

Willis (Skip) Ernest Barshied, Jr.

Skip Barshied passed away peacefully at home on the afternoon of January 6, 2020, surrounded by his friends. Born June 3, 1930 in Amsterdam, NY, to Margaret and Willis Barshied, Sr., Mr. Barshied spent his early life in Marshville, NY. His education included six years at the Marshville school. He graduated from Canajoharie High School in 1948. That same year, he married Ethel Nellis and moved with her to the Nellis Farm on Route 10. Like Skip, Ethel was from a long-established Palatine family. He resided in Stone Arabia for 70 years. Skip had a deep interest in the land and worked on the Nellis farm for 10 years. For a few years, he was secretary of a small fire insurance company founded in the Town of Palatine in 1854. For 28 years, he directed and helped restore the 18th century Brower-Loucks-Dunn farm property in Stone Arabia.

Mr. Barshied was an accomplished historical preservationist. From a very early age he was engaged in collecting, preserving, restoring and stewarding all forms of Mohawk Valley heritage—artifacts, sites, stories and people. He was one of the founders and first president of a group which dedicated itself to the preservation of Fort Klock near St. Johnsville in 1954. Fort Klock and its surrounding complex is now one of a very few national landmarks in Montgomery County. He participated in the restoration of the Windfall Dutch Barn at Salt Springville and was the first chairman of the Trustees of Salt Springville Community Restoration. He restored the Conrad Kilts Farm at Stone Arabia, which includes a Dutch barn, circa 1790 Greek Revival house, summer kitchen, a relocated 18th century house and a relocated building used as a shoe shop. Many of those with an interest in the past and the area were proud to have been given personal tours of the beloved property.

Willis was a strong participant and leader in many important Mohawk Valley organizations. He was one of the founders of Stone Arabia Preservation Society as well as a Trustee of Canajoharie Library and art gallery. He spent many years helping the Young Pioneer Program at Fort Klock. He was a supporter and friend of the Stone Arabia Amish community. Many of his tools can be seen in the hands of this community today. He was an active part of the Town of Palatine citizenry and often informed the town board on ruling and events of the recent (and distant) past. In 2008, Mr. Barshied received the 2008 Liberty Bell Award from the Montgomery County Bar Association and the National Historic Preservation Medal from the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Skip's collecting often focused on the families of Stone Arabia. His collections have been important for many in genealogy searches and those looking to learn more about the Palatine region of New York. Throughout his years, he authored various newspaper articles and historical narratives. He was the author of the book "Shoes for John," the story of a Stone Arabia boy in the time of the American Revolution. Over the past few years, many of his unique

historical tools and artifacts have had a weekly presence in the paper under the title of "Whatchmacallits." Many of his musings and stories can still be enjoyed online at www.DutchBarnFarm.com/essaysbyskip.php.

His wife of 58 years, Ethel Nellis Barshied, predeceased him on November 10, 2006. His brother Robert and sister-in-law Penny also predeceased him. Mr. Barshied is survived by his son Andy and daughter-in-law Maureen, who reside in Averill Park, NY. He has four wonderful grandchildren: Ben (and Claire) Barshied, of New York, NY; Matthew (and Lauren) Barshied of Ross, CA; Gregory (and Alexandra) Barshied of Grand Rapids, MI; and Kristen (and Tim) Sheehan of Pleasant Valley, NY. His nephew Scott Barshied resides in Mechanicsville. At the time of his death, there are 12 children that called him Great-Grandpapa.

Services will be held at the Lenz and Betz Funeral Home at 69 Otsego St., Canajoharie, NY 13317. There will be a viewing on Friday, January 17 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. and a funeral service at the same location at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 18. The service will be followed by a dish to share lunch at Salem United Methodist Church, 1254 Stone Arabia Rd., Fort Plain, NY. In lieu of flowers, please send donations in remembrance of Skip to either Fort Klock, P.O. Box 42, St. Johnsville, NY 13452, or the Fort Plain Library, 19 Willett St., Fort Plain, NY 13339.