

The Pattersons

Jefferson Patterson

Jefferson Patterson was born May 14, 1891 in Dayton, Ohio, son of the co-founder of National Cash Register. In 1921, after passing the exams for the diplomatic service, he became Secretary of Legation at the State Department in Washington, D.C. Thus began a 36-year career spanning five continents, including posts in China, Columbia, Turkey, Poland, Norway, Germany, Peru, Egypt, the Balkans, Uruguay and the US. While posted in Washington, D.C. in the early 1930s, Mr. Patterson spent time visiting his sister in Southern Maryland. She suggested he buy a farm and raise Black Angus cattle. In 1932 he purchased the Peterson farm in Calvert County. He hired architect Gertrude Sawyer to create his vision of the property he called Point Farm. In 1934, he left for Breslau and then Norway, coming home on leave when he could to visit the farm.



While in charge of the Prisoner of War Section at the American Embassy in Berlin from 1939 to 1940, he met Mary Marvin Breckinridge, who was on assignment for CBS. They were married at the embassy on June 16, 1940. Together Jeff and Marvin served their country with strength, determination and goodwill. One of Mr. Patterson's most notable achievements as a diplomat was his instrumental role in arranging a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt in January 1949 during the Palestine War.

Mary Marvin Patterson



Born in New York City in 1905 to a privileged life, Mary Marvin Breckinridge dedicated her life to be a responsible and productive person. Graduating from Vassar in 1926, Mary Marvin jumped into life with gusto, volunteering for her cousin Mary Breckinridge riding into the hills of Kentucky to bring medical assistance to the isolated poor. She dropped Mary from her name and went on as Marvin to study photography and film making, getting a pilot's license along the way. She made a classic film on the Frontier Nursing Service and published photographs in Life Magazine to raise support for the nursing service. During the Second World War, she became a broadcaster for CBS, one of Edward R. Murrow's "boys", from the blitz of London to Ireland, Amsterdam, Paris, Norway, and Berlin. She accepted the challenge to write and broadcast news in spite of censors and threat of imprisonment. On June

16, 1940 Marvin married Jefferson Patterson, ending her photojournalist and broadcasting careers due to State Department requirements for wives of diplomatic officers.

During the Pattersons years of diplomatic service, she worked with skill and great heart to learn the cultures and languages of the countries where they served. She spoke five languages fluently, including colloquial Arabic, with which she addressed the people of Egypt on July 4, 1949. Marvin was always the gracious hostess. She maintained that entertaining was an art which took hours of meticulous planning. She also worked with charitable projects, often starting them herself. After retirement from the diplomatic life, Jeff and Marvin generously supported many charitable organizations and assisted friends and family.

After Jefferson Patterson died November 12, 1977, Mrs. Patterson began to busily "decollect." Knowing her husband's love for Point Farm, she began to look for someone worthy to give it to. She asked a friend, Tom Richards, to look into it for her. At the same time a tenant found Indian artifacts on the farm. A survey of the property conducted by the state archaeologists revealed dozens of prehistoric and historic period sites. The Maryland Historical Trust nominated the property to the National Register of Historic Places. In 1983, Mrs. Patterson donated the 512 acre farm to the State of Maryland, calling it the "greatest gift that is in my power to give," and did so in memory of her husband Jefferson Patterson. Point Farm became Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum. Mrs. Patterson continued to actively support the museum and participated in many developments including the Agricultural Exhibit Building, the Museum Service Center, and the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory.

In December 2002 Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson died. She will be remembered for her legacy of service and philanthropy.

Point Farm

Point Farm, the Pattersons' country home, was a place of retreat when they came back to the U. S. from stations abroad. Mr. Patterson enjoyed the details of farm management and was an early proponent of best farming practices. Today Point Farm is Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, but the Pattersons home remains preserved for tours and educational programs.

