

Stepping Stones Garners Grant from New York Council for the Humanities

For Immediate Release

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Stepping Stones, the Bedford Hills, NY, home of Lois and Bill Wilson has received a mini grant from the New York Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Stepping Stones shares the story of hope for recovery from alcoholism, in the individual and the family, as it is embodied in the lives and home of Bill Wilson (Bill W.) and Lois Burnham Wilson. Bill W. was the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Lois was the co-founder of Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups, the self-help groups for family members of alcoholics.

The mini-grant provides funding for Dr. Jill Vexler, Ph.D., cultural anthropologist and curator, to create a guided tour of the house and grounds at Stepping Stones, an important step in fulfilling the organization's educational mission and access to the community. The guided tour will be formally launched in October, 2006. Dr. Vexler is curator of the New York Public Library exhibit "Letters to Sala: A Young Woman's Life in Nazi Labor Camps."

The Wilsons', who lived in Bedford Hills for 30 and 47 years, respectively, had an immeasurable impact on the world and their legacy lives on today. Wilson authored *Alcoholics Anonymous* (1939), also known as the "Big Book", which has sold well over 25 million copies. He disseminated the idea of alcoholism as a disease and provided a program – the 12 Steps – for treating alcoholism and maintaining sobriety. The 12 Steps remain the most successful means of treating alcoholism and are the central treatment program in most hospitals and clinics. The program has enabled millions of people around the world to achieve and sustain permanent sobriety and helped to reshape the general public's perception of alcoholics.

In 1990 *Life* magazine named Bill W. one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20th century, and in 1999 *Time* magazine selected Bill W. as one of the 100 most influential people of the century. A short time spent in their home reveals that Lois was as influential as her beloved husband, for the role she played in her husband's recovery, for her founding of Al-Anon and Alateen, and for leaving the Stepping Stones Foundation to carry on their legacy in perpetuity.

The interior of Stepping Stones is furnished exactly as it was upon Lois' death and is a simple home filled with heirlooms, memorabilia and important A.A. archives. Social and cultural historians, community members, and members of 12 Step programs are among the museum's most frequent visitors. Stepping Stones is open year-round by appointment. The grounds and garden are open from sun up to sun set at 62 Oak Road, Katonah, New York. Admission is free, although contributions, to help preserve Stepping Stones, are encouraged. For more information including photos, call 914-232-4822 or visit www.steppingstones.org.

(Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this release, do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment of the Humanities.)