove’s completion brings the CBA’s total site development to nearly nine acres.

A nine-foot tall, steel ornamental arch, designed and fabricated by Noah Smith of **Lone Star Ironworks** in Elm Mott, TX, greets Grove visitors. Master Blacksmith Caleb Nolen of **Homestead Forge** in Waco hand-crafted decorative leaves for the impressive portico that represents trees newly planted in the Grove. **Don Young & Associates** Waco of created the concrete pedestals.

Travis Williams of **Fitzgerald’s** in Woodway is responsible for landscape design, irrigation, pathways and trees added to the elm and ash juniper on the site: live oak, Mexican sycamore, pecan, Texas red bud, Monterrey and bur oak trees. Other plants include pink muhly grass, possum haw, Indian hawthorn, glossy abelia, Turks cap and new gold lantana.

Grove guests can relax on numerous mold and mildew-resistant garden benches made from recycled HDPE plastic. “The furniture is made from recycled milk jugs and assorted plastics,” said Brigitte Glatter, manager of the **Backyard & Patio Store** in Woodway.

**Background:** Carleen Bright Arboretum is known as the “hidden jewel of Woodway,” a 6.6- square-mile suburb of Waco, with about 9,000 residents. It boasts a certified Monarch Way-station, pond with babbling waterfall, rose garden, two McLennan County Master Gardener demonstration gardens – the Texas Superstar Bed and Trailside Gardens – and much more. The 10,000-s.f. Pavilion features a Great Hall for special events and a lobby that doubles as an art gallery and gathering space.

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** *Additional digital images of Schaffer, the Arboretum and the Grove are available from the Arboretum website pages for your use. <http://www.woodway-texas.com/carleen-bright-arboretum/>*

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS:**

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