



Barbara Winiarski

September 20, 1933 - October 8, 2021

Barbara Dvorak Winiarski, co-founder of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, artist, preservationist, and philanthropist, died at 88 years old, peacefully, at her home in Napa Valley, California, on October 8, 2021.

Barbara was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, and spent childhood summers near the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. An artist at heart, Barbara first learned to paint from her father, who introduced her to oil paints and how to care for brushes at a young age. Her love for art grew throughout middle school and high school, where she learned how to work with different mediums and styles. Her inspirations were Michelangelo's expressions of human life and portrait paintings by Vermeer and Rembrandt.

Barbara intended to major in art and art history after high school, but she chose to pursue a degree in liberal arts and philosophy from St. John's College in Annapolis. She selected St. John's, despite her parents' desire that she be formally trained as a painter, because, in her words, she "wanted to learn about everything." Barbara matriculated with the first group of women at the college, and it was there that she met her future husband, Warren Winiarski.

With dreams of a new life in wine, in 1964 the Winiarski family moved from Chicago, where Warren and Barbara were studying and teaching at the University of Chicago, to Napa Valley, California. In 1970, the Winiarskis purchased a prune orchard in what would become the Stags Leap District appellation, and Barbara and the children worked alongside Warren to establish a new winery there. They christened it Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. Their first commercial release from the new facility, the 1973 S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon, would place first amongst the red wines in the now-famous 1976 Judgment of Paris tasting.

The Winiarskis' early years in the Napa Valley were spent advocating for the then-radical notion of creating an Agricultural Preserve to protect the Valley from the suburban sprawl that was fast eliminating farmland in most other Northern California counties. Since then, the Winiarskis have endowed the Land Trust of Napa County with almost 200 acres of property, which will never be developed. In 2017, the couple received the Land Trust of Napa County's Acre by Acre Award.

Barbara and Warren have also been supporters of the Smithsonian's National Museum of

American History for over 25 years. Their generosity helped to establish the museum's American Food and Wine History Project in 1996, as well as the subsequent, "FOOD: Transforming the American Table 1950-2000" exhibition, in 2012. In 2021, with the mission of sustaining food and wine history for generations to come, the Winiarski Family Foundation donated \$4 million to establish a permanent Curator of Food and Wine History position at the National Museum of American History.

The couple provided a transformational \$50 million dollar pledge to their alma mater, St. John's College - the largest gift in the history of the institution - to ensure affordable tuition for future students. The 2019 gift from the Winiarski Family Foundation established a challenge grant which has already reached its goal of \$50 million dollars in matching funds.

Most recently, in October 2021, a \$5.1 million gift from the Winiarski Family Foundation to Providence Queen of the Valley Medical Center provided funds for The Winiarski Stroke and Diagnostics Center, a 208-bed acute care facility in Napa. They also donated to NEWS (Napa Emergency Women's Services) and Samaritan Family Shelter, both causes strongly supported by Barbara.

Barbara's passion for art called to her throughout her life, although a busy schedule as wife, mother and winery owner often left her little time to paint. After a hiatus, Barbara picked up her paint brushes again in 1980, focusing on portraits of her children and loved ones. Old photographs also served to depict six generations of family members. Barbara's paintings have been described as "having compelling intimacy. They capture moments in people's daily lives while drawing the viewer into a space of contemplation." Her life's work was published in the 2018 book, *Passages*, which includes exquisite photographs of her paintings.

.Barbara's lighter, but no less passionate pleasures were gardening, fishing, watching birds and classic British Mystery stories.

Beloved wife of Warren Winiarski. Dearest mother of Kasia (Jim), Stephen (Shahnaz) and Julia. Cherished grandma of Gabe, Noah, Matin, Arren, Kiann, and Maia.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a gift in Barbara's name to any of these organizations:

- * Napa Emergency Women's Services (NEWS)
- * Clinic Ole (Ole Health)
- * Napa Valley Food Bank
- * Samaritan Family Shelter (CANV)
- * Chesapeake Bay Trust

Visitation will take place in the chapel at Mont La Salle (4401 Redwood Road, Napa) on Thursday, October 21st, from 4-7pm. A second visitation will take place Friday, October 22nd, at 10:00am at the same location, followed by a funeral service starting at 10:30am.

The burial will be private.

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 21. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Mont La Salle
4401 Redwood Rd.
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-3810
<https://www.christianbrosretreat.com/property>

Visitation

OCT 22. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (PT)

Mont La Salle
4401 Redwood Rd.
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-3810
<https://www.christianbrosretreat.com/property>

Funeral Service

OCT 22. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (PT)

Mont La Salle
4401 Redwood Rd.
Napa, CA 94558
(707) 252-3810
<https://www.christianbrosretreat.com/property>

Tribute Wall



“ *Barbara Winiarski*

September 29, 2022 at 04:54 PM



“ *Barbara Winiarski*

September 29, 2022 at 02:55 PM