

## The Soltz Property

Margery Black Soltz was born in Cleveland, but attended a one-room school at Richmond and Mayfield roads. She graduated from Cleveland Heights High School and, at 19, earned a bachelor's degree with Phi Beta Kappa honors at Flora Stone Mather College for Women of Western Reserve University. She worked as a social worker, then traveled to Europe in 1928. Her first plane ride was a flight over the English Channel to Paris.

The next year she married Alfred I. Soltz, a lawyer and real estate developer. They lived in Shaker Heights until 1956, then moved to Gates Mills. They built a beautiful mid-century modern home on the property designed by the renowned Cleveland architect, Robert Little. With its vaulted roofs, large plate-glass windows, open floor plan and a feeling of inviting nature in, their home was a perfect expression of their love for the pristine Gates Mills woods. Margery was concerned about the environment for many years. She extensively planted and managed her wooded land until she made the very first foundational gift to the Gates Mills Land Conservancy.

Prior to Alfred's death in 1978, plots of the Soltz property were sold for new houses along Gates Mills Boulevard, and they also donated land to St. Francis Church. At one time the large 14-acre tract of Soltz land was identified for potential housing to extend the Norvale development on the south of Gates Mills Boulevard northward. Fortunately, that planning did not proceed. Instead, Margery who believed strongly in conservation, donated the acreage to the Gates Mills Land Conservancy in 1989.

Mrs. Soltz, moved from Gates Mills in 1993 and passed away in 1998 at the age of 92. Today Margery's grandson Douglas Hyams lives in Gates Mills with his family. Margery's legacy lives on in the family's passion for the history of Gates Mills, and the preservation of the environment through conservation.

"My grandmother, Marge, was an inspiration to me. Her love and appreciation of nature and the beauty of Gates Mills is something that will forever remain within me. It is because of her I chose to spend the rest of my life here in beautiful Gates Mills."

- *Douglas Hyams*

The Gates Mills Land Conservancy is very grateful for Margery's foundational, landmark gift and for people like Margery, who's love of Gates Mills and conservation/preservation efforts that helped to preserve the natural habitats of our community.