



## Living Large: Wilna Hervey and Nan Mason

**Joseph P. Eckhardt**

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*Travel, art, friendship, love—these are the things that made these two women's lives full, and Eckhardt shares their story with admiration and depth.*

Everything about them was large: their size, their bold personalities, their zest for living life, and their love for one another. In *Living Large*, Joseph P. Eckhardt follows the journey of Wilna Hervey, a silent-screen actress, and her partner, Nan Mason, as they travel the country and settle down together in the artist's enclave of Woodstock, New York. In an endearing portrayal, he shows how the two women made the world around them a brighter place.

Eckhardt, author of *The King of Movies: Film Pioneer, Siegmund Lubin* and *So Bravely and So Well: The Life and Art of William T. Rego*, shows his knowledge and love of both art and film history in this wonderful dual biography of two women who refused to let society dictate what they should do. Born into a wealthy family, Wilna Hervey gained popularity in silent films playing "The Powerful Katrinka" in the Toonerville Trolley comedies. At six feet three inches and 350 pounds, she made an impression everywhere she went. But it was Dan Mason, her Toonerville costar, and his six-foot daughter, Nan, who made the biggest impression on Wilna. Over the next six decades, she and Nan would build nationally recognized art careers and live a life full of travel, friends, art, adventure, and most of all, love.

Wilna and Nan lived a pretty haphazard life, flitting from one coast to another and trying out numerous professions, but Eckhardt's biography is well organized and packed with 180 black-and-white and color photographs that illustrate their life and artwork. With seven years of in-depth research and writing into this project, his affection for his subjects is palpable, making the two women seem to the reader like long-lost friends. Wilna and Nan are worth getting to know, and anyone with a taste for biographies, but especially those with an interest in art, film history, or the LGBT community, will find this an enjoyable and heartwarming read.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (Summer 2015)

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