



ATTACHED: Photo of Ruth and Thomas Keegan taken July 22, 1967

Wilmington Historical Society Purchases Site for Keegan Memorial History Center

Karen Marshall Peters, President of the Wilmington Historical Society, has announced the purchase of a 1.91 acre parcel of land on Route 86 in Wilmington as part of a plan to construct a new home for the Society. Established in 2003, the Society is dedicated to preserving the town's history. Its mission statement proclaims, "The mission of the Wilmington Historical Society is to collect, preserve, display and interpret the documents, photographs and artifacts that tell the unique story of how the people of this remote, mountainous small town with big ideas have adapted and survived in the harsh but beautiful environment of the Adirondacks."

The land purchase was made possible through a donation by Colonel Dennis Keegan, a retired U.S. Air Force officer and former U.S. Olympic Committee executive. Keegan's parents, Ruth and Thomas Keegan were tourism pioneers in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. They were the builders, owners and operators of the largest motel in Wilmington, Keegan's White Brook, and the Swissaire Motelodge in Upper Jay. The White Brook also had a restaurant and bar. "Last year the officers and trustees of the Society voted to name the proposed building the Ruth and Thomas Keegan Memorial History Center due to the substantial impact the Keegans had in promoting tourism in the town and contributing to the area's economic development," said Peters. "The Wilmington Historical Society would also like to thank Attorney Janet Bliss for handling our legal affairs in the acquisition of the property and Ralph Schissler of Adirondack Surveying, PLLC for providing surveying services," she added.

"We still have a long way to go to reach our goal for the construction of a new building and provide funding for future maintenance and operations," Peters said. "The Society plans to launch a fundraising plan to achieve these goals." According to Peters, all contributions are tax deductible and may be made directly to the Wilmington Historical Society, a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit institution chartered by the State of New York. Donations should be marked either for the Keegan Building Fund to fund building construction or for the Wilmington Historical Society Fund at the Adirondack Foundation to fund sustainability, operations and maintenance for the future building. The Wilmington Historical Society has in its possession more than 200 artifacts, 350 reference and library books, 300 microfilms, and considerable archival material. The society assists genealogists, supports historical research, conserves collections, creates displays and offers programs to the public.