

Wisconsin Historical Society: Ruth St. John and John Dunham West House and Gardens listed on the State Register of Historic Places

Posted on Thursday, Sep 15, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Manitowoc, WI. – The Wisconsin Historical Society announces the listing of the Ruth St. John and John Dunham West House and Gardens in Manitowoc, Manitowoc County, on the State Register of Historic Places. State Historic Preservation Officer Daina Penkiunas presents a certificate to Robert P. Fay, Gail L. Fox, and Traci Schell.

The Ruth St. John and John Dunham West House and Gardens has been added to the State Register for its association with Ruth St. John West. Although she did not have any academic knowledge of horticulture or gardening, she turned her house, “West of the Lake,” into the “largest and most elaborate privately owned garden in Wisconsin.” She was directly associated with creating multiple garden clubs in the region. As a widely known garden expert, she also traveled throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest for hundreds of engagements on lectures and demonstrations for gardening, horticulture, flower arranging, table setting and the home.

The Ruth St. John and John Dunham West House was constructed in 1934 and designed by the couple in the Streamline Moderne style. Over time, the property expanded, as did the spacious gardens in a well-manicured landscape. The Gardens were highlighted by colorful flowers and held Tulip Teas and garden tours to raise funds for local organizations. Today, the property is operated by the Ruth St. John and John Dunham West Foundation, Inc., which continues the West’s enthusiasm of horticulture.

The State Register is Wisconsin’s official list of state properties determined to be

significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit: www.wisconsinhistory.org.

About the Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society, founded in 1846, ranks as one of the largest, most active and most diversified state historical societies in the nation. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, its mission is to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Society serves millions of people every year through a wide range of sites, programs and services. For more information, visit wisconsinhistory.org.