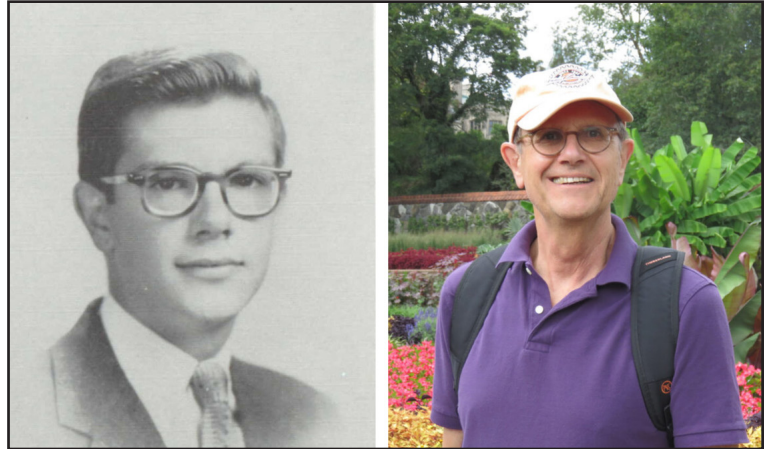


# Red Hook Roots Run Deep: James Hardin Bequest

By Thea Burgess, HRH President, February 7, 2023

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Those who knew James Budd Hardin understood he loved the Hudson Valley, especially Red Hook where he grew up. Jim's attachment to his hometown remained extremely strong although he lived in Washington, D.C., for 44 years. His Hudson Valley books were close at hand on a lower shelf of his bookcase in his living room, recalls his nephew Michael Hardin. Because Jim owned over 3,000 titles, this within-reach placement symbolizes how much he treasured our area. His connection to Red Hook is exemplified by the generous bequest he made to Historic Red Hook. Michael and his mother Teresa Marie Hardin and the widow of Jim's older brother, the late Peter Warner Hardin, recently visited the Elmendorph Inn and delivered a check for \$25,000, a gift from Jim to his hometown.



*James B. Hardin (1940-2022), who grew up in Red Hook, had a passion for his family history as well as Red Hook's. Left: Jim's Red Hook High School yearbook photo, class of '58. Right: Jim at the Biltmore Estate garden in Asheville, North Carolina, 2015. Photo by Judith Gray. You can read his obituary here and a tribute to him on the Library of Congress website..*



*Members of HRH's board met with James Hardin's nephew Michael and sister-in-law Teresa in December to accept the bequest of the late James Hardin and reminisce about the Hardin family's history in Red Hook. From left to right: Teresa Marie Hardin, Michael Hardin, Thea Burgess, and Claudine Klose.*



Left to right: James Budd Hardin, Mary Elmendorf (Budd) Hardin (1901-1991), and Peter Warner Hardin (1936-2020). Most likely taken in the Hardin house on Linden Avenue. The photo on the radio is Eugene Piester Budd (Pete & Jim's grandfather, 1871-1935). The photo of the woman is likely Mina Elmendorf (Potts) Budd (Pete and Jim's grandmother, 1874-1933).

The Hardin family has deep roots in Red Hook. Jim and Peter's mother was Mary Budd Hardin whose parents owned the Elmendorf-Budd Farm. Before her marriage, Mary kept a journal from her high school and early adult years, a transcript of which the Hardin family donated to Historic Red Hook. Mike marvels that his grandmother was born before the Wright Brothers' first flight and lived to see the astronauts' first landing on the moon. He relates Mary was always volunteering at the Inn and with the Friends of Elmendorph. She was, in fact, related to the Elmendorfs (also spelled Elmen-dorph) who were instrumental to the

first years of the Inn itself. That love of family, town, community, and history was passed down to Jim. His memorial, written by friends, states, "Jim spent his early childhood on the Elmendorf/Budd family farm in Red Hook, New York, as well as in Lima, New York, where his father worked as a traveling representative for the New York State Dairyman's League Cooperative. Jim returned to Red Hook in 1947 with his mother and brother after his father died unexpectedly. Although the farm had been sold by that time, the Hardin family lived in the house next door. Throughout his adult life, Jim would make frequent trips back to Red Hook to visit friends and see how things had changed (or in some cases, remained exactly the same)."

Jim sparked in his nephews an abiding interest in history through his enthusiasm for his career and his obvious passion for Red Hook and its role in their family history. After he graduated from Red Hook High School in 1958, Jim earned a degree in English from Colgate University and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English and American literature from Syracuse University. He served in the U.S. Army Intelligence Corps in Stuttgart, Germany, and was a sales representative for McGraw-Hill Book Company. Jim worked for 26 years for the Library of Congress, where he specialized in folklife publications and public information presentations. Jim's passions for the written word and for folklife were combined in his positions as the associated editor of the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, the editor of *Folklife Annual* and of *Folklife Center News*, and the author of *The American Folklife Center: An Illustrated Guide*, as well as numerous articles for other periodicals. Mike remembers his uncle Jim taking the family downstairs in the Library of Congress to show them the archived records, making a strong impression on his nephews. Both Michael and his brother Jeff, with help from other family members, are sorting through the many Elmen-dorf, Budd, and Hardin family papers and artifacts that Jim collected and preserved.

Jim remained connected to the Library of Congress after his retirement: volunteering as a Library docent. He also was an active member in his neighborhood as a member of the Capitol Hill Village, a

volunteer-based local organization that engages neighbors to build a vibrant, inclusive, and age-friendly community. Jim's abilities went beyond literature and writing; he sang and played the guitar and piano. He was a member of the Congressional Chorus, Lesbian and Gay Chorus of Washington, Capitol Hill Choral Society, Colgate Chapel Choir, and other singing ensembles, and he also performed at the Kennedy Center Honors.

Jim Hardin's name brings smiles to those who grew up with him and his family here in Red Hook. While he lived and worked for decades in Washington, D.C., making his mark on his profession, in his neighborhood, and among his friends and colleagues, and while he considered Washington his home, he also knew he had a first home: Red Hook. We at Historic Red Hook like to think we shared our Jim with those friends who live in the D.C. area. Jim's memorial states, "Jim wanted to be remembered for his two defining characteristics, his sense of humor and his curiosity." We at Historic Red Hook respectfully offer up two more: his generosity toward, and love for, his hometown. We thank you, Jim.



*Left to right: Jeff Hardin, Peter Hardin, Michael Hardin and Jim Hardin.  
Taken April 9, 2011, in Florida.*