

Long Grove Legend Barbara Turner Turns 100!

Barbara (Reed) Turner is familiar to most people in the Long Grove area as the namesake of Reed-Turner Woodland Preserve, a natural treasure of woodland, ravine, sedge meadow, creek, pond, stream, wildflowers and wildlife. Barbara grew up in this area and later donated her family's land as a nature preserve. Her colorful history and generous legacy to Long Grove extends well beyond Reed-Turner Woodland. This renaissance woman has been a student of art history, English literature, library science, loom weaving, natural history, land conservation and more. Barbara's curious nature and love of learning has also served the Long Grove community well. She has held numerous positions including park district president, village board trustee, woodland steward, founding member of the Long Grove Historical Society and of the Long Grove-Kildeer Garden Club, board member of the Illinois Nature Conservancy, District 96 elementary school board member and church council member. She co-authored the book, *Long Grove Lore and Legend*. In addition to all of this, Barbara has received numerous accolades, but has said she is most proud of the 2010 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award by the U.S. EPA and Chicago Wilderness, the 2011 Inaugural Lake County Conservation Award by Liberty Prairie Conservancy and the 2016 Village of Long Grove 'Citizen of Distinction' Declaration.

Barbara's family moved to Long Grove when she was just nine years old in 1928, and her father was the first Long Grove Village President. As a young girl, she recalled walking into the Village's downtown to get ice cream. The family had two riding horses, Nip and Tuck. They would ride them up to the crossroads where the local blacksmith fitted horses in new shoes, and while waiting, would walk to the general store to buy penny candy. The family ice skated on Reed Pond and skied and sledged down the hill from their Long Grove cabin in the woods. It was here that Barbara came to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of nature and wildlife that surrounded them in this long grove of trees.

In 1943, Barbara married Harold Turner, a professional pianist and organist who had a 35-year career with WGN, first in radio and then on television. Harold was especially known for playing the great pipe organ at WGN. Barbara and Harold adopted two children as infants; Tommy in 1949 and Leslie in 1951. This young family thrived in their Long Grove house in the country, surrounded by nature.

After Kildeer Countryside School opened in 1948, Barbara started a library, first in a hallway, then a closet, and finally in a proper classroom. She was the school librarian until her retirement in 1976.

For many years, Barbara took natural history classes at the Morton Arboretum. It was especially interesting to her because the flora and fauna that she learned about was abundant in the woods of her Long Grove home. It got Barbara thinking that she had to preserve this woodland. In 1976, Barbara and Harold donated their

36 acres of woodland for conservation through the Illinois Nature Conservancy. What an extraordinary gesture, which shows how much they loved and cared for this land! Over the years, Barbara made it her passion to learn how to preserve the ecosystem native to this woodland.

The Reed-Turner Woodland Nature Preserve is now owned and managed by the Long Grove Park District whose core mission is to preserve and protect Long Grove's natural spaces. Barbara continues to live in the family home on the edge of the Woodland.

Honoring Barbara Turner

In honor of her many contributions to the Village of Long Grove, Village President Bill Jacob proclaimed June 'Barbara Turner Month' at a recent Village Board meeting. The Village will also be installing an honorary Barbara Turner street sign at Ridgeland Lane and Old McHenry Road, the intersection at the entrance of Barbara's longtime residence in Long Grove. Barbara celebrated her 100th birthday on June 13, 2019.

Village President Jacob described Barbara as a beloved and treasured resident, and a role model for the community during the official proclamation.

"I appeal to all citizens of Long Grove and Lake County to join me in recognizing the many contributions and countless hours of volunteering Barbara has graciously given to our Village over many years; let us extend our sincere thanks to her and honor her for her civic commitment and inspiration to all," Jacob said.

