



The Stepping Stones News

Stepping Stones - Historic Home of Bill & Lois Wilson

2021

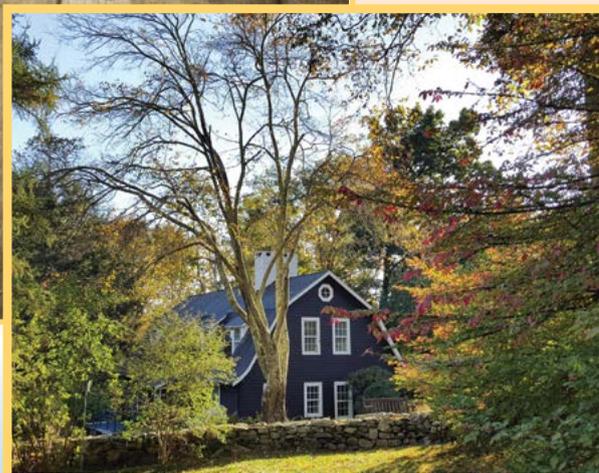
“When brimming with gratitude, one’s heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion we can ever know.” — Bill W.

Share in Gratitude! Support the 2021 Annual Appeal for Stepping Stones



The home and the grounds at Stepping Stones are a profound reflection of Bill and Lois Wilson’s five decades of service to others—much of which took place right here. At this time each year we invite you to participate in our Annual Appeal for general operations and maintenance of Stepping Stones, so that together we can pay it forward and benefit thousands of future visitors, program participants, and archive researchers.

Donations of any amount help perpetuate the Stepping Stones Foundation mission, which was established by Lois Wilson in 1979. We hope you will help us continue to provide access to the Wilson’s home, Bill’s writing studio, the Welcome Center, and the 8-acre grounds **to benefit thousands of future visitors.**



Gifts to the Annual Appeal help upkeep of the 1920 home that typically welcomes **2,750 global visitors each year to experience tours led by our great volunteers.** Your support also enables our professional staff to use the right preservation approaches and consultants to maintain the **100,000 original documents and 10,000 artifacts, including rare family heirlooms, art, and décor from the 1800s and 1900s.** Please consider a gift today to support our year-round operations and our virtual and in-person programs.

Lois & Bill

2021

Ways to Give

Donate to help maintain the 100-year-old home and more!

- **Online at www.steppingstones.org - Click “DONATE”. NEW! Set up monthly or quarterly giving online.**
- **By check / money order payable to “The Stepping Stones Foundation” mailed in the enclosed envelope.**
- **By Phone: 914.232.4822**

The Stepping Stones Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization with tax I.D. 13-3031164. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by U.S. law.

Greetings from the Board & Staff

Dear Friends,

Thanks to the generosity of many of you—the loyal Stepping Stones family—we are pleased to share that the Stepping Stones Foundation has continued to fulfill its mission throughout the pandemic.

In 2019, we launched “**Stepping Stones Online: The Living Legacy of Bill & Lois Wilson.**” In light of Covid-19, we expanded the series to meet friends where they were—mostly on Zoom—and have since **interacted with over 30,000**. Our online efforts continue, and we are creating a **Virtual Tour Video**. (See News on right.)

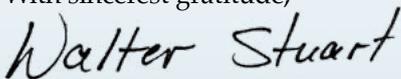
In mid-June 2021, we began a **soft reopening for onsite tours** at limited capacity. This afforded guests from outside the region, who would not otherwise be able to visit, a chance to do so. We hope to be back to hosting **full-capacity tours soon**. Reserve a visit by phone or our website.

In July, we had a going away party for Site Operations Manager **Katie Liszewski**. We thank her for her six years of enthusiastic work.

We are grateful to **John J. Quinn** who completed his terms of service as Board of Trustees President in July, and we also thank him for his many years of prior service. We extend our gratitude to **Fred Doulton** and **Terry Bedient**, who completed their Trustee roles in July. We welcome our newest Trustees: **Greg Tobin**, **Maggie Keogh**, **Margaret Dettman**, **Patrick Raycraft**, and **Paul Capetillo**.

We invite you to support our mission with a gift to our 2021 Annual Appeal. Thank you for being a part of the Stepping Stones family.

With sincerest gratitude,



Walter Stuart
President, Board of Trustees



Sally A. Corbett-Turco
Executive Director



Trustees & *Executive Director (L-R): (Back) Margaret Dettman, Chris Franklin, *Sally Corbett-Turco, Maggie Keogh, Bill Barton (Treasurer); (Front) Amalia Castillo (Secretary), Walter Stuart (President), John J. Quinn (Past President), Susan M. Vairo



News You Can Use

- **A Virtual Tour Video is coming soon** so that new friends get a view into the historic site while past visitors get to relive it. Ensure that you are among the first to see it by updating your email via our website.
- **The Online Archive is becoming a reality** thanks to all who participated in the “Archives Anywhere” appeal and matching challenge. We are especially grateful to the donors who provided the matching funds. As we prepare the online platform of **10,000 manuscripts**, we are **recruiting volunteers to help from home**. Over 200 volunteers stand ready for training to transcribe, append key words, and correct text in the online platform. To join their ranks, use the volunteer form on our website.
- **Play Scripts and Video are available for your in-person and online events**. The 35- and 60-minute presentations derived from Stepping Stones Archive require two to four amateur actors. Alternatively, our 60-minute video can be used. To share the lives and legacy of the Wilsons in their own words using a play, email steppingstonesplay@gmail.com for options.
- **Speakers for Virtual and In-Person Events** are available to present an illustrated talk about the Wilsons and Stepping Stones. See the events page of our website for details.

Explore Our New Website & Online Shop!
www.steppingstones.org

MISSION

The Stepping Stones Foundation fosters public understanding of alcoholism and inspires recovery by preserving and sharing the historic home, archives, and legacy of Bill and Lois Wilson, cofounders, respectively, of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Family Groups.

In Appreciation: "Sunlight of the Spirit" Appeal Comes to a Shining Finish



In early October 2021, the Stepping Stones Foundation completed the Sunlight of the Spirit appeal to fund outdoor preservation projects **thanks to the kind-hearted donors** who collectively gave \$35,000. We are especially **appreciative of six generous anonymous donors whose combined gifts comprised the matching challenge fund** totaling \$17,500. We received **123 gifts** from friends in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and 28 U.S. states, with NY, NJ, CA, and FL represented most.

The gifts will fund preservation masonry and metalwork on the front yard fireplace nicknamed "**Stone Henge**" and restoration of the backyard fountain, which requires plumbing, electricity, and more. In addition, a feature will be created using bricks that a thoughtful donor salvaged from **17 William Street, Newark, NJ**, where the "Big Book" was worked on by **Bill W., Hank P., and Ruth H.**

Online Series' Stellar Presenters

Our virtual series owes its success to these knowledgeable recent presenters who generously shared: **author Bill Schaberg** ("Big Book" history), **Roger B.** (A.A. and the military), **Mily T.** (Marty Mann), and author **Mike Fitzpatrick** (2020 Day of Gratitude).

Saluting Our Tour Guides

We thank our dedicated docents for their years of enthusiastic service: Chris P. (11), John F. (10), Levi P. (10), Mildred H. (8), Greg H. (4), Ron T. (4), James T. (2), Gabriela N. (2), Larry B. (2), Bob F. (1). Special thanks go to docent **James T.** for his service as an archive researcher and virtual tour co-presenter since 2020 and to docent **Doon C.** who completed his service in 2021.

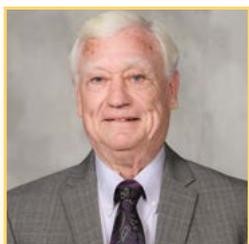
IN MEMORIAM

We offer our condolences to all who recently lost a loved one, including the many with memorial tributes listed on pages 5–7. We also remember two of Lois' circle who passed.



Bernadette F. Borchert (April 17, 1934–December 18, 2020) of CT, was a dear friend of Lois, a devoted Stepping Stones volunteer, and a longtime Al-Anon. Bernadette cheerfully greeted thousands of Lois' picnic guests over the

decades. She brought joy to Lois' late life by including Lois in country drives, luncheons, surprise parties, and family holiday parties.



Maurice F. Dettman (June 11, 1944–August 4, 2021) of NC, loved family, adventure, and the A.A. fellowship to which he belonged for nearly 40 years. While at Stepping Stones for Lois' family gatherings, he especially loved the outdoors

where he played with his stepchildren—the great-great nieces and nephews of Bill W.

Volunteer Here or at Home

Sign up at www.steppingstones.org

- Audio / Video & Photography
- Communications & Marketing
- Construction / Skilled Trades
- Editing / Writing
- Gardening & Trail Maintenance
- Graphic / Web Design
- Language Translation / Interpretation
- Lead Tours or Greet / Host
- Online Archive
- Technology, Computers & Software

From Stepping Stones Archive Who is Fred B.? By James T.

After finding many references in the archive to “Fred B.,” we asked, “Who is Fred B?”

An April 1954 letter from Bill to Fred’s doctor reads, “As he doubtless told you, **Fred was the first alcoholic that I talked with following my spiritual experience.** He came up out of an audience gathered at Calvary House, one-time American Headquarters for the old Oxford Groups. I was only about ten days out of the hospital myself when I spoke. This was the beginning of a long friendship and a struggle to get Fred sober which has gone on, more or less, until this day.”

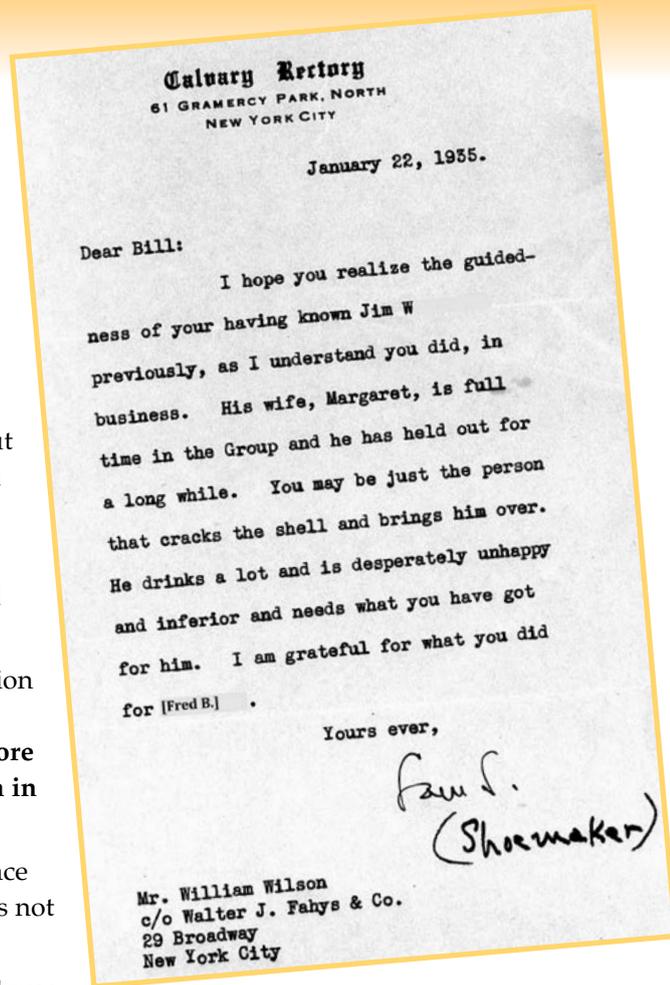
Episcopal minister Sam Shoemaker introduced Fred and Bill. He thanked Bill on January 22, 1935 (see letter on right).

In 1956 Bill wrote Fred: “...you know you have naught but the deepest affection from Lois and from me... **You must remember that you are the first person I ever tried to help, following my own recovery. For that reason, and even more because you are Fred, you will always have a very special place of affection in our memories.**”

In Bill’s writing studio, a Works Publishing stock certificate sold to help finance printing *Alcoholics Anonymous* shows “Fred B.” as the investor. However, he is not the Fred with a story in the “Big Book”.

Fred might be considered Bill’s first “sponsee.” Lois’ diary reveals that Fred was a regular at early A.A. gatherings. On December 31, 1944, she noted: “Bill went to get Freddy in the afternoon and he is to spend the night.”

A May 1962 letter by Jim B. implies that Fred finally achieved sobriety: “Fred Bs death came as a pang—he was just about the first one, you know. It was good to learn that he was doing well, when the end of the chapter came.”



70th Picnic—An Event Full of Firsts

The **70th Annual Stepping Stones Lois’ Family Groups Picnic was June 5, 2021**, on Zoom. For the first time it featured a world premiere play, an international speaker, and a young A.A. The anniversary event began with an illustrated picnic history from Stepping Stones Archive and a recording of Bill speaking to the family groups.

The centerpiece of the picnic was the emotionally moving play reading of *Bill W. & Lois W.: Their Journey in Letters*, which had original music and archival images. (See page 2 for play video and script availability.)

The traditional speaker meeting featured A.A. **Bill B., Stratford, CT, Al-Anon Bonnie C., Sarasota, FL, Alateen Edson G., Veracruz, Mexico, and Jillian M., Katonah, NY.** A recording of Lois leading a prayer concluded the meeting.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to all the presenters, **Amalia C. and Carlos R.** (Spanish interpretation), to **RecoverySpeakers.com** (audio clips), to **Linda V.** (serenity pillows for the raffle), and to **Tech-12.com.**



Lois at
Picnic 1955



To donate, volunteer, or for more news, events,
and information:

www.SteppingStones.org

The Stepping Stones Foundation

62 Oak Road

Katonah, NY 10536

Email: office@steppingstones.org

Phone: 914-232-4822

Note:

Donor listings are not included in the
online versions of the newsletter. Contact
us if you do not receive a mailed copy,

The Stepping Stones News

Stepping Stones was designated a
National Historic Landmark in 2012.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

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Connect on Facebook, Twitter, &
Instagram @BillWHome

For more news by email,
sign up at www.steppingstones.org

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Images: historic photos from Stepping Stones Archive,
including image below of Bill and Lois Wilson, 1969; home &
studio pictures, 2021, by Sally Corbett-Turco.

Save the Date

71st Annual Stepping Stones
Lois' Family Groups Picnic

Saturday, June 4, 2022, Noon

Register or nominate a speaker via the "Events" page at
www.steppingstones.org



2021

Preserve a Legacy in Your Will

Lois Wilson thoughtfully included Stepping Stones
as a beneficiary in her will, and you can too. To learn
more about planned/estate gifts, call 914.232.4822 or
email info@steppingstones.org