AARCH

ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

# 28TH ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS

THE HITCHING POST, LAKE LUZERNE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

*The AARCH Preservation Awards program annually recognizes exemplary historic preservation work throughout the Adirondack region, including sensitive restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and long-term stewardship by a wide range of individuals and organizations.*

## *Ruth Hart*

*For community revitalization and stewardship of the Church Garden*

Village of Lake Placid, Essex County

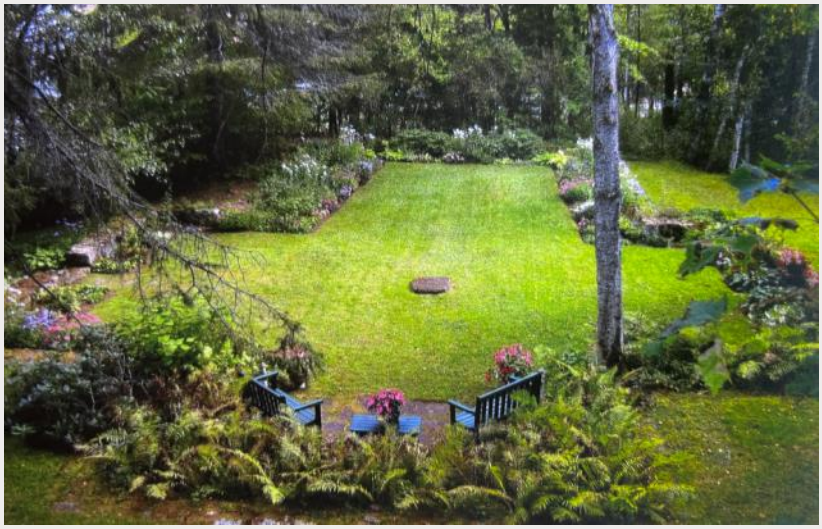
**Owner:** Ruth Hart
**Head Gardener:** Eileen Dempsey
**Heavy Lifter, Lawn Mower, and Groundhog Control:** George Smith
**Project Dates:** 1972 – Present

The Church Garden in Lake Placid is a creative example of how we can honor the spirit of historic sites whose original structures are gone. Ruth Hart's vision for the Church Garden showcases the original foundation of St. Eustace-by-the-Lakes Episcopal summer church on the corner of Victor Herbert Road and Harbor Lane. Completed and consecrated in 1900, the St. Eustace congregation held services on this site each summer until it was dismantled and moved to its present location on Main Street in 1927.

Noted Adirondack architect William L. Coulter designed the original modest, shingled church and Coulter's protégé, William G. Distin, oversaw its 1927 move to Main Street and enlarged the building, raising the basement and redesigning the stone tower. The windows and boards of the original church were carefully dismantled and numbered, then reassembled at the new location and integrated with the alterations. All that remained of the original church was its stone foundation, which nature enveloped over the next 45 years.

In 1972, Dr. George Hart and his wife Ruth purchased the overgrown property where the original church was built. After meeting in Montreal, the couple had settled in George's hometown of Lake Placid in 1946. Ruth has always loved to garden and has lent her passion to many organizations over the years, including the Lake Placid Garden Club and the Essex County Garden Club. While planning a garden for this site, Ruth uncovered the church's foundation and made it the centerpiece of her plan. The low stone walls became the framework for the garden, along which are a variety of plants as well as spots to rest and soak in the serene setting. Today, 51 years later, the garden is still flourishing thanks to the continued efforts of the Hart family, along with the head gardener, Eileen Dempsey, and enthusiastic volunteers. For a 5-cent suggested donation, visitors can take a peaceful moment to connect with nature and wander the cruciform plan framed by maidenhair ferns, rhododendrons, hosta, and tuberous begonias.

To mark the 100th anniversary of St. Eustace-by-the-Lakes in 1999, the church held a summer service in the church garden. This tradition has continued nearly every summer since then and includes music and an informal coffee hour afterward. The garden has also hosted baptisms, weddings, and photo shoots. However, you don't need a special occasion to visit the Church Garden – it's open to the public and all are welcome to stop by and explore this special place.



*Opposite: Ruth in the Church Garden; photo courtesy of Nancy Beattie.*
*Top left and right: the Church Garden today; photos courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Middle left: summer service in the Church Garden; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Middle right: St. Eustace-by-the-Lake circa 1910 in its original location; photo from the AARCH archives.*
*Bottom: summer service in the Church Garden; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*

## *Trustees of the Hillview Free Library*

*For the restoration and stewardship of the Hillview Free Library*

Town of Diamond Point, Essex County

**Owners:** Trustees of the Hillview Free Library
**General Contractor:** Andrew Hirschklau Contracting
**Engineer:** Scott Quigan, P.E.
**Project Dates:** 2015 – 2022

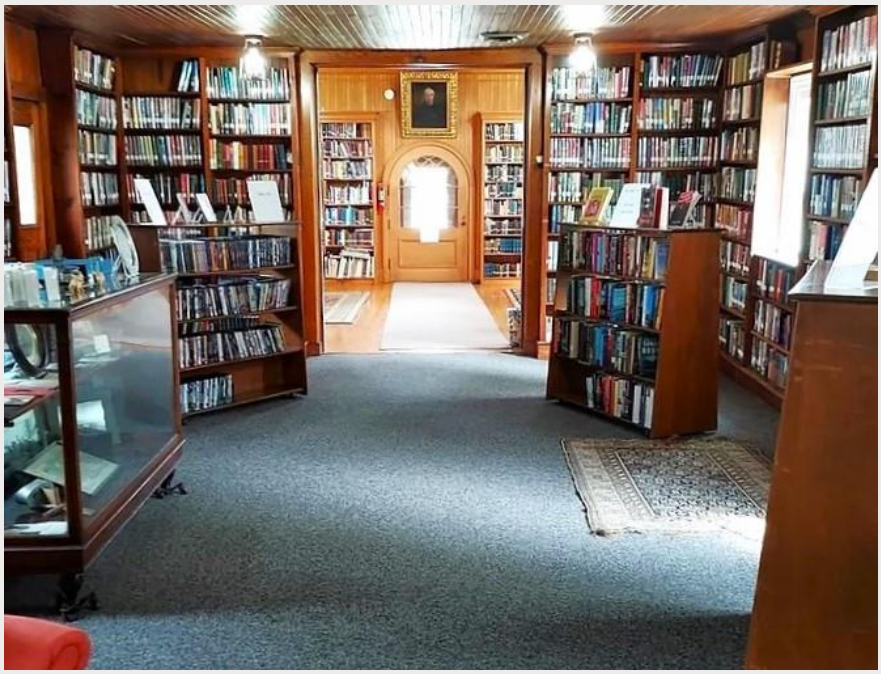
The stewardship of the Hillview Free Library in Diamond Point demonstrates its trustees' longstanding dedication to their community. Their care for the library, particularly over the past 25 years, has not only preserved this historic structure, it has ensured that the library continues to serve the community and celebrate its history.

The Hillview Free Library was established in 1899 by five Diamond Point residents who were looking to improve the reading pleasure of those who lived in the area, including its seasonal residents. The library grew into its current three-room layout over a span of seventy years, beginning in a modest 1860s timber-frame one-room schoolhouse that was moved to the property — a great example of adaptive use! The community soon needed a more functional year-round structure, which led to the front addition constructed in 1901-1902 that greets visitors today. This distinctive stone and shingle structure was designed by J. Dickinson Hunter, a distinguished architect who worked for the renowned New York City firm McKim, Mead and White. Known as the Great Room, this portion of the library is a synthesis of the Shingle Style summer homes that McKim, Mead and White designed in Newport, Rhode Island, and the Romanesque-inspired stone libraries that Henry Hobson Richardson designed in the late 19th century. Lastly, a children's room was added onto the back of the library in 1967.

25 years ago, the Board of Trustees embarked on a campaign to tend to the library's structural and organization needs in order to ensure that the Hillview Free Library continues to serve Diamond Point and surrounding communities. In addition to routine maintenance, the board undertook three capital projects between 2015 and 2022 to address larger structural issues. The 2015 phase included foundation work under the Middle Room (original schoolhouse structure), along with drainage work around the Middle and Great rooms and replacing the cedar shingles on their south elevations. In 2018, the large arched window in the south façade of the Great Room was replaced in-kind. A plumbing failure in 2021 necessitated the replacement of the floor in the Middle Room. This led to further stabilization of the foundation there, rounding out the work done in 2015. This project also allowed the library to make some accessibility upgrades to improve access and use throughout the building. With these three capital projects complete, the library has been stabilized and remains steadfast in its service to the community.

The restoration and stewardship of the Hillview Free Library would not have been possible without its dedicated Board of Trustees and partners, who worked together with a common vision and respect for the care and custody with which they have been charged. 90% of the funding required for these capital projects was derived from the library's trust fund, which was endowed mostly by a generous bequest from a friend and loyal patron. Funding and in-kind services for the capital projects were provided by the Town of Lake George, as well as ongoing support.

The Hillview Free Library also has a pending application to the National Register of Historic Places, which was submitted in 2022.



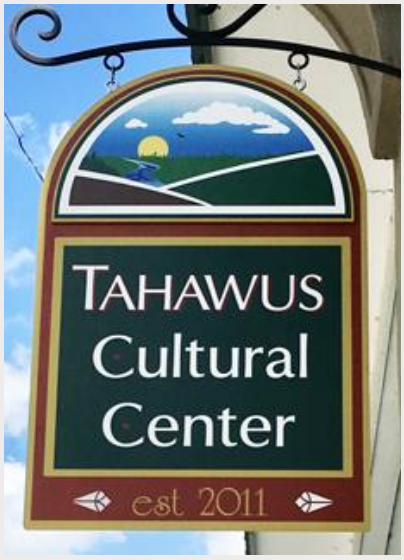
*Top left: original converted schoolhouse circa 1901 before additions; photo courtesy of Hillview Free Library.*
*Top right: Middle Room during construction; photo courtesy of Hillview Free Library.*
*Middle left and right: Great and Middle rooms, respectively, after restoration; photos courtesy of Hillview Free Library.*
*Bottom: Hillview Free Library after restoration; photo courtesy of Hillview Free Library.*

## *Tahawus Cultural Center — Rebecca Kelly & Craig Brashear*

*For the ongoing rehabilitation and stewardship of the Tahawus Cultural Center*

Town of Au Sable Forks, Essex County

**Owners:** Appleby Foundation, Inc.
**General Contractor:** High Peaks Builders
**Windows:** Black Mountain Screens
**Heating:** Anco Heating Services, Au Sable Forks
**Electrical:** Cliff Holzer
**Project Dates:** 2009 – present




The Tahawus Cultural Center is "a place for ideas, with room to move." The ongoing rehabilitation of this former Masonic lodge is a great example of how buildings can adapt to a community's changing needs while still preserving their heritage.

Formerly Tahawus Masonic Lodge #790, the building was chartered by the masons in 1884, then designed by Keeseville architect C.F. Kingsley (former Au Sable Forks resident) and constructed in 1911. The building's three floors were originally a ground level store, a second-floor banquet and reception space, and a third floor Masonic lodge. This structure was one of the few to survive the devastating fire of 1925 that destroyed most of the town. Over the years, the building has housed various businesses and organizations, including a laundromat, the *Adirondack Record* newspaper, and the post office.

In 2009, the Appleby Foundation acquired the former Masonic lodge with a vision to revive this local icon as the Tahawus Cultural Center. The Appleby Foundation is a not-for-profit performing arts organization founded by Rebecca Kelly and Craig Brashear. The couple transformed the Tahawus Masonic Lodge into a center for art, dance, film music, STEM education, and community engagement. The rehabilitation of the storefront was completed by High Peaks Builders and made possible by a Main Street revitalization grant. Rebecca and Craig oversaw the rehabilitation of the second and third floors, with help from Black Mountain Screens (windows), Anco Heating Services (heating), and Cliff Holzer (electrical work). In addition to the Main Street grant, the rehabilitation of the Tahawus Cultural Center has been funded by a private donation, Indiegogo campaign, and construction loan, and made possible by skilled local craftspeople.

The Tahawus Cultural Center has breathed new life into this building, welcoming back the community and fostering a diverse array of arts, education, social, and entertainment experiences for people of all ages. The Windows Gallery on the second floor showcases artworks by local and regional artists, such as paintings, photography, pottery, collage, and video. The spacious and airy Cloudsplitter Studio on the third floor houses dance classes and rehearsals as well as workshops and coaching sessions for choreography and the performing arts.

In 2021, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and social significance. The next phase of the building's rehabilitation is to transform the basement into a multi-use area that expands the Center's opportunities for creativity, education, and community engagement. This space will become a resource for its community's needs, as a makerspace, music rehearsal studio, or for other uses. The Tahawus Cultural Center's vision is to work in concert with the magnificent historic building it's housed in to celebrate the vibrant history and community of Au Sable Forks and bring people together through creativity, education, and empowerment.

*Top left: the Tahawus Masonic Lodge amidst the ruins of the Au Sable Forks business district following the fire of 1925; photo courtesy of Steve Laundree's "Historic Adirondack Photos."*
*Top middle: vacant Tahawus Masonic Lodge in 2008; photo courtesy of Tahawus Cultural Center.*
*Top right: the Tahawus Cultural Center in 2023; photo courtesy of Tahawus Cultural Center.*
*Middle left and right: Windows Art Gallery and Cloudsplitter Dance Studio, respectively, in 2008 before rehabilitation; photos courtesy of Tahawus Cultural Center.*
*Bottom left and right: Windows Art Gallery and Cloudsplitter Dance Studio, respectively, in 2023 after rehabilitation; photos courtesy of Tahawus Cultural Center.*

## *Schroon Lake Community Church*

*For community revitalization*

Town of Schroon Lake, Essex County

**Owner:** Schroon Lake Community Church
**Building Committee:** Pete Johnson (Chair), Scott Chadbourne (Fundraising Chair), Jim Morse
**Architect:** SD Atelier Architecture, LLC.
**General Contractor:** Hilltop Construction Company
**Landscape Architect:** Studio A
**Mechanical Engineering:** Engineering Solutions, Inc.
**Structural Engineer:** Greg Sellar, P.E.
**Timber-Framer:** New Energy Works Timber-framers
**Project Dates:** 2019 – 2021

The Schroon Lake Community Church is a testament to its community's resiliency. It demonstrates their ability to preserve their historic and cultural identity through sympathetic new construction after losing the historic cornerstone of their downtown to fire in 2019. The new church does not replicate the original, but was designed to reflect and respect its features and character while serving the community's needs.

For more than 150 years, a vernacular, wood-framed church anchored the corner of Main Street and Leland Ave in Schroon Lake and was home to the Methodist congregation and later the United Church of Christ when the two denominations merged in 1948. The church was a cornerstone of the community and served as a central gathering space. Despite the efforts of firefighters from two counties, a fire started by faulty old wiring claimed the building within minutes in January 2019. However, the town quickly came together to begin the work of rebuilding. Parishioners and local business owners contributed funds, furniture, doors, and an accessibility lift in addition to organizing fundraisers.

The community used the new church as an opportunity to improve the layout to better accommodate its needs for worship and community gatherings. This led to a linked sanctuary and community room, which can be closed off or opened up as a bigger space as-needed. In addition, the church is fully accessible and has chairs rather than pews, which can be rearranged for flexible seating arrangements, allowing for the fluidity of use that the Schroon Lake Community Church has come to represent. Despite these changes in design, the new church respects the original, with similar massing and white clapboard. The original church's stained-glass windows were salvaged from the fire and re-installed in the new entry vestibule. In addition, the original bell was restored and installed on the porch. As a nod to vernacular Adirondack architecture, the sanctuary features a vaulted ceiling with exposed timber trusses.

The story of the Schroon Lake Community Church illustrates how change is inevitable, but it's how we move forward that is important. We may not be able to save every building, but we can still use the memories of lost buildings to honor our heritage and acknowledge the ways in which buildings shape our communities. The new Schroon Lake Community Church has helped revitalize the community, ensuring that there is a space where all are welcome.

*Opposite: new Schroon Lake Community Church proposed by SD Atelier.*
*Top left: Schroon Lake Community Church before the fire; photo courtesy of SD Atelier.*
*Top right: Schroon Lake Community Church after the 2019 fire; photo courtesy of Andrew Gushee.*
*Middle left: new Schroon Lake Community Church; photo courtesy of SD Atelier.*
*Middle right: aerial view of new Schroon Lake Community Church sanctuary; photo courtesy of SD Atelier.*
*Bottom left: new Schroon Lake Community Church sanctuary; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Bottom right: entry vestibule of new Schroon Lake Community Church, showcasing salvaged stained glass from the original church; photo courtesy of SD Atelier.*

## *Nancy & Robert Fierer*

*For the restoration of the Bloom Cottage*

Town of Loon Lake, Franklin County

**Nominators:** Mark & Denise Beese
**Previous Owners:** Nancy & Robert Fierer
**Project Dates:** 2017 – 2021

The Bloom Cottage preserves an important piece of Adirondack history — the integral role that seasonal residents and tourism have played in shaping the region. Nancy and Robert Fierer have kept this story alive through their careful restoration of this cottage in Loon Lake's historic core.

The Bloom cottage is one of 53 original cottages that were part of the Loon Lake Resort in Franklin County, started by Mary Howe Chase and Ferdinand Chase in 1878. Through building lodges and acquiring nearby cottages for further guest housing, Mary and Ferdinand established the Loon Lake Resort as one of the grandest, most "modern" and socially prominent Adirondack resorts at the time, which could host up to a thousand visitors and featured one of the earliest golf courses in the Adirondacks. The resort hosted three U.S. Presidents and possibly notable architect Stanford White, who may have designed some of the buildings. When Ferdinand passed away in 1916, Mary took over the resort, continuing to expand its properties and services. She became one of the most successful and prominent female entrepreneurs and hoteliers in the Adirondacks before the resort's closure in 1930 and her death in 1933.

Unlike earlier cabins, lodges, and cottages at the Loon Lake Resort, Mary designed and built the Bloom Cottage. The cottage showcases features of the Craftsman and Shingle styles, such as exposed rafter tails, low massing, shingle cladding, and interior woodwork. The Bloom exemplifies the singular nature of the Loon Lake Resort's collection of buildings, each with their own name and character.

Like most of the resort's buildings, the Bloom was sold to private owners in the 1930s. After that, it had a few different owners and was vacant for over 15 years before the Fierers acquired it. Little work was done since its initial construction to update the building systems, meaning much of the original fabric remained in place.

When Nancy and Robert Fierer bought the Bloom Cottage at an estate auction in 2017, this allowed them to make the necessary changes for modern conveniences while saving as much historic fabric as possible and honoring the building's history. The Fierers carefully directed the restoration, which included repairing original plaster, restoring bathroom fixtures, salvaging original wainscoting, and refinishing windows and woodwork, including the original wood floors (which still show the marks of people who wore their golf shoes in the house!). The interior restoration of the cottage also included a new kitchen and building systems (electricity, water, septic, and roof), all of which was done with respect for the original structure.

The Fierers coordinated the restoration of the Bloom Cottage with help from a variety of local contractors. Upon completion of the project, the couple sold the cottage to its current owners, Mark and Denise Beese, who nominated them for this award. Thanks to the efforts of Nancy and Robert Fierer, this unique piece of Loon Lake's story remains a testament to Mary Chase's dedication to the vision she began there with her husband 40 years earlier.

*Opposite: Mary Howe Chase c. 1885; photo from* Franklin Historical Review, *August 1966.*
*Top left and right: exterior before and after restoration, respectively.*
*Middle left: bathroom before restoration.*
*Middle center: bathroom after restoration.*
*Middle right: interior plaster repairs.*
*Bottom left: screened porch after restoration.*
*Bottom right: interior after restoration.*
*All photos of the Bloom Cottage courtesy of Nancy and Robert Fierer.*

## *Paul Besignano*

*For the rehabilitation and revitalization of War Cannon Spirits*

Town of Crown Point, Essex County

**Owner:** Paul Besignano
**Exterior Architect:** Nils Luderowski, AIA
**Interior Design:** IMHOTEP
**General Contractor:** Cutting Edge Group, LLC
**Project Dates:** 2016 – 2022

The rehabilitation and revitalization of a 200-year-old mill as War Cannon Spirits honors this rare structure, one of the oldest of its kind still found in the Adirondacks. Paul Besignano's vision in reimagining this former industrial space as a place for people to gather helps to share the building's story and celebrates the community's history.

At the core of this building lies a mill built by Job Howe in the 1820s. It harnessed the power of the Putnam Creek as a grist and lumber mill until it was repurposed as the Crown Point Agway store in 1957, which subsequently became Porter's Mill Hardware & Feed from 2000 to 2008.

Paul Besignano saved the mill from demolition when he acquired it in 2016 and set about stabilizing the structure. At that point, the building was in dire structural condition due to almost two centuries of heavy use. Most people believed the building could not be saved. Although it was neither cost effective nor practical, Paul ignored this advice because he felt that demolishing the mill would have been an injustice to the community. Instead, he partnered with noted regional architect, Nils Luderowski, to transform the former mill site into War Cannon Spirits. The team spent over seven years rehabilitating the structure with respect to its vernacular construction and ensuring that any changes were sensitive to the original building. This comprehensive effort included site cleanup, hazmat abatement, new underground utilities, structural repairs, and rehabilitating the exterior and interior finishes. The building now houses a restaurant and tasting room as well as a small storefront on the first floor, with additional event space on the second floor.

War Cannon Spirits was created with the vision to not only create exceptional spirits but to use the revitalization of this historic mill to celebrate the community's history. The iconic 200-year-old building greets visitors entering Crown Point from the north, inviting them stop by for a drink and a bite. This project would not have been possible without the skilled team that Paul assembled and funding support from a National Grid Main Street Grant, Restore New York and Capital grants from Empire State Development, and a Small Business Administration loan.

*Opposite: rehabilitated garage and silo at War Cannon Spirits; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Top left: exterior before rehabilitation; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*
*Top right: exterior during rehabilitation; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*
*Middle left: exterior after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*
*Middle upper right: interior during rehabilitation; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*
*Middle lower right: interior after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Bottom: site after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*

## *Nils Luderowski*

*Posthumous award for lifetime achievement*

Nils Luderowski lived and worked as an architect in the Adirondacks for almost 30 years, where he pioneered the New Adirondack Style of architecture, a blend of Shingle, Craftsman, Prairie, and regional expressions, while maintaining an eye for modern living requirements and technology. His structures are all thoughtfully designed to fit their surroundings, as if a part of the natural landscapes themselves, without losing the rich texture, color, and form that make his designs distinctive. An artist in every sense of the word, his work went far beyond plans and elevations. From unique light fixtures, furniture, planters, pennants, and stained-glass windows, he meticulously considered every aspect of a building, no matter how small or large.

After growing up in the United States and Sweden, and studying at the National College of Art, Craft, and Design (Konstfack) and Pratt Institute, Nils worked for architects in Stockholm, Detroit, and New York before opening his interior design firm in 1973. He became a registered architect in 1993 and moved to Keene, NY, in 1996 with his family, where he opened a small office in Keene Valley and began, at the age of 54, a relationship with Adirondack architecture that would become the great, burning love that defined the rest of his life.

Refusing to engage with computer-aided design, Nils worked and reworked his drawings in graphite pencil, color pencil, and Prismacolor markers across pages and pages of drafting paper. He found joy in a cantilevered roof, in the way that pencil can add life to a line. He never missed an opportunity to draw. This joy and care is reflected in his design of structures that thoughtfully address natural site features and are carefully scaled. They are rich in texture and color and closely relate to the land around them, becoming part of the landscape itself.

Nils maintained a design-oriented practice specializing in camps and other seasonal residences for over a quarter century. While he took pleasure in designing new structures for his clients, a number of his projects included substantial preservation or restoration work, such as North Point Camp, the Newell Reynolds House (the Luderowskis' home), Camp Pinebrook, the Cairn, and War Cannon Spirits. In his new design, he drew inspiration from strains of modernism in the U.S. and Scandinavia, along with characteristics of the Shingle Style and the Arts and Crafts Movement. His work also weaves in the whimsy that has characterized some of the most iconic rustic architecture in the Adirondacks for over a century. At the same time, his designs embody a concern for practicality and livability. Nils' unique take on an Adirondack camp incorporated highly crafted interiors of wood, stone, and textiles and exteriors with flared eaves and walls, eyebrow dormers, and a particularly masterful way of creating an elegant and grounded massing. His work reflects a deep understanding of the historic architecture that defines our region.

Furthermore, Nils was a great friend and long-time member of AARCH. Over the years, he served as an AARCH Board and Advisory Council member, going above and beyond to support our special events and fundraisers. His one-of-a-kind Adirondack chairs, designed especially for our silent auction, were a favorite. We had the pleasure of featuring his work in our educational tours and showcasing his projects in an AARCH gallery exhibition. In addition, Nils and his wife Muriel hosted a "Big Gratitude" donor event in 2018.

Nils contributed so much richness to architecture in the Adirondacks and beyond, furthering the tradition of organic, thoughtful design that makes our region so distinctive. He will be remembered for his striking architecture dotting the Adirondacks' many lakes, rivers, and mountains.

"Nils was sensitive to the landscape and also to the needs of his clients. He treated his designs as works of art while paying close attention to the practical demands of function and durability. Not since William Coulter and his immediate successors, Max Westhoff and William Distin, has the region been home to an architect of such distinction."

*Richard Longstreth, Professor Emeritus, George Washington University*

*Top left: Adirondack A-Frame Redux by Nils Luderowski.*
*Top right: Nils welcoming AARCH members into his home in 2018; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Middle left: Blue Moon; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Middle right: Marcy Cottage at Camp Pinebrook; photo by Nils Luderowski.*
*Bottom left: North Point Camp; photo by Nils Luderowski.*
*Bottom right: Westport Chair designed for AARCH by Nils Luderowski in 2019.*

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*The Private Nonprofit Historic Preservation Organization for the Adirondack Region*


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Special thanks to the AARCH Stewardship Committee for their planning and oversight of this annual awards presentation.

*Susan Arena, Chair*

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We also extend our thanks to the following sponsor for their generous support of this celebration in memory of Nils Luderowski:


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*Thank you to this year's host:*
## *The Hitching Post*

The Hitching Post was recently rehabilitated by Nettle Meadow Farm as a tavern, retail space, and cheese plant. Built in 1939 by Svend Munck as a dining hall for all of the local dude ranches, the Hitching Post has been a local icon in the community for more than 80 years. The building also boasts one of the largest original support beams and largest fireplaces in the entire Adirondack region.

***Cover Photos***
*Top left: War Cannon Spirits; photo courtesy of War Cannon Spirits.*
*Top right: The Church Garden; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.*
*Middle left: Hillview Free Library; photo courtesy of Hillview Free Library.*
*Center: Nils Luderowski; photo by AARCH.*
*Middle right: Schroon Lake Community Church; photo courtesy of SD Atelier.*
*Bottom left: Tahawus Cultural Center; photo courtesy of Tahawus Cultural Center.*
*Bottom right: The Bloom Cottage; photo courtesy of Nancy & Robert Fierer.*


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