

# Stepping Stones

## The historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson

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January 28, 2009

Mr. Paul Loether  
Chief, National Register of Historic Places and  
National Historic Landmarks Program  
1849 C Street, NW (Org. 2280)  
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Loether:

I am writing to suggest that Stepping Stones, the historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson in Bedford, New York, is an appropriate candidate for a National Landmark designation.

Stepping Stones was listed on the NYS and National Registers of Historic Places in 2005. I have attached that nomination for your review. Because Stepping Stones is the home of Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous and Lois Wilson, co-founder of Al-Anon family Groups, the house and its archives have a National, and even international appeal.

Stepping Stones is historically significant for its association with Bill and Lois Wilson, who lived in the house from 1941 until their deaths in 1971 and 1988, respectively. Bill Wilson (1895-1971) was the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and his personal experiences and leadership were critical to the success of the organization.

Wilson disseminated the idea of alcoholism as an illness rather than a moral failure and provided a program – the 12 Steps – for treating alcoholism and maintaining sobriety. The 12 Steps and AA enabled, and continue to enable, millions of people around the world to achieve and sustain permanent sobriety and helped reshape their lives. Lois Wilson was the co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, the self-help group for loved ones of alcoholics. Al-Anon and Alateen have also grown to reach international membership, with chapters in 115 countries.

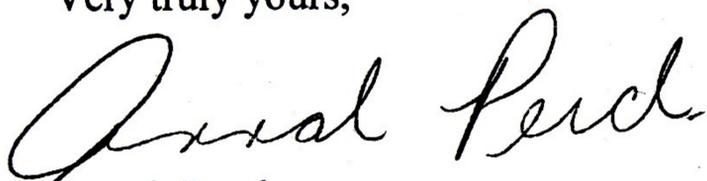
The Wilsons' influence on twentieth-century society is immeasurable. The 12 Steps remain the most successful means of treating alcoholism and are the central treatment program in most hospitals and clinics. AA does not keep official membership lists; however, in 2002 the General Services Office estimated the organization's international membership at 2,215,293 members – more than two million people – all following the 12 Steps devised by Bill Wilson. The report calculated that 51,245 groups with 1,160,651 members existed in the United States alone. Over 200 other groups that address issues as varied as drug addiction, gambling, overeating, and surviving incest have subsequently adopted the 12 Steps. In 1990 *Life* magazine named Bill W. one of the 100 most important Americans of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in 1999 *Time* magazine selected Bill W. as one of the 100 most influential people of the century. Al-Anon and Alateen

have 26,000 group meetings in 115 countries. In 1988 its membership was estimated to be over 500,000. Most importantly, the 12 Steps help alcoholics and others turn their life around to become honest and decent "citizens of the world (Bill Wilson)." In doing so, not only does the life of the alcoholic improve dramatically, but so does the life of all of those about him or her.

The Stepping Stones Foundation is undergoing major projects to preserve the home so that it lasts in perpetuity. I have enclosed a summary of our Master Conservation Plan so that you can see that our commitment to the site is strong, and our procedures are sound.

If you have any other questions or would like to invite Stepping Stones to prepare a nomination, please don't hesitate to contact me at (914) 232-4822 or via email at [info@steppingstones.org](mailto:info@steppingstones.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annah Perch". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Annah Perch  
Executive Director