

# Longtime resident named official Historian Emeritus

**BY KAREN KLEIMANN**  
MANAGING EDITOR

For generations, residents interested in their forebears' first footsteps into Allendale and other history buffs intrigued with the borough's roots have turned to unofficial borough historian Patricia Webb Wardell to trace those connections to the past.

The long-time resident, having a strong family history of her own in the borough, was recognized as the official Allendale Historian Emeritus by way of proclamation at the March 14 Mayor and Council meeting.

Mayor Vince Barra said "it was long overdue."

One proclamation will be kept at Borough Hall and the other will be sent to Wardell, who now lives in Florida, with a letter from Barra surprising her with the honor.

The proclamation reads that Wardell grew up on Crescent Place in Allendale, in which the home was built by her grandfather, James Webb, in 1894. Her father, John Durie Webb, took his place on the borough council and was

president of it in 1948.

She married Walter Wardell and continued to live in the borough with their three children until she moved to Florida in the mid-90s.

When Hillside Elementary School was built in 1967 one thing missing was a library. With the help of the Junior Women's Club, Wardell created a "traveling library" for the school. Resident Marilyn Tackaberry said at the March meeting that her friend collected books and went to all the classrooms giving the children a chance to pick one out.

"She is a wonderful historian," Tackaberry said.

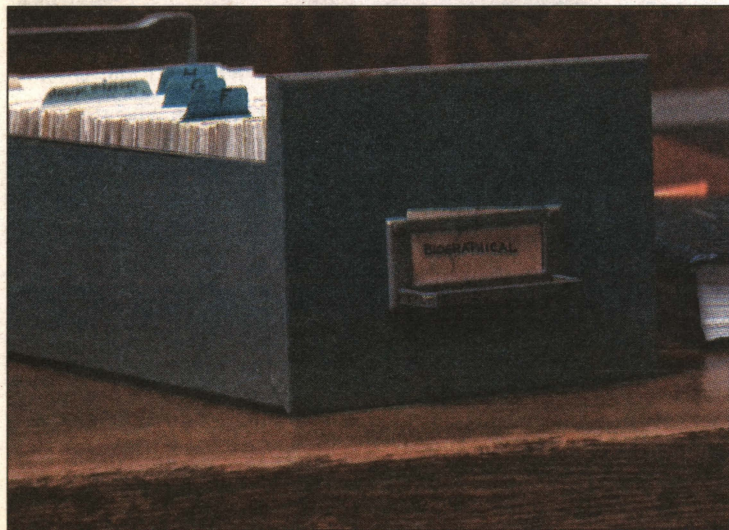
Through the years Wardell collected material about the borough in what would later become a book, "Allendale, Background of a Borough," published in 1994, which contained a "wealth of information" the proclamation reads, of the borough's history and its earliest families and businesses.

She spent 25 years collecting information from county records, obituaries, and census data and hand-typed them onto note cards,



KAREN KLEIMANN/TOWN JOURNAL

Longtime resident Pat Webb Wardell, who now lives in Florida, was honored as the Allendale Historian Emeritus at the March 14 Mayor and Council meeting via proclamation for her work in bringing the borough's history to light. Above, from left, Mayor Vince Barra, resident Marilyn Tackaberry and residents Ellie and Joanne Hart, holding the proclamation.



Author and former resident Pat Webb Wardell researched and published a book on Allendale's history and was recently honored as the borough Historian Emeritus.

resident Joanne Hart said.

Hart brought in Wardell's book, giving the audience an idea of how long and what went into putting the book together.

"In the front of the book is a chronological history by chapter," Hart said. "In the back of the book is a genealogy of every original family in Allendale."

Hart, who has worked with the borough Historical Society, of which Wardell is a founding organizer, said that since 2010, the two have been emailing information back and forth on not just Allendale history, but a background of Bergen County and all of its original families.

"I got a package today," she laughed, adding there are hundreds of pages of information.

Hart's daughter, Ellie, scanned the original "Allendale, Background of a Borough" for her Girl Scout Gold Award so there could be copies of it for the third-graders at Brookside School to do their project on the borough. As of the March meeting, the scanned book has been published and is now available for purchase.

Many generations haven't forgotten Wardell or her book, including Tackaberry, in which she shared that she was able to do a family history with the help of Wardell.

A third-grader, through her mom, publicly thanked Wardell for making her town's history available to her.

Nancy Greene, Allendale resident and Ridgewood Public Library Director, said Wardell's work will continue and she is "so grateful to Patty" for the work she's done.

"She has always been so involved in history," Tackaberry said. "People are still emailing her seeking help in finding their own relatives. Patty Wardell has done so much for Allendale."

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