

Written by Irvana K. Wilks, Mayor Village of Mount Prospect
For St. Paul Lutheran School, April 29, 2006 Arbor Day



'Greenspire' Littleleaf Linden
(*Tilia cordata* 'Greenspire')

In the time-honored tradition marking Arbor Day,
we plant a tree, a 'Greenspire' Littleleaf Linden,
covering its roots with rich, brown Illinois soil.

Our words of dedication echo across a nation,
and join with the choruses of millions of others
honoring this same April day.

One imagines that this sapling stands like a small sentry –
a guard – next to this school built by faith. It is, however,
we who are the sentries, promising to care and to protect it.

The sun and rain will nourish this linden. As it
grows, stretching its branches into the vast sky,
it will shade children who pass beneath laughing,
learning – generations of students we've not met.

In summer the perfume of its flowers – delicate white clusters –
will beckon us. We will pause within the canopy of the fragrance
and for an instant - pretend to be on a tropical island.

So it will be, the life of this linden and our lives
locked together – grownups, youth and the tree, because
today we take shovels and cover its roots with rich, brown Illinois soil.

And then we make a promise.

- Irvana K. Wilks