

September 19, 2018

Good evening and welcome.

My name is Linda Taverni and I am Chair of the Friends of the Town of Chester Library. We gather tonight to dedicate this lovely mural which now graces the children's area of our library.

Virtue may be its own reward, but as a community we believe that virtuosity deserves some concrete and tangible form of recognition. And that is why we gather here today — to remember and officially recognize our friend Barbara Wilson. From the time of the laurel wreath awarded by the ancient Greeks, we recognize that in every field of endeavor, some people are outstanding in that particular work, and some people are outstanding simply as people. Barbara Wilson is honored here today because she was simply one of those outstanding people and it is for that reason that we gather here tonight to dedicate this mural in her name.

After her retirement from teaching, Barbara became an active member of the Friends of the Library, among other community organizations, and soon became its Chair, where she remained for a number of years.

During that time, she oversaw our book sales, organized and obtained

funding for several programs such as the quilting program and the Russian librarian exchange, ran the authors lecture series and most importantly, dressed up as Mother Goose for children's reading hours. The mural is a tribute to Barbara's lifelong work of education thru stories and the Mother Goose figure is modeled after her.

On a personal note, soon after I moved here full time, I met Barbara at one of the author's programs and she quickly invited me to attend the next Friends meeting, and shortly thereafter "talked" me into becoming a Board member. After only a few meetings, Barbara advised that she wished to step down as Chair and again "talked" me into taking over her position. Although I had misgivings about assuming this duty since I was so new to the group, I agreed on the basis of Barbara's assurances that she would always be available for advice and support. She was, of course, good to her word until she became ill and I will always be grateful to her for bringing me into this wonderful group.

Tonight, the Friends also publicly honor and thank Wendy Joy-Hayes who has given life to Barbara's memory with her beautiful artwork. She has made Barbara's life and contributions to the library into a living thing which will inspire all who come into our library.

We also honor and thank Dennis Wilson for his beautiful wood chip carvings which decorate our library. His work, along with the mural, has

created a visual fantasy world to support the work of the library and stimulate all of our imaginations, hopefully for generations to come.

For many of us involved in the decision and planning of this memorial, it is the culmination of a long-term project, from which we can justifiably take a great measure of satisfaction. However, it is also a beginning—as we assume the task of continuing to honor Barbara’s memory in making our library a truly outstanding community resource.

A library represents one of the most cherished gifts we pass on to future generations. As some have said, a library holds the legacies that genius lends to mankind. Holmes described the library as the peoples’ palace. Norman Cousins described the library “as the delivery room for the birth of ideas—a place where history comes to life”. These concepts endure even as we deal with the demands of modern technology which are transforming the means by which they become possible.

In conclusion, we are gathered here for a two-fold dedication. On the one hand, the pleasant task of dedicating this mural to the memory of Barbara Wilson; and, on the other, to remind ourselves of the continuing responsibility to follow her example in working to maintain and improve our library.

It is only fitting that we recognize our friend Barbara Wilson with this honor for her dedicated service to the library and the standards we hope to emulate.

Thank you again for coming tonight.