

PHILIP CHARLES BEALS

Philip Charles Beals of Worcester, was the archetypal 'pillar of his community,' and a long and faithful member of the American Antiquarian Society at his death on March 20, 2008. Born in Winchendon in 1919, he lived in Southborough for almost all of his adult life. Educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, he graduated from Harvard with the class of 1942. Serving with the United States Marines as a fighter pilot in World War II, he returned to Worcester in 1946 to run the family business, Vellumoid Company, which manufactured gaskets. The sale of that business in 1959 allowed him to spend more time with his family and to immerse himself in civic affairs and cultural organizations and to pursue the sports of bird hunting and fly fishing.

He served on the board of Hahnemann Hospital in Worcester, eventually becoming its president. In 1982 he received a key to the city for his contributions to the community. He also served on the board of the Worcester Art Museum. His interests in gardening led him to join the Worcester County Horticultural Society where he also served as a trustee. He was instrumental in convincing fellow board members to acquire an old farm in Boylston so that the Society could have an outdoor facility to carry out its programs. The old farm has become the popular and successful Tower Hill Botanic Garden. In addition to his board work for medical and cultural institutions, he was a trustee of the Fay School, and in the 1960s and 1970s served as a board member of Phillips Exeter Academy. He was a great believer in and supporter of all secondary school education, and was appointed to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. He later served as the lay member of the Board of Bar Overseers. Other civic interests included his involvement in the zoning issues in the town of Southborough where he lived for more than fifty years on a very large farm. He served on the Southborough Planning Board for ten years and helped to draft the town's first master plan. All of his own property, Chestnut Hill Farm, some two hundred and

fifty acres, is now protected by covenants and restrictions, a lasting tribute to his ethic, as well as to a love of land and town.

Beals was elected to the American Antiquarian Society in 1966. During the forty-two years that he was a member, he served on the Council in various capacities for some nineteen (Committee on Bequests, 1967; Nominating Committee, 1972; Finance Committee, 1973; Committee on the Hall, 1977; and Secretary for Domestic Correspondence, 1981). He was a long-standing supporter of the Isaiah Thomas Society.

Although not a collector himself, Beals became familiar with that world when he inherited an important group of Currier and Ives lithographs that his father had assembled in the 1920s and 1930s. This collection was exhibited at the Worcester Art Museum in 1998 in connection with a series of lectures given by AAS Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts Georgia Barnhill.

My own acquaintance with Phil was primarily due to the numerous fishing trips we shared. He was an avid and accomplished angler. Most of our fishing was at the Black Brook Salmon Club on New Brunswick's Miramichi River, a club of which Phil was a founding member, together with a group of other Worcesterites, in 1962. Phil enjoyed the social aspect of angling almost as much as the sport. He was a genial and charming man, a true gentleman in every sense of the word. Phil had a wonderful quality of self-effacement and humility, a great sense of humor and a keen interest in others. At his memorial service it was said that he had the ability to talk to anyone and make him or her feel important. He loved poetry, especially that of 'the celebrated bard of the Yukon' Robert Service. One of my best memories from Black Brook is of a fall evening many years ago after a great day's fishing. One in our group had a gift for dramatic reading. He read aloud 'The Cremation of Sam McGee,' while Phil acted out the part of Sam. Phil knew the poem by heart, and it was hilarious.

Salmon fishing is a very odd and unpredictable sport. It is often said that its rewards are in direct proportion to one's perseverance. Phil's paid off. His largest salmon ever, a thirty-four-pounder, was

caught on his last full week on the river in October 2005. He was fishing under a great hardship: because of a painful hip injury, he was casting while sitting on a chair of hard planks bolted to a flat bottomed rowboat. He loved the woods and fields and game birds as well as the streams and rivers; he took great pleasure in watching the spring courtship flights of woodcock while walking the edges of his farmland in the evening and in seeing wild turkeys. He enjoyed membership in groups of like-minded individuals: the Anglers' Club of New York, the Fly Casters' Club of Boston and the Laurel Brook Club of Uxbridge.

Phil is survived by his wife Elaine; their son, Whitney; and three daughters, Suki B. Sargent, Molly B. Millman, and Nancy B. Donaldson; as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Another son, George L., predeceased him. A firm believer in giving back to the community and the cultural institutions that enrich it, Phil Beals was a giant—not only literally to his children when they were very small (he was over six feet tall) but also to his peers. His son Whit summed him up in a remembrance at the memorial service: 'honesty, integrity, discipline, hard work, a sense of humor, affability, a huge heart, and an utter lack of pretensions were his hallmark traits.'

Charles B. Wood

SILVIO ANTHONY BEDINI

Silvio Bedini, museum official, energetic researcher, and prolific author, was born on January 17, 1917, on a farm near Ridgefield, Connecticut, where his Italian parents had settled after coming to the United States in 1913. He attended Columbia University (1935-36, 1937-1942), majoring in comparative literature and languages. He served in the United States Army Air Force in 1942-43, and then was assigned to Fort Hunt, Virginia, where he was a cryptoanalyst with Army Intelligence. He worked for the

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.