

2023 Heritage Tree Awards

The 2023 Heritage Tree Awards celebrate three historic living neighborhood landmarks in Shaker Heights.

The Durbin Family
Pin Oak
3030 Huntington Road



In 2020 in the midst of the Covid pandemic, Wil Durbin and his family were house-hunting in Shaker after an interstate move. When they saw the home at 3030 Huntington built in 1919, Wil Durbin says that it was the two giant century-old Pin Oaks, the Sycamore and Sugar Maple that sold them.

The 36-inch diameter trunk of the 90-foot tall Pin Oak anchors two roads, Southington and Huntington, that meet at their corner lot. If you add its 100-foot-wide canopy, this tree is an Onaway neighborhood landmark.

One day when Mrs. Durbin was trying to explain its 100-year age to her young children, in an effort to instill a reverence for its long life, she compared it to a grandparent. From then on, her oldest children began referring to the Pin Oak as “The Grandmother Tree.” For a project using their math and science understanding to estimate the size and species of the Oak, Wil Durbin and his children did some estimating and research, and submitted the nomination of this heritage tree.

Squirrels compete now with the children who collect wheelbarrows full of acorns every fall to plant and to share with the neighborhood. The Durbins realize that their Pin Oak will not live forever, especially with the challenges posed by climate change. To ensure that their own “forest canopy” stays green, they are planting new trees while they continue their intentional stewardship of the older generation.

Pat Agatisa & Jerry Boyle
River Birch
16520 South Woodland Road



In 2004, when Pat Agatisa and Jerry Boyle moved into their home designed and built in 1914 by notable architect Harry Shupe on the north shore of Green Lake at the corner of South Woodland and Andover Roads, they noticed what they believed to be two century trees, a stately River Birch in the backyard floodplain of the Lake and a dominating Maple in the front yard.

“We had both pruned by professional arborists who told us that our River Birch was the largest specimen of its kind they had ever seen,” says Pat Agatisa. The 70-foot-tall River Birch with its 63-foot- wide leafy canopy filters sunlight and provides shade with its spectacular branching pattern across a large expanse of the backyard.

The Agatisa-Boyle family love the fact that this living landmark in the Malvern neighborhood is unique in all four seasons. In winter, its leafless branches as seen from below form dramatic skeletal arms against the sky; in spring wood ducks nest in the tree's cavities and their hatchlings just drop into the lake; in summer, green herons, piliated woodpeckers and kingfishers enjoy their roosts in it; in autumn, its feathery foliage falls in a gold blanket over the entire yard.

According to Pat Agatisa, the final verdict on the value of this 2023 Heritage Tree could be cast by the Red-Tailed Hawk that perches in its branches overlooking the lake while it patiently waits for just the right fish to swim by.

Reydman Family
Pin Oak
2950 Weybridge Road



Gazing upward from the ground under the massive Pin Oak in the backyard of 2950 Weybridge Road, an observer sees a fan of branches extending into blue waves of sky. With its 46-inch diameter trunk and 80-foot height, this 2023 Heritage Tree is simply stunning in its sheer size and form.

The Reydman family believe that their Pin Oak may date back to the home's construction in 1928. The owner's daughter grew up in the home and always remembers the tree being there. Good stewardship and careful preservation of their Oak through the years have made it a landmark in this Boulevard neighborhood.