

Groundbreaking set for writing and events space honoring the legacy of Utah poet May Swenson

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The first phase of the Swenson House, to be launched Sept. 18, 2018, at a groundbreaking ceremony, will include construction of the house. Future phases will add the patio and gardens, as well as writer-in-residence cabins.

Much more information about the Swenson House can be found at <http://chass.usu.edu/swenson-house/>

LOGAN — The long-anticipated effort to reimagine the childhood home of famed poet May Swenson as a public venue and destination for writers will soon get off the ground officially.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Swenson House is set for Sept. 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the site at the base of Old Main Hill, 669 E. 500 North, Logan.

May Swenson, one of the most influential poets of the 20th century, grew, explored and discovered herself at this home built by her father, a Swedish immigrant, and shared by 10 siblings. The new venue has the same goals of discovery and enlightenment, but for a contemporary audience.

“The re-imagined Swenson House will be a destination for writers of all stripes and a place for the community to connect with creative thinkers,” said Joe Ward, Dean of USU’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Swenson House is being designed as a space where audiences can enjoy a variety of public events like readings led by creative writers, book discussions by scholars in the humanities, and music by local artists, he said.

The Swenson House exterior design will pay homage to the history and original design of the classic 1922 bungalow, as well as the lush gardens that surrounded it. Inside, the 6,000-square-foot building will contain a common area for up to 150 people, an exhibition space honoring the poet, reading nooks, and Greta’s Kitchen,

a café that will serve Greta Swenson’s family favorite: cardamom rolls.

May Swenson (1913-1989) was a 1934 graduate of USU’s English Department. She received a MacArthur fellowship, also known as the “genius award,” and was an innovator of iconographs, where the lines of the poem itself are shaped to create images reflecting the its content.

All funds for the project are coming from private sources, USU’s Department of English, and fund-raising efforts by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Utah Board of Regents, which is required to approve all public higher-education buildings over \$500,000, gave its approval last spring.

The building is expected to open sometime in 2020.