

Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden

VISION AND CASE STATEMENT

The Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden is recognized by art and botanical enthusiasts from around the world. The garden contains a range of topiary styles from tightly manicured geometric compositions to figurative shapes, monumental abstractions, and “junk art” sculptures, all created by Pearl Fryar. It achieves a creative vision that transcends racial, ethnic, social, and economic barriers. The garden, a cultural and educational asset to the state of South Carolina, should be preserved to inspire visitors for years to come.

PEARL FRYAR AND HIS GARDEN

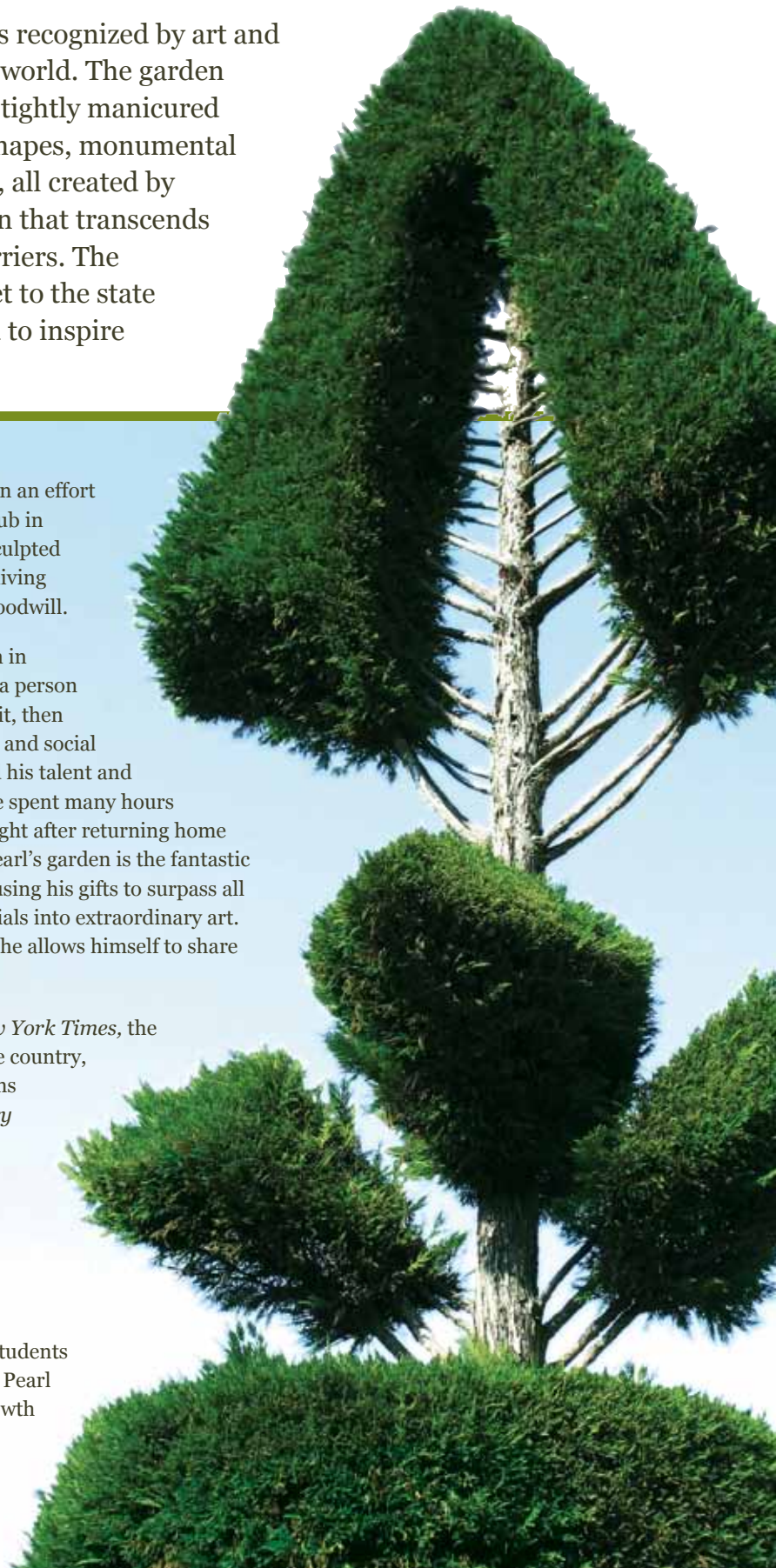
Pearl began work on his three-acre garden in 1984 in an effort to win “Yard of the Month” from the local garden club in Bishopville, South Carolina. The well-manicured, sculpted topiary, many of which began as castoff plants, are living embodiments of Fryar’s vision of love, peace, and goodwill.

The garden is the creative expression of Pearl’s faith in human potential and hard work. He believes that if a person can discover their talent, and work hard to develop it, then he or she will be successful and rise above obstacles and social barriers. Pearl was over 40 years old when he found his talent and began trimming and shaping plants into topiary. He spent many hours developing his vision; even pruning his shrubs at night after returning home from a 12-hour shift at the local soda can factory. Pearl’s garden is the fantastic result of his finding and developing his talent, and using his gifts to surpass all barriers and to transform ordinary, everyday materials into extraordinary art. It demonstrates what one person can achieve when he allows himself to share the full expression of his humanity.

Pearl and his garden have been featured in *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other newspapers around the country, as well as on radio, websites, and television programs such as *CBS Sunday Morning* and PBS’s *The Victory Garden*. He has been showcased in more than 25 magazines and books. Pearl and his garden is the subject of the award-winning 2006 documentary film *A Man Named Pearl*.

HOW ARE PEARL FRYAR AND HIS GARDEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

For more than 20 years Pearl Fryar has welcomed students and other visitors to his garden. As visitors listen to Pearl describe the long, patient process of guiding the growth of a small shrub to its final height of 20 feet, they



learn that long-term efforts can yield extraordinary results. He is especially dedicated to capturing the attention of at-risk children who do not excel at academics or sports and who may be in danger of falling through the cracks. His dream is to inspire youth who have creative abilities and to help them find the confidence to obtain the skills needed to pursue creative goals.

Pearl Fryar is committed to sharing his life story of learning and success with youth and adults. He has spoken at numerous schools and colleges across South Carolina and the nation. At Coker College in Hartsville, South Carolina, he collaborated with art students to create a campus sculpture garden to help students see their own designs take shape in topiary and mosaics.

Pearl's garden receives approximately 5,000 visitors per year. Visitors include grade school classes, college and university students, church groups, garden clubs, artist groups, senior citizens, and families. Some view the garden as a destination for weddings, family reunions, club meetings, and bus tours, while others view the garden as an inspiration to their own creative work and visit to sketch, paint or photograph.

Pearl Fryar believes strongly in the role higher education can play in breaking the cycle of poverty in rural communities. He tells visitors to the garden that he believes a student's academic performance does not always reflect potential for success. To realize Pearl's objective of helping the average student to succeed, the Friends of Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden have established the Pearl Fryar Community Scholarship Fund to benefit students from the Bishopville area enrolled at Central Carolina Technical College in Sumter. The Friends have also contributed to a fund for students at Clinton Junior College in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

A TOPIARY NEIGHBORHOOD

Pearl's garden has inspired his neighbors to explore their own creative potential. As they have watched his garden grow, neighbors have picked up techniques and ideas from Pearl and have used these to create their own living sculptures by pruning and shaping plants. In doing so, they have developed their own creative abilities and they have transformed their neighborhood into one filled with remarkable topiary.

A TOPIARY TOWN: BISHOPVILLE

The garden is located in Lee County, one of the most socially and economically challenged counties in South Carolina. The garden's creative spirit, however, has created a community identity that has helped to bring people together in the town of Bishopville. Once known as the Garden City of South Carolina, Bishopville can again become a distinctive destination within the region, featuring unique topiary landmarks and a revitalized downtown.

THE MISSION OF THE FRIENDS OF PEARL FRYAR TOPIARY GARDEN

In 2006, the Friends of Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden ("Friends") incorporated within the State of South Carolina to support and preserve the artistic and horticultural legacy of Pearl Fryar, to encourage public appreciation of the garden, and to provide opportunities for artistic and educational enrichment and enjoyment. The garden is a Preservation Project of the Garden Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's exceptional gardens.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Friends and the Garden Conservancy envision the garden continuing beyond Pearl's lifetime. The garden will sustain Pearl's legacy and maintain his distinctive, dynamic style. The garden will become a significant cultural and educational destination in South Carolina and promote civic and cultural pride.

The Friends and the Garden Conservancy are raising funds to purchase the property from Pearl. There is a sense of urgency concerning the future of the garden. Now in his 70s, Pearl needs the time and opportunity to communicate his artistic vision and innovative techniques to his successors. We will establish a phased plan leading to the purchase of the property and the transition of management to the Friends. We aim to help Pearl Fryar realize his dream of inspiring youth and to help Bishopville fulfill its cultural and economic potential. Success will depend upon the support of individuals, organizations, and agencies eager to work together to support Pearl Fryar's vision of love, peace, and goodwill and to preserve his creative masterpiece of living art for years to come.

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The Garden Conservancy

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