

Edith Farnsworth House Rededication

Thank you all for being here today for this rededication of the Edith Farnsworth House. Some of you may wonder why we are making such a fuss about adding the first name of the individual for whom this house was built. To you I say, it is indeed a very big deal, because in the approximately 3/4s of the century since this house was built, the only story students ever heard was about the greatness of the architect. And that story was often embellished with story of the “hysterical” female client, who was possibly a rejected lover.

Well, the architect was great, but so was the client, and it was the collaboration AND the tension—which was almost definitely non-sexual— between the two of them that created this magnificent structure. The EDITH Farnsworth House!

Katherine Malone France, the Trust’s Chief Preservation Officer, could not be here with us today but I would like to quote her as a further elucidation of why today is such a big deal: “Preservation is inherently optimistic work, because it is NOT about the past. Preservation is about the future we are building together. What we preserve and how we preserve can strengthen the fabric of our civil society and advance more just, equitable, and sustainable communities. This idea represents an important evolution for the preservation movement as it becomes more inclusive and more relevant...An important part of restoring a building is searching for the elements that have been obscured or overlooked and bringing them back—celebrating them—because without them the building isn’t everything it could be.”

So, now, today, as we bring Edith’s obscured story to light, we are also illuminating the fascinating story of the creation of the Edith Farnsworth House. Thank you.