

## JAMES BIDDLE

Everyone in the nonprofit world in Philadelphia knew him, and we all knew him affectionately as 'Jimmy.' His ancestor William Biddle, a friend of William Penn's, came to this country in 1681. His great-great grandfather was the diplomat and financier Nicholas Biddle, who served as president of the Bank of the United States and fought bitterly with Andrew Jackson over the nature of a central bank. Nicholas acquired a property along the banks of the Delaware River in Bucks County in 1814, where he built Andalusia, a Gothic Revival mansion that he filled with antique French, English, and American furniture and draperies. A national historic landmark, the house and grounds were opened to the public in 1975. James Biddle was born at Andalusia on July 8, 1929, and died there on March 31, 2005. For many of his friends in the American Antiquarian Society (he was elected a member in 1968), our last visit with him was on a tour of Andalusia as part of the spring meeting in Philadelphia in April 2001. As we walked the grounds, Jimmy traversed the great lawn separating the 'Cottage,' where he lived, from the 'Main House' in his golf cart, and he welcomed AAS members to his family's estate with the gusto that marked everything he undertook.

Art and historic preservation were his great loves. He graduated from St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, and from Princeton University with a degree in art and architecture. He was a curator of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York between 1955 and 1967. Then, he moved to Washington to become president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where he served for almost a decade and a half. He was instrumental in raising money to save Olana, Frederic Edwin Church's Moorish mansion and studio, perched above the Hudson River, a project that combined his love of American art and distinguished architecture. During his tenure at the Trust, he also served on the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

Arnold Berke, writing in his column in *Preservation*, the National Trust's magazine, pointed to some of the highlights of Biddle's leadership: 'The advances on his watch were many: The Trust's first regional offices opened, the Main Street program was born, six properties joined the historic-sites collection, the Study Tours Program began, and the first grants and loans went out to local projects. Also, the Preservation Honor Awards and National Preservation Week were launched. Reflecting these advances, the Trust's membership grew from some 5,000 to 150,000, and preservation at large developed into a locally supported, democratic movement.' Current National Trust president (and newly elected member of AAS) Richard Moe, added, 'From wealthy corporate donors and private philanthropists to grassroots activists lying down in front of bulldozers, Jimmy provided the spark that inspired and sustained their efforts.'

He is survived by his former wife Louisa Copeland Duemling, two daughters, Letitia C. and Pamela C., a son James C., and seven grandchildren.

Ellen S. Dunlap

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