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## Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens Dedicates The Wells Barn

### *Facility Will Expand the Conservatory's Educational and Community Programming Capacity; Increase Event Space*

COLUMBUS, Ohio (October 27, 2015) – To accommodate its growing outreach and education programs, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens today dedicated The Wells Barn to be used for classes, community-oriented programs and as a rentable venue for private events. The new facility will more than double the capacity for its education programs.

The Barn's amenities include a catering and demonstration kitchen, a fireplace, a high quality A/V system and lower level classrooms. The 12,000 square-foot center will allow for growth of current programs, such as cooking and horticulture classes, and the development and expansion of new initiatives including Healthy Harvest, Green Corps' and the Fairchild Challenge.

"This new facility symbolizes a pivotal moment for Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens," said executive director Bruce Harkey. "The community's interest in our programs has grown so exponentially that we must now dedicate our second largest structure to outreach and education. The Wells Barn will enable us to engage our community and provide a broad variety of classes and programs for all ages."

The structure gets its internal framework – and character – from a 200-year-old barn in Richland County that was set to be dismantled in 2014. With the guidance of the Mt. Vernon Barn Company and support of the Board of Trustees and committed donors, the barn's timber frame was relocated and given a new life.

Conservatory Trustee Bill Wells and his wife Jackie have been longtime supporters of the Conservatory. "Jackie and I are so honored to have this facility named for us. We have always been proud to be a part of the Conservatory family and appreciate its strong partnership with the Davis Foundation throughout the years."

"The vision for this latest addition at the Conservatory came from the Board of Trustees' strategic planning initiative to prioritize community outreach and education to fulfill our mission," said Bill Gerhardt, Board President.

The first class to be hosted in the new facility will be a fall harvest-themed demonstration and dinner on Saturday, October 31 led by Chef Doug Miller. Reservations are open for private rental



of The Wells Barn. For information about class schedules or private event rentals, visit [www.fpconservatory.org](http://www.fpconservatory.org).

To celebrate the facility's completion, the Conservatory is hosting a community open house this weekend, October 31 and November 1, where the public is welcome to tour the building and sample the programs and activities that will be housed in the new barn. Activities include cooking demonstrations, a family activity, garden tours, and presentations by Ohio Wildlife Center, Ohio History Connection, and Doug Morgan from the Mt. Vernon Barn Company.

### **About Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens**

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers botanical collections, art and nature based exhibitions, plant shows, and educational programs for all ages. Situated in an 88-acre urban park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House and 83,000 square feet of glasshouses, classrooms, and meeting and event spaces. The Conservatory owns a signature collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly and a permanent installation by internationally recognized light artist James Turrell, illuminates the John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn. [www.fpconservatory.org](http://www.fpconservatory.org).

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