

THE PLUMTREES RETURN



WHO are the Plumtrees?

Mr. and Mrs. Plumtree have called the Library home since they were created at the *Wood Sculpture of the Americas Symposium*, held in West Vancouver, in 1977. Mrs. Plumtree's impressive dress was fashioned from a real dress coated in resin and fibreglass. The Plumtrees are part of the West Vancouver Public Art Inventory Collection, and were created by acclaimed wood carver Barbara Spring (1917 – 2011).

WHO was Barbara Spring?

Barbara Spring was born in Essex, England in 1917. At the end of the Second World War, during which she served in the Women's Royal Air Force, she emigrated to the U.S. as a war bride. She and her husband moved to Big Sur, California in the early 1970s where Barbara remained until her death in 2011. Barbara was a talented and widely respected wood carver whose work was exhibited extensively. She crafted the Plumtrees for the 1977 *Wood Sculpture of the Americas Symposium*, held in West Vancouver — the works produced at the symposium became part of the West Vancouver public art inventory.

WHERE have the Plumtrees been?

Mr. and Mrs. Plumtree were on an extended stay at the spa for people made of wood, otherwise known as Straight Line Designs, a Vancouver-based design company led by Judson

Beaumont. The West Vancouver Public Art Advisory committee approved funding for the restoration and facilitated the work. Last year, the talented people at Straight Line Designs successfully restored five degraded wooden bicycles that were also part of the 1977 *Wood Sculpture of the Americas Symposium*. The bicycles were restored under the auspices of the West Vancouver Public Art Program to near mint condition and have a new home at the West Vancouver Community Centre. Similar restorative techniques were applied to the Plumtrees.

HOW were the Plumtrees restored?

When Mr. and Mrs. Plumtree first arrived at Straight Line Designs, they were showing their age. To bring back their glory, the folks at Straight Line Designs first gave the Plumtrees a thorough wash with soap and water to remove dirt and oils. Loose bits — such as their necks and wrists — were tightened and strengthened using a mixture of sawdust and glue, and wooden dowels were added where necessary to make the Plumtrees stronger. Their books were reattached using hidden bolts and given a fresh coat of stain, and their thinning, patchy hair regained its youthful lustre thanks to a mix of coarse sawdust, glue and diluted wood stain. The final step was to have them sprayed with a clear protective finish.

THE FINAL RESULT? Looking good, Mr. and Mrs. Plumtree. Welcome home!