

BARBARA WILK

'New York cowgirl' succumbs to cancer

By Robert Nott
The New Mexican

Visual artist Barbara Wilk, who divided her time between Santa Fe and Westport, Conn., died April 2 in Connecticut after a long battle with cancer, according to her husband, writer Max Wilk. She was 84.

Wilk also worked as a film animator, educator and arts activist.

"She was such a talented woman," Max Wilk said by phone Friday. "I loved her, but I loved her talent as much as I loved her."

Her husband said she continued to make art until the end of last year, and her last public exhibition took place last autumn in Westport.

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MAX WILK, husband of late artist Barbara Wilk

hattan, once described herself as "a New York cowgirl." She graduated from Smith College in Northampton, Mass., in 1944 and worked for a time as an editor for United Press International before enrolling in the Arts Students League of New York. She then moved to Europe, where she studied at the Fernand Leger Atelier in Paris.

She worked mostly in oils but turned to printmaking about 10 years ago. In June of 2000, she had an exhibition of prints based

on Western movie lobby cards at the Jean Cocteau Cinema in Santa Fe.

"She had wonderful enthusiasm and adored traveling," said her friend, Madelon Hedden of Santa Fe. "She went to all sorts of places that nobody else would go to. Her last trip, I think, was to Petra (the ancient archaeological site in Jordan)."

Hedden said Wilk worked with Save the Children to develop a program called "Eyes on the Future" that brought eye

doctors and glasses to Navajo reservations in Arizona and New Mexico.

In a January issue of *Pasatiempo*, Wilk recalled meeting Pablo Picasso in the South of France in the late 1940s. "He was strange — he was a clown," she recalled. "He did a drawing for me that, as I was driving through the Alps, flew out the window of my car and disappeared into the mountains. I have regretted that to this day."

In addition to her husband, Wilk is survived by her sons, David Wilk of Weston, Conn., and Richard Wilke of Bloomington, Ind., a daughter, Mary Frances Begaye of Tuba City, Ariz., and seven grandchildren.

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