



Columbia University's Landscape Improvements to the Morningside Campus

Founded in 1754, Columbia University is the oldest institution of higher learning in New York and the fifth oldest in the United States. Throughout the years, the University moved its location around the city before finding its home in Morningside Heights in 1897. The beauty of the Morningside campus not only lies in the University having the largest single collection of McKim, Mead & White buildings in existence, but it is also found in its award-winning green spaces. Essential to the campus' landscape are a series of upgrades to its public gardens.

In 1996, Columbia University enlisted Lynden B. Miller, a distinguished public garden designer, to update the two large Morningside campus display beds at the heart of the University's beautiful McKim, Meade and White open plaza, located on each side of the sundial on the lower campus. The area, called the Centennial Beds, needed an upgrade in time for the 100th anniversary of the University's move to the Morningside campus in 1997.

Miller, working with Columbia University Facilities, brought in mixed plantings consisting of evergreens, flowering shrubs, and perennials. Many of these plants were chosen for their ability to remain rich and full throughout each season. Meanwhile blue and white annuals were strategically selected to highlight Columbia's brand and create a visual effect on campus during the spring graduation ceremonies. These landscape improvements were favorably received by the community and led to additional upgrades.

Landscape improvements spread across the University's main campus and throughout the East Campus. They include sizable construction on the bridge crossing Amsterdam Avenue, where the bed at Revson was raised, and more recent enhancements to the plantings by Wien Courtyard and Faculty House. Ancel Plaza, which was once an empty space on East Campus near Jerome Greene Hall, is now a pleasant area for student use, with the addition of Soho Planter Boxes. These large, rectangular planters broke up several of the plazas into attractive areas which now

feature benches and seating areas. The University currently boasts more than 30 Soho Planter Boxes on campus.

Columbia University's landscape not only enhances the overall campus' beauty, but it has also garnered the University an honor award in the Professional Grounds Management Society's (PGMS)'s 2010 Green Star Awards competition. Columbia University Facilities is committed to enriching the lives of University students, faculty, and staff through the maintenance and preservation of the Morningside campus' green spaces, and Facilities continues to work closely with Mrs. Miller and her team. For more information on Lynden B. Miller, visit lbn@publicgardendesign.com.