



# Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Barbara Wilkens*

Barbara Wilkens, along with her husband, Johnny, have owned and operated Wilkens Fruit & Fir Farm in Yorktown since the late 1950s. In 1968, they expanded to a Pick-Your-Own-Orchard operation and, in the early 1970s, planted the first Christmas trees for a Cut-Your-Own experience. In the 1970s, school tours were also added in the fall to provide a farm experience to thousands of children nearby. The farm has since celebrated its 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and provides food donations to many local pantries.

Ms. Wilkens is a founding member of the Yorktown Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which started in 1963. Ms. Wilkens began as a Red Cross first aid volunteer on the first ambulance. She was one of the first volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians, and retired from active service as a life member after 44 years.

Ms. Wilkens served on the Yorktown Town Board from 1978 through 1989, and as Deputy Supervisor for the last four years. During that time, she worked on many projects, including the construction of the Town Court, expansion of the John C. Hart Memorial Library, construction of the Jefferson Valley Mall, purchase of the community center, chairing the bicentennial celebration, formation of the Town's Board of Ethics, and most importantly, drafting the Town's first comprehensive master plan.

For 17 years, Ms. Wilkens served on the New York City Watershed Agricultural Council beginning in the 1990s. She also served as the founding chairwoman of the Westchester County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to protect the watershed through environmentally sound practices. Additionally, she served on the Board of Directors of the Yorktown Land Trust and on the Board of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York.

She is an Elder at the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown, and has been an active congregant since 1941.

Ms. Wilkens grew up in Yorktown, New York and graduated as Valedictorian from Yorktown High School in 1949. At the age of 19, she learned to fly as a member of the United States Civil Air Patrol. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in Architecture and Design and returned to Yorktown to teach art in the schools.

***Barbara Wilkens was selected as a  
2024 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Pete Harckham***

