

Gordon's affinity with the natural world began early in life. His favorite memories are of his uncle, a naturalist and a trustee of the Bronx Zoo, taking him to the Magnolia Swamp in Tallahassee and exploring the Florida Keys by boat. He also enjoyed summer vacations at his parents' house on Cape Cod. In both places Gordon spent hour after hour exploring, learning and developing a deep love for nature.

Although raised on Long Island and in Manhattan, he was always drawn to wilder places. Friends introduced Gordon and his wife Jean Hannon to the wooded hills around Pawling. In 1989 they bought the Pawling estate once owned by Dr. Ray. Their country home is tucked into a hillside overlooking Ray Lake, surrounded by forested uplands and wetlands in the Great Swamp.

His passion at that time was turtles! When he discovered turtles on his property he called Dr. Michael Klemens, Director of Conservation and the Turtle Recovery Program at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Klemens had done field work on the property when he was a student and was delighted to come...and continued to come up to the Douglas property every Sunday for many years.

In 1990, Gordon met with fellow citizens (Edie and Tom Keasbey, Sibyll Gilbert, and Marilyn Reed-Kelly) in Pawling and Patterson that were concerned about the environment. They formed an Advisory Committee to the Regional Plan Association's *The Great Swamp Conservation Plan*. At one meeting Friends of the Great Swamp or FrOGS, was born. Its mission was, "to conserve, protect and promote the functions, values and integrity of the Great Swamp and its watersheds in Putnam and Dutchess Counties, New York." He helped write the by-laws that shaped FrOGS into an educational and research focused organization and gain non-profit status.

Gordon posted a New Year's resolution on his refrigerator in 1997, vowing that he "would do something for the environment." That year he worked with Mae Greene and Dan Siemann to establish FrOGS' Great Swamp Art Show as a way to bring a wider public awareness of the value of the wetlands. The same year Hamilton Meserve, owner of the *Pawling News Chronicle*, invited Gordon to write a column about the environment. In researching topics, for his column "On the Wild Side" Gordon consulted experts, read books, attended lectures, searched the internet and hiked with naturalists in Pawling, the Arctic and the Galapagos. Illustrated with his wife Jean's sketches, he wrote about issues from backyard bears to global warming ...every week for 11 years! His passions had become education, science and conservation and he pursued them with vigor.

In 2000, Gordon wrote: "I urge that we do all we can to help protect the world's current biological diversity and critical habitat, so that we do not deny our descendants this heritage." He has practiced this in his everyday life in his own community. He was chairman of the Pawling Zoning Board, served on the Dutchess County Planning Board, the Pawling Conservation Advisory Board and the Advisory Board of Oblong Land Conservancy. In 2007, he received the Michael Ciaiola award for his public support of the environment.

Gordon helped create FrOGS, served as its chairman and vice chairman, was honored as a founder at its 25th Anniversary in 2015, forayed out on rainy evenings to monitor nesting turtles, and shared his wisdom and enthusiasm as a board member until earning emeritus status in 2018. He was a voice for the environment, discovering ways to engage the public in supporting its protection. As FrOGS has been honored by his contributions we wish to honor his work by dedicating this property to be known as the Gordon Douglas Nature Reserve. May it stay forever wild!