



William and Judith Wilder on their sailboat in Passamaquoddy Bay, St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick

I have been guided by the philosophy that you can't take everything out of life without putting something back in. With the help of my wife, my family, and many friends and business associates, I have been fortunate to accomplish both.

—WILLIAM P. WILDER

HEFFEL IS DEEPLY honored to present a very special selection of artworks from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William P. Wilder this fall. Heffel has many fond memories of William and Judith “Billie”; we were lucky enough to build a lasting relationship that spanned many years. Their passion for Canadian art, their philanthropic impact and their zest for life shone through during memorable visits to our galleries and in their beautiful home.

William, known to many as Bill (or Buck to his grandchildren, a nickname he gained during his time in the Royal Navy), passed away in 2019 at the age of 96. He is memorialized by the incredible legacy he left behind as a Canadian business leader, a staunch philanthropist, a loving father and grandfather, and a passionate art collector.

Following his World War II Royal Navy service, William completed his studies at Montreal's McGill University and began his career selling bonds with Wood Gundy (now CIBC Wood Gundy). He went on to pursue an MBA at Harvard Business School, an experience he often called life-changing, before returning to the securities firm. Several years later, he became chief executive of Wood Gundy and led the prestigious firm to much success, financing large Canadian energy companies and major national

projects. William then moved on to lead the Canadian Arctic Gas consortium, and then to Consumers' Gas as chairman and CEO. William's knowledge and expertise was sought after throughout his life, as he served on many boards, including those of the Royal Bank of Canada, Canada Life Assurance Company, Noranda Mines and Maclean-Hunter, to name only a few.

Like his business acumen, William's philanthropy was also far-reaching, with a focus on education, among other important causes. He became a major donor to Upper Canada College in Toronto, where he went to school, and to Harvard Business School, where the Wilder House building stands in his name.

Highlighting his many accolades, William was awarded the Order of Canada in 2017 and the Legion of Honour from France in 2018. He also received the Alumni Achievement Award from Harvard Business School in 1994 and was inducted into Canada's Investment Industry Hall of Fame.

Judith Wilder (née Bickle) also led an incredible life. Her extensive education began at Toronto's Havergal College, followed by McGill University. It was after McGill when she and William met and got married. She was known to family and friends as William's “chief business advisor” and biggest supporter. Her philanthropic contributions were widespread and focused on the arts, education, health care and social services. She made important donations to the Toronto Rehab Hospital and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, among other deserving organizations.

William and Judith were married for 66 years. They enjoyed time with their family and dogs at their farm near Uxbridge, Ontario, and in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, where they spent many wonderful summers.

The Wilders' passion for collecting Canadian art grew out of their pride for their country. They were enamoured of the Canadian landscape and culture, and over time they amassed one of the finest private collections of works by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. Masterpieces by Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer, David Milne, A.J. Casson, J.E.H. MacDonald and others decorated the walls of their home and office, and brought joy to all those who had the pleasure of spending time with the couple.

Additional works from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William P. Wilder will feature in Heffel's online auctions this November, including examples by Emily Carr, A.J. Casson and A.Y. Jackson.



TOP: William Wilder and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in the library at the Preparatory School at Upper Canada College, Toronto

BOTTOM: William and Judith Wilder at a World Bank meeting in New York