

Milestones

Harold Harris, an accomplished sculptor, local historian, entrepreneur, and long-time area resident, died Friday, March 7, 2003. He was 80 years old.

Harris was born in Brooklyn on October 26, 1922, the son of Anna and Morris Harris, both immigrants from Eastern Europe. He was educated in New York City public schools, and attended City College of New York before joining the Army during World War II. He served in the Pacific as a warrant officer, specializing in radar, a new technology at the time. His duties included operating a radar station on Iwo Jima atop Mt. Suribachi. Shortly after the war, he visited Japan and traveled to Hiroshima, where he witnessed the devastation caused by the world's first atomic bomb.

After the war, Harris returned to New York City. He was involved in several business ventures before joining *Channel Master*, then a small start-up begun by the Resnick brothers of Ellenville to manufacture television antennas just as the television industry was exploding. Harris served as vice president of sales and engineering, and was instrumental in the company's run-away success through the 1950s and 1960s, before it was sold to Avnet, Inc. During this time, he made more than 20 trips to Japan and Taiwan, and helped establish *Channel Master* as the first US importer of consumer electronics manufactured by Sanyo.

After leaving *Channel Master*, he moved on to several other entrepreneurial ventures, and was involved in business off and on for the rest of his life. A long time art lover, whose collection included works by Edward Hopper, John Marin, as well as many other American and Asian artists, he began working as a sculptor in the early 1970s. His first constructions were comprised of driftwood found on the beaches of North Truro on Cape Cod, where he and his late wife Leslie, who was a painter, had a summerhouse. Over the years, he expanded his vision to brass, bronze, copper, iron and steel, working closely with Charles Juneau, his skilled assistant, for more than 25

years. Harris's body of work, which is more than 400 pieces, includes an eclectic mix of styles, ranging from large, complex cable and steel pieces designed to bend and move in the wind, to smaller bronze and brass pieces made from industrial-age artifacts found in area junkyards. Over the course of his artistic career, Harris had more than 25 shows on Cape Cod, as well as in New York City, Long Island, Woodstock, and Ellenville. Examples of his work can be seen outside and inside the *Ellenville Public Library* and the *Ellenville Regional Hospital*.

He was also an avid historian who wrote two books on local history, and was completing a third at the time of his death. His first, *Treasure Tales of the Shawangunks and Catskills*, was published in 1955 and recounted folk tales of the mid-Hudson region. In 2001, he published *The Saga of the Empire State Music Festival: A Personal Recollection*, which chronicled how the Ellenville community came together to host a series of classical music concerts, musicals, and operas performed by world renowned artists during four consecutive summer seasons during the 1950s. His final book was a history of *Yama Farms*, an exclusive resort in Napanoch during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, whose guests included Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, and John Burroughs.

In addition to his wide-ranging interests in art, music, poetry, history, and business, Harris was known for his wit, warmth and generosity, and leaves behind many friends in Ulster County and the Glen Arden Retirement Community in Goshen, where he lived for the past three years.

He is survived by two daughters, Wendy Elizabeth Harris and her husband, Paul Campbell, of Cragmoor and New York City, Katherine Harris Young and her husband, James Young, of Charleston, S.C.; and one son, David Hopkins Harris, and his wife, Katherine Turner, of Burlingame, Calif. He is also survived by four grandchildren, Caleb Hopkins Young, Maren Jean Young, Sarah Yi Ping Campbell, and Amelia Hopkins Estrella Harris. ☼

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