I remember the first time I met Laura when she and her associates with The Nature Conservancy came to my home. Of course, she came to solicit a gift for The Nature Conservancy. I knew then there was
something special about Laura that set her apart from most fundraisers. Her unbounded love for nature and her passion for preserving the prairies, wild places, and nature refuges such as the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge were contagious.

Laura served The Nature Conservancy for four years and later started an advisory board in Fort Worth, of which I was a member. We lured Laura to come work with the Nature Center Conservancy in 2009, which later merged with the Nature Center’s volunteer support organization, the Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center, in 2012. She worked part time—although it was often full time—as its executive director.

Since Laura was part time with the Friends, she continued to work for other nonprofits and is the immediate past president of the Lena Pope board of directors.

In the past six years, Laura’s energetic enthusiasm and expertise, especially in fundraising, has resulted in her helping take a small grassroots volunteer organization and turn it into a bona fide nonprofit in board recruitment and communication, raising the profile of giving exponentially. Laura was always willing to take the extra step to make our events, especially our 50th anniversary celebration in 2014, a huge success. She assisted the board in raising support in many areas through individual gifts, grants, and other funds.

This year, Laura decided to take her talents to another level, now working with Missy Gale and Associates. She is passing the baton to another outstanding and experienced executive director, Haily Summerford (see article in Spotlight On).

We will miss Laura and her contagious personality, but as one of the parting gifts she received is a lifetime membership to the Friends, we are not letting her get very far away. We look forward to her continued support of one of her favorite places.

On behalf of the Friends, the Nature Center, and its staff, thank you for your hard work and devotion in not only being the voice but the facilitator of our mission to “preserve, protect, and conserve in perpetuity the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge.”