



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

Legacy Series

An ongoing series of articles recounting the history of the Stratford Ecological Center and the Warner family

Legacy Series: Part 10 January 2012



Stratford Start- up in the midst of Sorrow.....

Gale's family, with her input, decided to rename the project "The Stratford Ecological Center" (SEC), to honor the small Village of Stratford and the family history associated with the Village. Since the proposed goals emphasized the relationship between living things and their environment (the definition of ecology), Gale had proposed the word "ecological." The Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of Ohio in October 1990, and Stratford was on its way! The very first Board of Directors consisted of Warner family members: parents Jack and Louise Warner, and their children David and Gale. The IRS application for tax-exempt status was soon submitted, and the coveted letter declaring SEC a bona-fide 501(c)(3) organization was received in March 1991. Jeff Dickinson, who had been accepted into a PhD program at OSU, was tapped to oversee converting the rutted muddy lane into a gravel driveway

Gale Warner

Meanwhile, Gale, now living with her husband in Gloucester, MA, was experiencing puzzling abdominal discomfort. Exhaustive studies failed to pin down the problem, but a chest X-ray in November 1990, revealed a large tumor in her chest. A lymph node biopsy confirmed the devastating news: she had a non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Chemo was begun immediately and the tumor quickly dissolved, only to recur the following June.

With heavy hearts, Gale's parents continued with plans for the educational building. They decided on a metal frame, contracting with All-Ohio Buildings in Millersburg. Louise drew up the plans.

In August, following another round of chemo, Gale treated her mother to a 3-day camping trip in Maine; and the whole family – including brother David, his wife Julie, and their children Carolyn, Jonathan and Nathaniel - gathered at Gloucester for a wonderful weekend together.



The builders broke ground in November as Gale was undergoing a bone marrow transplant in Boston's Dana Farber Hospital. Unfortunately, Gale passed away on December 28, 1991, surrounded by her loving family and friends. Her final literary work was published posthumously – a labor of love by her widower, David Kreger, who condensed her voluminous cancer journal into a book entitled *Dancing at the Edge of Life: A Memoir* (1998).

