



JAMES B. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION, INC.
RICHARDSON MARITIME MUSEUM • THE BOATWORKS

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Press Release

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The Boatworks Finishes And Creates A Legacy

The Richardson Maritime Museum's Boatworks volunteers recently completed a Queenstown man's legacy and created one of their own by passing on their boatbuilding skills to a new generation.

Judy Friis' husband, Bill, passed away in 2003, leaving unfinished a 16-foot skiff, the first boat he had ever attempted to build. Knowing that her husband would have wanted to see it completed, she came to the Museum to see if the Boatworks would take on the project.

While not one of the traditional wooden work boats and sailing craft on which they usually focus, the group accepted the boat and the all-volunteer crew finished it this spring. Recently, friends of both Judy and the Museum gathered at the Boatworks as she saw the completed skiff for the first time.

The volunteers who worked on the boat unveiled it as Judy watched with tears in her eyes. Dubbed the Wye River Go-Devil after the river it was meant to cruise and the motor that Bill planned to power it, Bill's cabinetry skills are evident in the mahogany foredeck and stern.

When the skiff came to the Boatworks, it was judged ninety percent structurally complete by Museum President Frank Newton. That last ten percent, however, required time, skill and patience to turn a rough shell into a beautiful boat.



At the Richardson Maritime Museum Boatworks, Judy Friis and Bill Friis Jr. (front right) recently thanked the volunteers who finished building her late husband's boat, from left, John Ericson, Herm Kramer, Frank Newton, Joe Slaughter, Ken Guelta and Ernie Hanmer.

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The crew that took on that challenge included Herm Kramer, Ken Guelta and Ernie Hanmer. They handled most of the structural strengthening and painting details. It took the help of a master furniture maker, however, to give the skiff the look that Bill had clearly intended. And that became an added part of his legacy.



Ken Guelta and Herm Kramer work on strengthening the framework of the skiff begun by Bill Friis.

John Ericson creates custom reproduction 19th-century furniture in his studio in Easton, and is also a mentor with the Talbot Mentors organization. When he started volunteering at the Boatworks, it was natural that he would be offered the task of finishing the intricate mahogany brightwork on the Friis skiff, and just as natural that he would bring his mentee, 14-year-old Joe Slaughter, with him to help.

Joe and John became regulars at the Boatworks and could be found hard at work there practically every Saturday morning, with Joe eventually earning all of his school community service hours on the project. Not only was the skiff to be a legacy to Bill's heirs, but the work on it allowed a legacy of boatbuilding and woodworking skills to be passed on to Joe.

Joe, John and the other volunteers were on hand for the unveiling, as were Bill's son, Bill Friis, Jr., and members of

the Cambridge Rotary Club. Judy just completed a term as president of the Centreville Rotary Club, following in Bill Sr.'s very active footsteps with the organization, and Cambridge club members came out to the Boatworks to show their support for her.

We promised Judy that we would finish the skiff with the care and skill required to fulfill Bill's vision, maintaining a high standard in our work, said Newton. In the course of this, we were pleased to be able to pass on to young Joe a sense of the enthusiasm, skills and teamwork involved in boatbuilding. Joe is already inquiring about projects he can help with in the fall.

For more information, to volunteer or to make a contribution, contact the Richardson Maritime Museum at 410-221-1871, or visit its website, www.richardsonmuseum.org.

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The project allowed John Ericson, left, to teach his mentee, Joe Slaughter, traditional woodworking and boatbuilding skills, part of the mission of the Richardson Maritime Museum.