



WILLIS AND LOREE ELLIOT

Gale Sloan Photo

The Elliots build a "forever" home

By Gale Sloan

One enters the building and is immediately bathed in sunlight. Two full stories of large windows facing the southeast illuminate the high oak beamed ceilings. The size, strength and simplicity of the structure are slightly overwhelming, but at the same time inviting.

This is the home of Loree and Willis Elliot, two of Barnstable's newest residents. The home is a reflection of the Elliots' spiritual beliefs, a material affirmation of the strong convictions Loree and Willis Elliot have maintained throughout their lives.

The Elliots first came to the Cape in 1966 upon invitation of the late Pierre Vuilleumier to have Willis preach at the Craigville Tabernacle. They then returned to their home in Chapaqua, New York and to various preaching, teaching, writing, counseling and retreat activities.

It was their younger son, Mark, who now lives in Boston, who gave his parents an Alex Wade book on architectural design in 1978. Willis and Loree were intrigued with Wade's designs and proceeded to seek him out in his Woodstock, New York home.

Willis describes Wade as an "architectural mystic" with whom he and Loree were very impressed. When Wade realized the type of structure the Elliots desired, a huge post and beam home, he recommended David Howard of

New Hampshire. One of Howard's specialties is working on stress as it relates to heavy structures, explained Loree. "He is also noted," added Willis, "for his unique braces." So, it was Howard who designed the Elliot's house.

Willis Elliot, a bearded, wiry, vibrant person, has done much writing, has taught Hebrew and Greek in three graduate schools, was a minister for 10 years, has participated in Vatican conferences, has counseled and led various retreats, is a consultant to News Week, travels to Manhattan once a month ("Loree sees to it that our trips coincide with a concert of the Philharmonic," he says) to work in New York Theological Libraries, and on and on.

But he has never built a house before.

These past eight months "have back defined me as house builder," says Elliot, and that Loree "has been full partner all the way in everything, including timber hauling."

The kitchen was designed by Loree and includes a skylight. "I was so surprised one evening last week," she says. "The moonlight was shining in from above. It was beautiful!"

The Elliots worked along with the architects and builders throughout the building of the 2800 square foot structure whose frame is almost 40 tons of red oak.

"It will last a thousand years,"

was the prediction of the late Pierre Vuilleumier on his last visit with the Elliots.

The durability of the building is perhaps its most vital aspect to the Elliots. As Willis phrases it: "How spiritual, in for me a fresh way, to strike this blow in defiance of decay."

"New England used to be known for its sturdiness," says Elliot. "This place is a statement made for permanence rather than change."

Loree, who has had much experience in counseling the elderly and terminally ill, plans on becoming involved in some work of that type in the Barnstable community. Willis, with several offers from publishing companies, expects to do a lot more writing in his new abode.

The Elliots also will be holding retreats in their home.

The house is located in Craigville "where most of the buildings are rickety old white-clapboard Victorian with charming exterior-interior brica-brac and a few years left to run out toward the Second Coming," says Willis.

"We are saying yes to this little Christian community," Willis adds. "Our building affirms the continuity of Christian community in general, and the worth and future of this one in particular."