



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 12 (final part) January 2012

Recounting the history of the Stratford Ecological Center and the Warner family.



Gale Warner

#### Life and love go on....

During Gale’s final days, when her parents asked how they could possibly continue developing Stratford without her, she confidently answered: “You can do it; I know you can.”

And so they did. The mission of Stratford – crafted from the three goals Gale proposed in 1986 - was now on target: teaching children where their food and fiber come from, and reconnecting them to the awesome wonders of the natural world.

With the expertise of Jeff Dickinson, who consented to take a leadership role during the formative stages, Stratford was able to complete the required infrastructure and hire its first staff. Steve Miller, farmer, came from Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm near Dayton, so was already familiar with an educational farm. Paul Etheridge, education, actually had been a guide at Hidden Villa – the California organization that had initially inspired Stratford. Paul cleverly adapted its teaching strategies to fit our Ohio landscape.

The long-anticipated event occurred on October 21, 1993, when Paul, Jeff, Steve and Gale’s parents greeted the very first busload of children (from Richwood Jackson Elementary) to visit Stratford.

Gale certainly must have been smiling!



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In subsequent years, memorial spaces have been created to honor the loved ones who have contributed to Stratford's beginnings:



*Gale's gazebo garden, and the pin oak dedicated to her memory – a gift from the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association*

*Memorial garden, with a bench dedicated to Gale's grandparents, Mary and Galen Oman, who contributed the land and funds for the educational building; and a bench inscribed with both Gale's name and that of her father, Dr. Jack Warner, who died in 1996.*



*Statuette that captures Gale's spirit – her love of reading and her deep connection to the natural world. (Dedicated May 2, 2011, by Clyde Gosnell, Tina Rosenberg, Louise Warner and the Stratford staff.)*