



Luray Park Association, Inc.

The Belle Brown Northcott Memorial, commonly known as the Luray Singing Tower, is a carillon of 47 bells located in the Town of Luray, Virginia. The Tower's largest bell weighs 7,640 pounds and is six feet in diameter. The smallest is 12.5 pounds.

A carillon is an Old World instrument, originating some 400 years ago in Europe, consisting of a minimum of 23 cast bronze bells arranged in chromatic series and played from a keyboard permitting control of expression. North America has about 180 carillons, many owned by churches or colleges and universities, however, relatively few like Luray's are in free standing towers (called campaniles) surrounded by public park land. The Luray Singing Tower is considered one of 36 iconic carillon towers in the United States.

The Luray Singing Tower was a gift to the people of Luray and Page County by the late Col. T. C. Northcott and his late daughter, Katherine Northcott Graves, in memory of Col. Northcott's wife, and is partially supported by a small endowment which was created upon the completion of the Tower's construction in 1937. The Tower is owned by the Luray Park Association, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, which holds the carillon in trust for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of Page County and visitors to the area. In addition to the limited income provided by the trust, this carillon survives on donations from the general public, principally an annual contribution from the Luray Caverns Corporation.

The Luray Singing Tower enjoys a significant reputation among the carillons of North America and is one of the few to have a regular schedule of recitals. From June through August on Saturday at 8 PM and on Sunday at 3 PM. In addition, the bells are played for the Easter Sunrise Service, on Labor Day at noon, and on the Sunday before Christmas. The Tower is also a popular site for weddings and is made available to bridal parties at no charge. If music is desired, arrangements can be made with the carillonneur for a performance fee.

Since 1937, there have been only three principal carillonners at Luray; the late Charles T. Chapman from 1937 to 1984, David W. Breneman from 1984 to 2013 and Jesse Ratcliffe until his recent retirement in March of 2020. In order to restart the new season in the summer of 2021, the Association is currently seeking a new carillonneur.

The post of carillonneur is a part-time position. Compensation range is between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year to be negotiated based on experience, audition and the number of recitals annually. The initial response shall include a CD recording of the candidate's playing, a full resume and a letter of motivation regarding ambitions for the Luray position. Interested parties may contact the following.

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