November 2015

Dear Friends,

After four years of intensive study and planning, this fall we announced the Campaign for the Living Collections of the Arnold Arboretum, a 10-year initiative to redouble our plant collecting efforts both at home and abroad to prepare this institution for the next century. By the end of the decade, this Campaign will shepherd more than 150 new species of woody plants (among the 400 species targeted for collection) from around the world to grow in our landscape. Just as C. S. Sargent, E. H. Wilson, William Purdom, and other collectors during the Arboretum’s early history dazzled Boston with plants never before seen here, we intend to renew the Arboretum’s legacy of discovery by amplifying our efforts to document, preserve, and study biodiversity in a world dominated by human-induced climate change.

As the eighth director of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, I feel a tremendous responsibility to ensure that later generations can look back a century from now—much as we do today with Charles Sprague Sargent, the Arboretum’s founding director—and recognize that a long view of the future kept the Arboretum relevant and thriving as a research institution and eminent collection of plants. Sargent knew that these collections could only be sustained through substantial endowments and gifts to nourish the Arboretum and its collecting aspirations. I too sense that urgency.

This fall, our Campaign got off to an exciting start as we mounted three collecting expeditions (two in China, and one in northern Idaho during this year’s wildfires), which resulted in more than 60 wild-collected species that are now in the very capable hands of our propagators at the Dana Greenhouses. It will require an investment of $5 million in new endowments to source and sustain the amazing new plants we hope to acquire from around the world over the course of the Campaign and beyond. Every gift counts as it brings another seed to life and helps ensure that it will still be flourishing a century from now.
If your vision of the Arnold Arboretum for 2115 is that it should be the kind of institution that continues to inspire the soul, educate and enlighten minds at every age, and serve as a central resource for the creation of new knowledge, then I ask for your help. In essence, this (and every) annual appeal is not really about the coming year; rather, it is about our long term commitment to the future of this extraordinary living museum of woody plants and Olmsted-designed landscape. With your generous contribution to the Campaign, we can make positive and meaningful progress together and know that we did right by those who will walk these grounds and study our plants one hundred years from now.

With thanks and best wishes,

William (Ned) Friedman

P.S. If you would like to learn more about the Campaign for the Living Collections, I invite you to read about it on our website (www.arboretum.harvard.edu), in the Fall/Winter 2015-16 issue of Silva, and in upcoming issues of Arnoldia beginning this winter. Please demonstrate your support by forwarding your donation in the envelope included, or make an online gift by selecting the “Donate” button on our website homepage.