



2026

# Remember ME

Photography Exhibit &  
Recognition Ceremony

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# Thank you

The Maine Health Care Association is pleased to present the 2026 Remember ME program. This year’s nominations were all very strong and it made judging a particularly challenging task. In reviewing the entries, the judges were asked to consider first and foremost, the resident’s personal story and how it is significant or how the resident has overcome adversity. Secondary to the life story, judges also took into consideration age, gender, geography, past facility participation, and adherence to nomination criteria in making their decisions.

Given the importance of each and every nominee’s lifetime achievements, the judges were compelled to honor thirty individuals in the exhibit, while presenting others with Honorable Mention Awards. The Maine Health Care Association presented certificates to all and would like to thank the following judges for their time and expertise:

### **Outside Agency Judges**

Denise Vachon  
Member Services and Government Affairs  
Leading Age, Maine & New Hampshire

### **MHCA Board Judge**

Jason Moore  
Director of Strategic Operations, New England  
National Health Care Associates

### **Staff Judge**

Maureen Carland  
Director of Quality Improvement & Regulatory Affairs  
Maine Health Care Association

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# Howard Baker

High View Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, Madawaska



Howard was born in 1947 in Ohio, where his life story began with resilience and courage that would define him for decades to come. At just 17 years old, he enlisted in the United States Navy in 1964, serving honorably for four years. During his time in the service, Howard faced multiple near-death experiences that tested both his strength and his faith. He contracted tuberculosis and nearly lost his life. In another incident, a 100-pound metal hatch fell on his head, causing him to lose his memory for two years, yet even then, he continued to serve. After leaving the Navy, Howard moved to Rhode Island. He married and became a father to three children: Regina, Howard Jr., and Vern. Howard soon began a career in cross-country trucking, a job that suited his adventurous spirit. While traveling through Kansas, Howard survived an extraordinary ordeal when a tornado lifted his truck and carried it nearly a mile. When it finally came down, all that remained was the driver's seat and steering wheel. He spent a week in the hospital, where people from across the state came to meet the man they called "The Miracle Man" due to all the near-death experiences he had been through.

Sometime after he divorced and met his current wife, Barbra. They married in 1986 and made their home in Allagash, Maine. Some years later, tragedy struck when Howard lost his son, Howard Jr., in a heartbreaking accident when he was 15. Howard Jr. had gone out sledding with his friends and, unfortunately, was struck by a vehicle. When their son died, it was their faith in God that carried them through the great loss. They ministered for 17 years at Agape Church in Fort Kent. In 2010, Howard faced another battle when complications from asbestosis, caused by his military service, led to organ failure. Once again, he survived. Even as Alzheimer's later touched his life, Howard remains the caring, selfless man he has always been. Today, he continues to find strength in God, music, singing, and prayer. Known for helping anyone in need, Howard's life is a testament to perseverance, faith, and a heart devoted to others. He embodies strength and courage despite his battles and his stories. His kindness will forever leave a mark on this world.

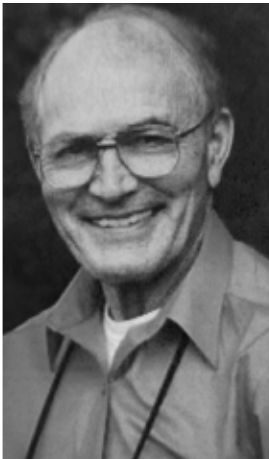
*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

# Dean Bennett

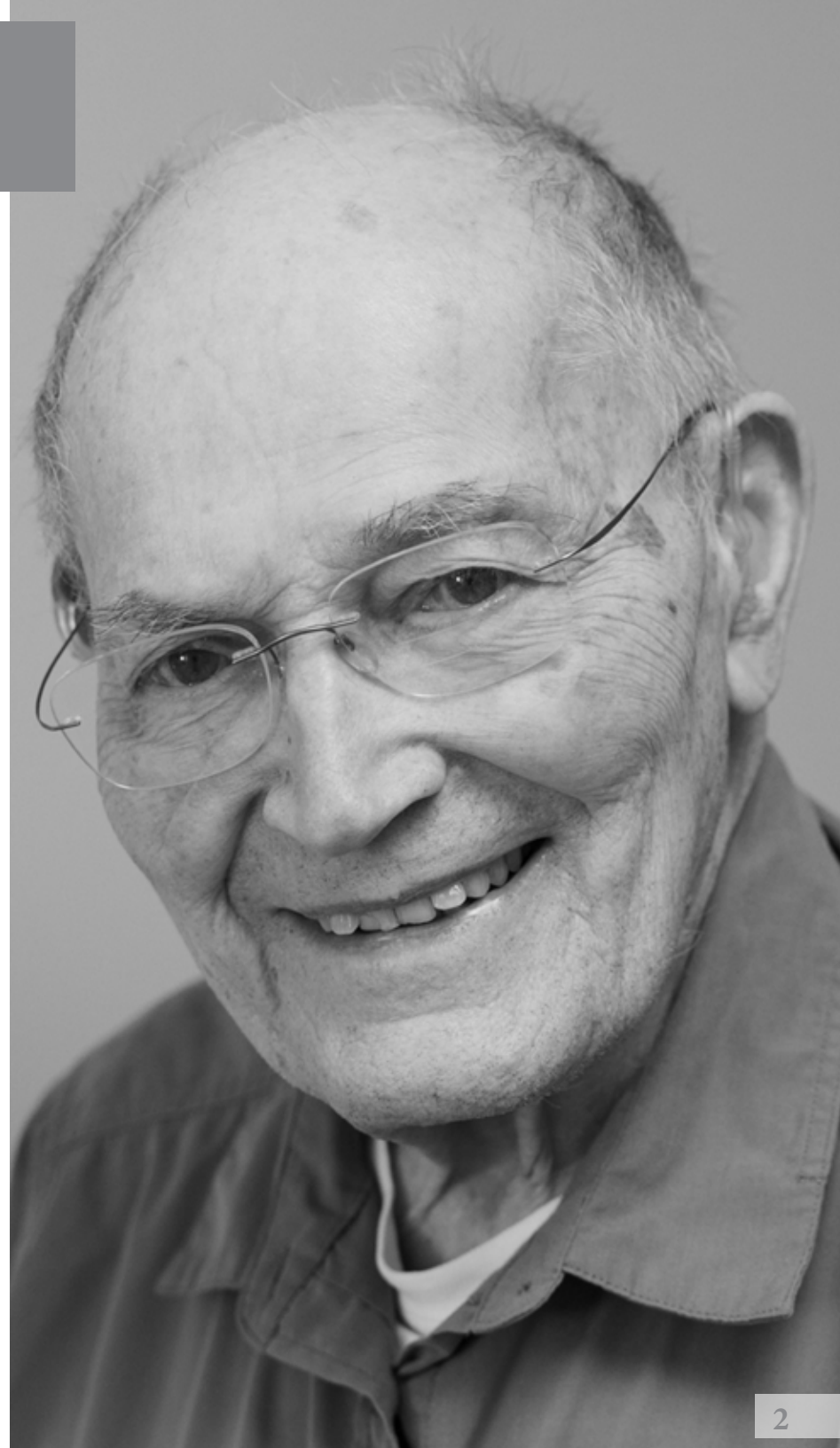
Market Square Health Care Center, South Paris

Dean Bennett, a 9th generation Mainer from western Maine, is husband to the love of his life, Sheila, a father of two, grandfather and a passionate preservationist of Maine's great outdoors. Dean graduated high school from Gould Academy in Bethel, and went on to receive his Journeyman's certificate in cabinet making and architectural millwork. Dean loves hunting, canoeing, hiking, playing music, and writing many books. Dean's passion to be a voice for protection of wilderness and conservation in Maine is longstanding. He was a member of an organization called Citizens to Protect the Allagash, that took great strides to protect the north Maine woods and protect the Allagash wilderness waterway, keeping it wild and scenic. His passion for conservation led him to expand his education, earning many degrees including a PhD in Resource Planning and Conservation. Dean's career spans teaching in public schools, and many years as a professor of science and education at the University of Maine at Farmington, earning the title of Professor Emeritus.

Over Dean's lifetime he has written and illustrated many books, including three children's books. Some include *Maine Dirigo "I Lead"*, which was used as a text book in Maine middle schools for several years. He also wrote *Allagash: Maine's Wild and Scenic River*. In 2021, at 86 years old he wrote and illustrated a book called *Thoreau's Maine Woods: A Legacy for Conservation*. He has co-authored books with his wife Sheila, including *The Wild Heart of Maine: Exploring Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, Baxter State Park, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway* (January 2026). In Dean's down time, he enjoys deer hunting at his family camp which led to the publication of the book *Ghost Buck: The Legacy of One Man's Family and its Hunting Traditions*. This year was his 39th year hunting with his kids at the family camp. Dean also plays banjo in his family band called "The Crank Telephone Company Dixie Land Band," the name coming from the last hand-cranked telephone system in America, owned by his Aunt and Uncle. Currently Dean resides at Market Square Health Care Center spending time with his wife, writing books, and sharing his knowledge with his fellow residents, leading and teaching educational programs.



Photography by Sarah Labonte, Westbrook





# Norman Blomquist

Maine Veterans' Homes, Bangor

Born on June 25, 1932, in Embden, Maine, Norman Allen Blomquist grew up as one of twelve children in a hardworking family. Independence came early to Norman, shaped by rural life and parents who modeled grit, faith, and perseverance. These traits would define a lifetime of service lived largely without fanfare.

In 1950, Norman enlisted in the United States Navy, embarking on a military career that would span more than 20 years. Trained as a Navy Corpsman, he later served as an in-flight surgeon's assistant—one of the most dangerous medical roles in combat. His service took him to Korea, Vietnam, and throughout Europe, where he worked under fire to stabilize wounded Marines and soldiers, often in helicopters or makeshift surgical environments. Norman was wounded by shrapnel on three separate occasions, sustaining injuries to his back, leg, and neck that would impact him for the rest of his life, including significant vision loss.

Among the memories he carried most closely was caring for a young Korean boy during the war, offering protection and comfort amid chaos. Decades later, that boy—now a man—tracked Norman down to thank him, a reunion that affirmed the lasting power of compassion even in wartime.

Norman's service was recognized with numerous honors, including three Purple Hearts, five Good Conduct Medals, the Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, Vietnam Service and Campaign Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Meritorious Vietnam Cross of Gallantry. He also trained as an X-ray technician, continuing his lifelong commitment to healing. Later in life, Norman experienced a rare second-chance love story, reconnecting with his high school sweetheart, Doris, at a class reunion when both were in their seventies. They reside together at Maine Veterans' Homes in Bangor, where Norman remains active in music, games, and social activities. Known for his kindness, quiet humor, and deep faith, Norman Blomquist's legacy is not only one of heroism, but of humanity—proof that true bravery often shows up quietly, does the work, and leaves a lasting mark on countless lives.



*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

# Nina Bohlen

Avita of Brunswick

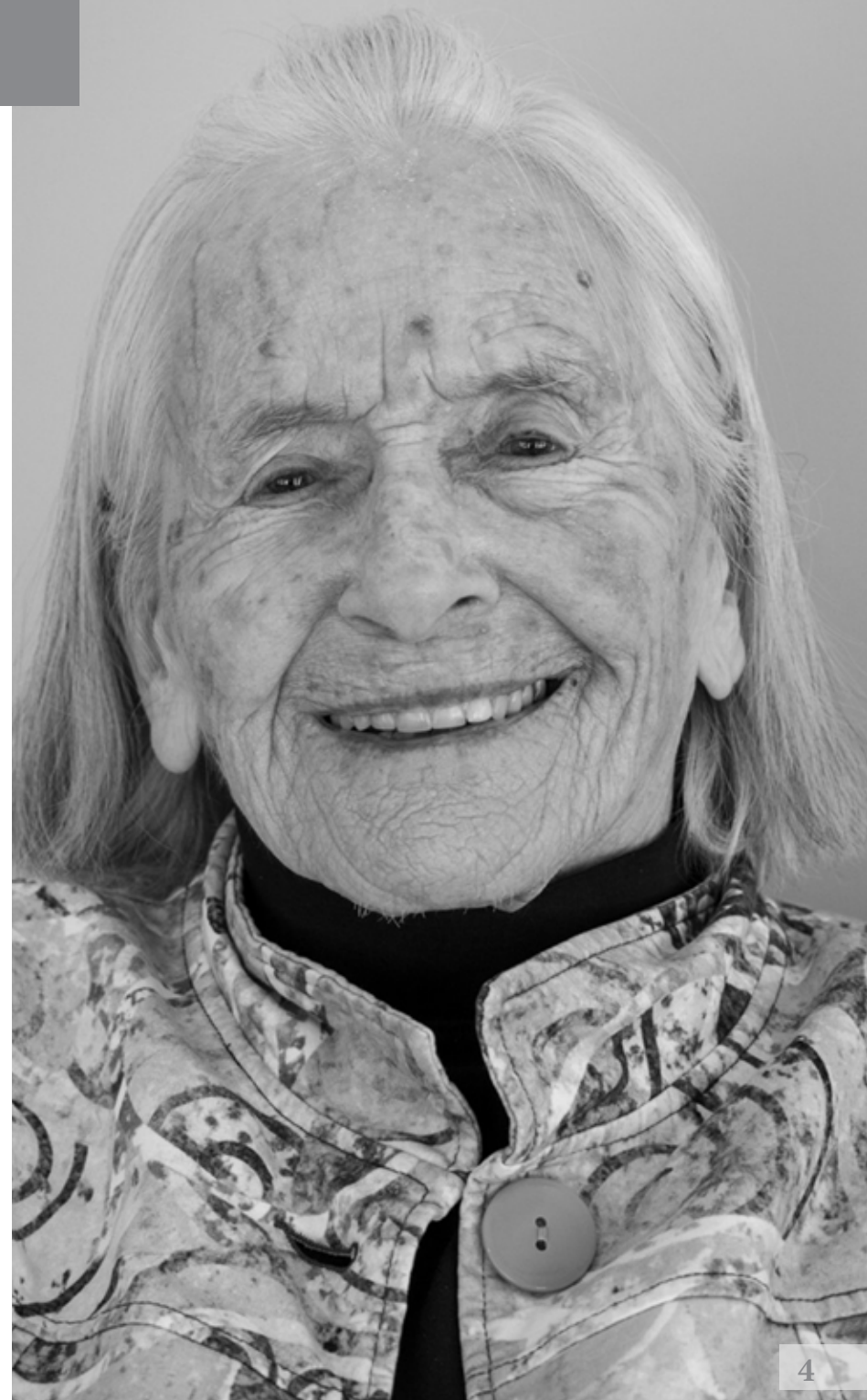
Nina Bohlen, born in 1931, is a beloved artist and cherished member of the Lubec community. Nina came to the small coastal town at the age of five and deepened her connection to the area as she grew older. Her love for Lubec became a lifelong source of inspiration for her—one she later shared with her husband, artist Hyman Bloom, whom she met and studied with while attending Radcliffe College.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Radcliffe, Nina joined Hyman as a member of the Boston Expressionist movement, becoming one of the few women associated with the group. Throughout her artistic career, Nina drew deeply from the natural world she experienced in Lubec—the woods, animals, ocean, and surrounding landscape. Since 1957, her work has been shown at notable institutions including the Danforth Museum, the Boston Public Library, the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, the L.C. Bates Museum, and the Tides Institute and Museum of Art in Eastport, Maine. Nina's achievements extend well beyond her exhibition history. She received an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in New York and was named an Artist in Residence at the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France. Most recently, an art studio was named in her honor at the Tides Institute and Museum of Art, where she served for many years on the Board of Trustees and played a vital role in developing and supporting the Artist in Residence Program. The Tides Institute is also home to the portable etching press designed by Nina's husband for her—one she often carried into nature to create work en plein air (create work outdoors).

Nina was also a dedicated educator, teaching classes and workshops in Maine and Massachusetts, and she mentored many private students. Beyond the visual arts, she was an accomplished musician and became a yoga instructor in the early 1960s. Today Nina is a beloved member of the Lubec community, where she is known for her kindness, sense of fun, and loving, accepting presence, which is felt by people of all ages. When asked how she wished to be remembered, Nina replied that she hopes to be known as “a good artist,” adding, “I've always loved Lubec.”



*Photography by Sarah Labonte, Westbrook*



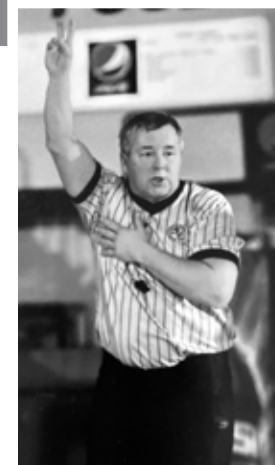


# Rodney “Rocky” Buck

MaineGeneral Rehabilitation & Long Term  
Care at Glenridge, Augusta

Rodney “Rocky” Buck was born on November 22, 1952, in Waterville and raised in Fairfield, Maine, where neighbors knew each other and Friday night games mattered.

All along, Rocky loved two things most: people and sports. By the time he reached Lawrence High, those loves blended into one. Whether it was football, basketball, or baseball, Rocky wasn't just playing, he was leading. As a three-sport varsity athlete and co-captain of all three teams his senior year in 1971 at Lawrence High School, he had a way of pulling teammates together and making everyone feel like they belonged. After playing college basketball at the University of Maine at Augusta and serving in the Army Reserves, Rocky came back to Fairfield to coach freshman football, wanting to give back to the area that shaped him. In 1973, Rocky married his high school sweetheart, Marcia. More than fifty years later, they are still side by side, having built a family that included two sons, six grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.



Rocky spent 44 years at Huhtamaki, but his real life's work happened after hours. He coached, refereed, organized, and volunteered, always making sure kids had a place to play and someone who believed in them. For 30 years, he ran youth baseball for SAD49, shaping generations of players. In 2020, the field at the Dick McGee Complex was renamed the “Rocky Buck Field,” a living reminder of all whose lives he touched. Rocky also gave decades to officiating, serving on the Waterville Football Officials Board and the Central Maine IAABO Basketball Board for over 30 years. He refereed many state championship games. His lifelong dedication to youth and high school sports earned him induction into both the Cal Ripken Hall of Fame and the Lawrence High School Hall of Fame.

Even in retirement, Rocky kept moving, playing pickleball, volunteering at the Fairfield Interfaith Food Pantry, enjoying the Celtics and Red Sox, and traveling with Marcia. Rocky's life has never been about trophies, it's been about people, and the community he's spent a lifetime lifting up.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*

# Urban Coombs

Pinnacle Health & Rehab at Sanford

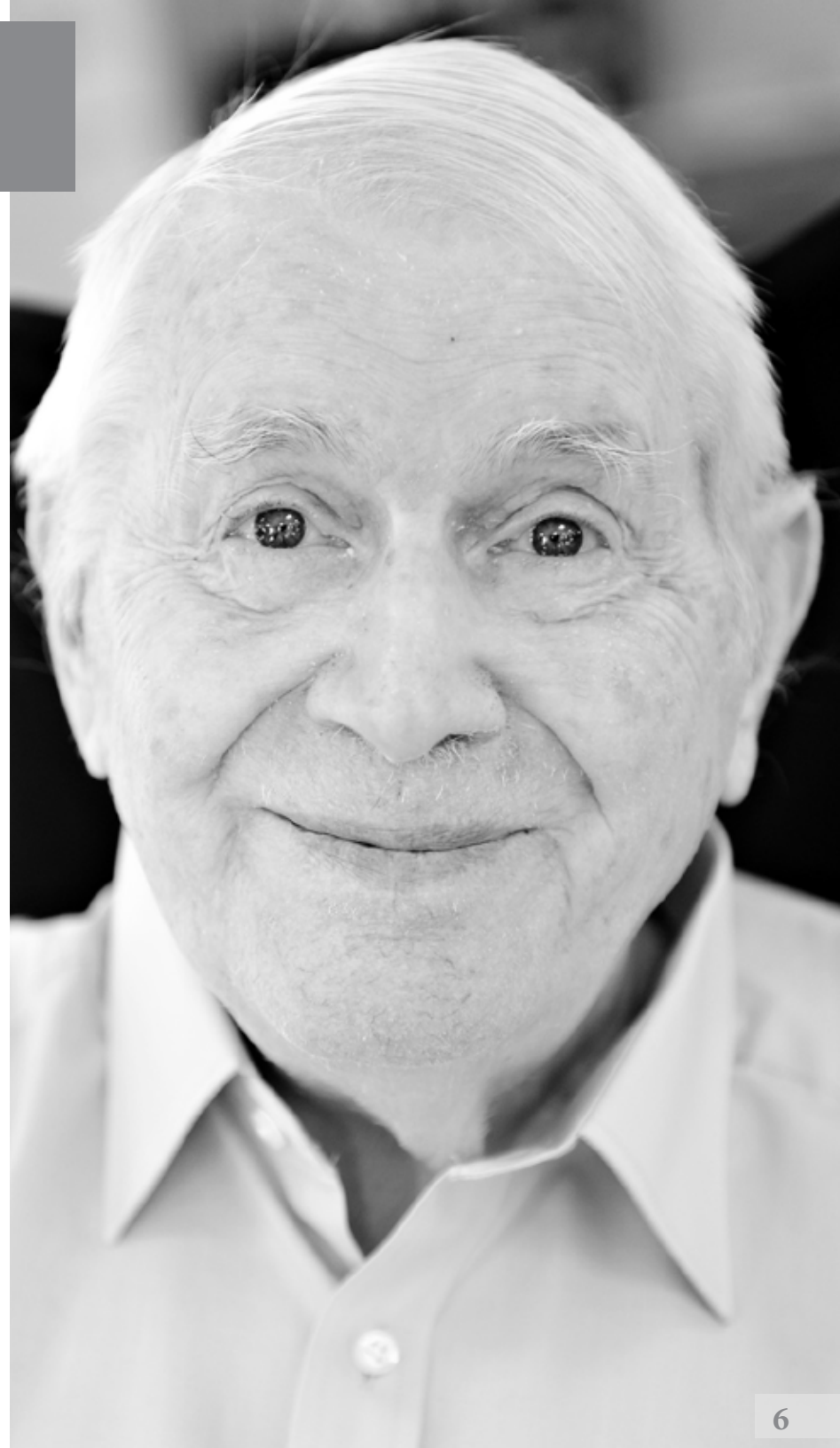
Urban Russel Coombs' life reflects a rich blend of family devotion, creativity, community involvement, and Maine heritage. Born on October 6, 1932, in Bucksport, Maine, Urban grew up in a close-knit household with his parents and two brothers, Warren and Bruce, learning responsibility, perseverance, and the value of imagination. As a young man, Urban worked alongside his father, Urban Harry Coombs, at their family-owned sawmill in Bucksport, built by his father. Together they logged timber, hauled it from the woods, and transformed it into usable lumber, supporting the community and strengthening the bond between father and son. Later, Urban worked at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford as a welder dedicated to craftsmanship for 40 years. Urban and his wife, Marion have been together for 73 years, raising three children, Candice, Harry, and Caroline. Although Caroline has passed away, Candice and Harry visit often, share lunch, conversation, and their cherished ritual of enjoying a can of Moxie, Urban's favorite drink.

In the 1990s Urban authored and illustrated three books, *The Wonders of Willie the Wizard* (1993), *Magical Tales about Willie the Wizard* (1994), *The Miraculous World of Willie the Wizard* (1996). A lifelong reader, Urban has read the Bible cover to cover and has a deep appreciation for poetry, rhythm, and rhyming language. He has written over 50 poems. Although due to hand limitations making writing difficult, he continues to create poetry verbally, often entertaining others with spontaneous verses. Urban enjoys painting and drawing, preferring colored pencils, and frequently contributes to group art projects. Urban composed numerous pieces for the piano, and although he no longer plays, his creative spirit continues to shine. He also served as President of the Sanford Art Association, a role that highlighted his leadership and deep commitment to his community.



Known for his honesty and independent thinking, Urban has always been open about the fact that he did not serve in the military, describing his decision as one rooted in deep personal conviction. His life is defined by his devotion to family, community, creativity, and culture, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who has known him.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*





# Dawn Degenhardt

Enclave of Scarborough

Dawn grew up in Portland, one of five children. After graduating Portland High School, she worked for the US Government in France for two years with the Superintendent of American Schools. She then moved to Cleveland for work, where she met her husband, Edwin, affectionately known as Hunk, through a blind date. They married a year later.



After struggling with infertility, Dawn and Hunk began the process of adoption, adopting two children. When they were told there weren't any other children awaiting adoption, and knowing that couldn't be accurate, they went about creating a new adoption agency, Maine Adoption Placement Services. Dawn and Hunk established agencies in 14 countries, placing thousands of children worldwide. The hardest country to break into was post-Cold War Russia. They started the first successful adoption agency in the country. One memorable adoption that stands out is a girl who had no hands or legs; they thought they'd never find a family for her, but they did. She ended up graduating with a master's degree in social work. Dawn stayed in contact with a good number of families throughout the years.

In 1988, Dawn was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The cancer spread throughout her body, and she was given 6 months to live. She worked with doctors from Japan and Germany, going through many types of treatments. Despite all this, through sheer determination, she continued her work with her adoption organization while also raising 9 teenagers. Today, Dawn is cancer free, and she "definitely believes in miracles."

Through her mission to revolutionize adoption, Dawn received numerous awards for her service, including the Jackie Kennedy Onassis award, Child Advocate of the Year, and Congressional Angels in Adoption Award. Former Governor Angus King, who has adopted children himself, even proclaimed June 22 as Dawn Degenhardt Day. Today, Dawn continues to foster a sense of community and goodwill with all she meets.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*

# Richard Doiron

Maine Veterans' Homes, Scarborough

Dr. Richard G. Doiron, PhD, grew up in a Gold Star family. His father, Gilbert J. Doiron, was killed in action on October 31, 1941, when the destroyer USS Reuben James (DD-245) was torpedoed by a Nazi submarine. Richard was not yet two years old and grew up never having known his father, but his sacrifice shaped the course of his life and instilled in him a deep sense of patriotism, duty, and service to others. Richard volunteered for the United States Army out of a profound respect for his country and the legacy of his father, entering active duty on January 5, 1968, and was assigned as a psychologist at Ireland Army Hospital at Fort Knox, Kentucky. There, he worked with returning combat Vietnam War veterans suffering from severe psychological and physical trauma. His role was critical in helping these men process their experiences and prepare to reenter civilian life after unimaginable hardships. Richard was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and was honorably discharged with the rank of Captain on December 16, 1969. While his military service was significant, it was only the beginning of a lifetime devoted to caring for veterans.

After returning to Maine, Richard dedicated his professional career to serving veterans as a civilian psychologist. In addition to having a private practice until retirement, Richard also served as Chief Psychologist from 1987-2000 at Maine Medical Center in Portland. During this time, he earned his Diplomate from the American Board of School Neuropsychologists, one of the highest certifications and most honorable in his field. Remarkably, his final patient before retirement had served in Vietnam, just as many of his earliest patients had.

In a powerful and symbolic way, Richard's life came full circle: his professional journey began with caring for combat veterans and ended the same way. From growing up as the son of a fallen hero to dedicating his life to helping those who served, raising a family with his wife Judith in Scarborough, Maine, Dr. Richard G. Doiron's story is one of sacrifice, healing, and unwavering devotion to America's veterans.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*



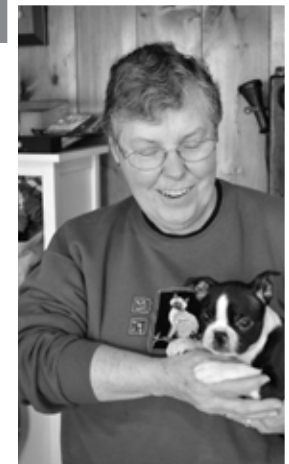


# Roberta Fowler

Colonial Health Care, Lincoln

Roberta Fowler, born on January 12, 1943, grew up in Old Town, Maine. She attended the University of Maine, where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in 1965 and her Master of Science degree in 1966, and was inducted into the All Maine Women Honor Society.

Roberta dedicated 37 years to teaching Physical Education and Health at Orono High School. In addition to teaching, Roberta coached multiple women's varsity teams at Orono High School, including basketball, softball, volleyball, and also was cheer-leading advisor. Her dedication to encouraging the growth of girls resulted in her being named the Penobscot Valley Coach of the Year in 1970, and in 2015 she was inducted into the Orono High School Hall of Fame. While teaching, Roberta was dedicated to her community as well, serving as a member of the Old Town City Council for nine years and on the Old Town School Board for six years. She was a chair person for each Old Town City Council and Old Town School Boards for two years. Roberta was also the first woman to be accepted into the Old Town/Orono Kiwanis.



Her kindness extended to the four legged within her community too. In 1991 Roberta and 14 others took over the Old Town/Orono Animal Orphanage. Over time, they turned the shelter into a beautiful facility that adopters would travel from hours away to adopt from. The orphanage was a no-kill shelter and took in only stray animals but on occasion would take in animals being surrendered from senior citizens.

Roberta's life did slow down a little in 2015 after she was diagnosed with colon cancer. She underwent chemotherapy and radiation therapy, and within six months, she resumed her active routine. Now retired from her previous busy schedule, Roberta is enjoying her time at Colonial Health Care. She had stated to residents and staff members that she chose Colonial Health Care because of the facilities she toured, it was the cleanest, friendliest and offered a full activity calendar. Roberta now enjoys giving a helping hand with events put on throughout the year at Colonial Health Care.

*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

# Clayton Giggey

Woodlawn Rehabilitation & Nursing Center,  
Skowhegan

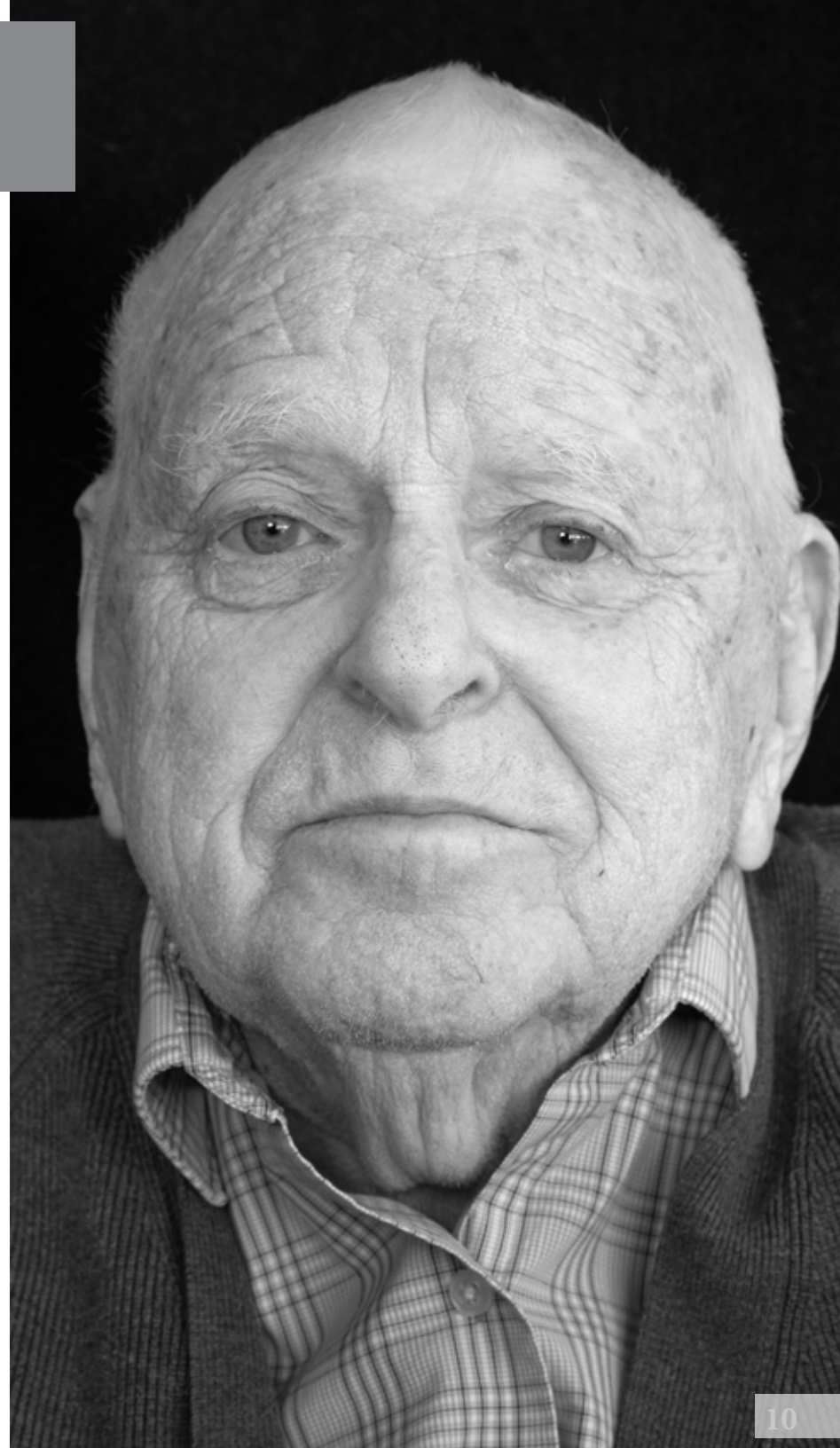
Clayton “Buddy” Giggey was born on a farm in Montville, Maine, where he learned the value of hard work from an early age. An outdoorsman, he loved to hunt and fish near Frye Mountain, but he also dedicated time to his community. He served in various civic leadership roles, from plowing snow to serving as a Montville Selectman, while also acting as a member of the Freedom Grange and leader of the local Masonic lodge in Thorndale. However his most enduring legacy stems from a harrowing plane crash in 1965, which has an attention-getting ending that surprised everyone.

Buddy Giggey and two friends Roger Drew and Milford Downer remained close friends after graduating from Freedom Academy. They often explored Maine together, sometimes joined by Roger’s uncle, Laurel Drew. On Labor Day in 1965, the four men took to the skies in a vintage 1946 Stinson Voyager for a scenic flight over the Penobscot Bay. Mid-flight, a loud snap rang out—a sharp, crackling sound like a gunshot. The fabric covering of the plane’s fuselage had begun peeling away, severely compromising the aircraft. As the plane lost altitude, the pilot searched for an emergency landing spot in Castine. The descent was harrowing: the plane clipped trees, hit power lines, and crashed into a field. The impact, documented by the FAA, was severe and violent, flipping the plane upside down and driving the engine into the fuselage. Despite the danger of leaking fuel, downed wires and an imminent explosion, good samaritans pulled the men to safety just moments before the wing tanks ignited. All men survived, but Buddy suffered the worst trauma: broken hips, a shattered arm, requiring multiple surgeries and a grueling recovery, supported by his wife, Punkey.



About 40 years after the accident, Buddy’s son Mike was working in Castine when he struck up a conversation about the event. To his astonishment, a local man said he had the plane’s propeller. Without hesitation, he gave it to Mike, who brought it home to the Montville farmstead. The returned propeller, once a part of a near tragedy, became a powerful symbol of heroism and survival.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine,  
West Gardiner*





# Joyce Hardy

Inn at Atlantic Heights, Saco

Major Joyce M. Hardy was born to Hazel and Eastman J. Hardy on April 7, 1937 in Nashua, NH. During her senior year of high school, Major Joyce M. Hardy was chosen to participate in an IBM pilot program. While this was a pivotal opportunity Joyce's faith called her to become a Salvation Army Officer. She graduated from a two-year program of the Salvation Army's Training School (Bronx, NY) in 1962.



Joyce was commissioned and served at the Binghamton (NY) Citadel Corps and the Buffalo (NY) West Side Temple Corps and absolutely "fell in love" with the lifestyle of officership. For nearly fifteen years, she was appointed at the Salvation Army Stuyvesant Treatment Center in Lower-Manhattan, which served as transitional housing for women undergoing interpersonal growth, substance use treatment, and employment skill building upon release from prison. Following this appointment, she ministered to female inmates at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and Rikers Island. Other appointments included the Anthony Residence in New York City, Booth Hospital Unwed Mother & Baby Home (Cincinnati OH), The Catherine Booth Home & Hospital (Cincinnati, OH) Divisional League of Mercy Secretary for New Jersey, and Divisional Women's Ministries Secretary for Southwest Ohio and Kentucky. During her final appointment, prior to retirement, she spent three weeks cooking for and ministering to emergency responders at the mobile canteen mere steps from "the pit" at ground zero after 9/11.

Post retirement, Joyce continued to serve others in many capacities in the Lancaster (PA) region, including seven years as chaplain for a retirement community, manager of a B&B and head of the Lancaster Citadel Corps Community Care Ministries team. Since moving to Maine in 2020, Joyce has participated in and served others through programs at the Old Orchard Beach Citadel Corps, and is finding new opportunities as a resident of the Inn at Atlantic Heights in Saco.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*

# Rosemary Hede

Maine Veterans' Homes, Caribou

Rosemary Spix Hede will celebrate her 101st birthday this year, and her story reflects more than a century of kindness, generosity, and quiet leadership.

Rosemary proudly supported World War II, living and working on a military base where she performed transcription work, contributing in important ways to the operations supporting our nation's service members. Her husband served in the United States Navy, and Rosemary has been a devoted member of the American Legion Auxiliary for many years.

Education and learning are central to Rosemary's life. She could read before she started school and was known for her exceptional abilities from a young age. Later in life, Rosemary learned how to create Braille books for the blind, focusing especially on math books that were desperately needed, spending countless hours producing these materials so others could have access to education and independence. Rosemary also volunteered weekly at the Adult Multiple Alternative Center in Caribou, reading to adults who were unable to read on their own. Rosemary also played a significant role in preserving local history. She helped compile historical summaries for New Sweden and Stockholm, Maine, was one of the first members of the Stockholm Historical Society, assisted in establishing the museum, and typed the entire book on Stockholm's history. She also helped organize and support the annual Midsommar celebration in New Sweden for many years.

Family and community were always priorities. She was active in the PTA throughout her children's school years and sang in her church choir for 50 years. In the early 2000s, she made more than 100 bonnets for newborns at Cary Medical Center so every baby could go home wrapped in love. Today, Rosemary remains active at MVH-Caribou, nurtures her faith by going to church with friends. Rosemary's life is a powerful example of service, compassion, and devotion to others.



*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

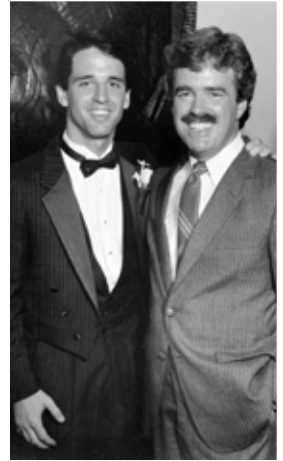




# Stephen Hughes

Augusta Center for Health & Rehabilitation, Augusta

Born on July 26, 1943, Stephen Hughes continues to live a life defined by service, leadership, and commitment to community in Maine and beyond. Born and raised in Maine, Stephen spent most of his early years in Auburn, growing up alongside his older brother and developing a lifelong connection to the state he would later serve in meaningful ways.



Stephen's academic journey began at Duke University, where he studied before being drafted into the United States Army, serving for nearly two years in the Vietnam era, shaping his desire for civic responsibility and service to community. Upon returning to Maine, Stephen resumed his education at the University of Maine Orono, quickly emerging as a respected student leader. Active in student government, he became the first student ever selected by the governor of Maine to serve on the University of Maine Board of Trustees in 1969. During this time, he was also involved in campus discussions around racial justice, corresponding with alumni about significant social issues and events.

Following graduation, Stephen served several terms as a Maine State Representative. He sponsored measures reflecting his interest in environmental responsibility and careful stewardship of Maine's landscape. Through his years in public service, Stephen built lasting relationships within Maine's political community, including long-standing friendship with Governor Janet Mills, former Attorney General Jim Tierney and fellow public servant Charlie Jacobs. Later, Stephen relocated to New York City, pursuing a calling in ministry and becoming deeply involved first with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and then with the Church of St. Bartholomew. He ran a youth ministry program and devoted more than 25 years at St. Bart's. His dedication was honored as he was received into the Order of St. Bartholomew's in 2019, awarded to members for outstanding service to the church. A lifelong lover of music, Stephen participated in glee clubs and choirs from youth through adulthood and sang in the church choir for many years.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*

# Willys Johnson

Maine Veterans' Homes, South Paris

Willys Johnson was born on November 10, 1938, in Norwalk, Connecticut, and raised in New Canaan. He remembers roaming the woods and swimming in the Five Mile River with neighborhood friends, often playing "war games" inspired by the times. Those early experiences, along with the military service of family members, helped shape his strong sense of duty and curiosity about the world.

After graduating high school, Willys entered the United States Army in 1956. He trained as a military policeman and, after receiving a secret clearance, was assigned as a courier in Korea. With his own driver and a quarter-ton truck, he transported classified documents between ASCOM, Seoul, and United Nations offices. While stationed there, Willys worked alongside a reporter from the Detroit Free Press, who mentored him and sparked a passion for journalism and storytelling.

When he returned home in 1959, Willys got a job at The Norwalk Hour, beginning a career that would take him around the world. He later joined the Associated Press, covering the Maine Legislature in Augusta before assignments in Boston and New York. His adventurous spirit led him to Australia, where he became Chief Night Editor for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. In 1969, Willys was assigned to the Associated Press bureau in Saigon, where he spent nearly two years covering the Vietnam War at its height. After returning home, he married his sweetheart, Chris, and together they settled in Maine. The letters they exchanged while Willys was abroad remain his most cherished possessions.

In addition to his journalism career, Willys is a published author. He wrote *The Girl Who Would Be Russian: And Other Stories* and *The Year of the Longley*, reflecting his gift for storytelling and understanding of people, history, and politics. A soldier, journalist, author, world traveler, and devoted husband, Willys Johnson's life reflects courage, curiosity, and an unwavering commitment to truth and service.

*Photography by Sarah Labonte, Westbrook*





# Shirley Jones

Alzheimer Care Center, Gardiner

At age 86, Shirley Jones is an unparalleled pioneer of girl's athletics. A long time coach, physical education educator, and athletic leader, Shirley has been recognized by many groups for her lasting contributions, including the Maine Principal's Association as an Unsung Heroine.

In the early 1970s, during the early days of Title IX, Shirley was earning her bachelor's degree in physical education and sciences from University of Maine Orono. Shirley was a prominent leader establishing girls' athletic programs in softball, intramural swimming, field hockey, basketball, track and field, and cross-country. Over a career that spans nearly four decades, she instilled a spirit of competition and motivated athletes to strive to be their best.



As coach at Falmouth and Portland high schools, Shirley helped the Falmouth girls win the state class B Track and Field championship in 1974, the field hockey team win its second triple C class B division championship and later, Portland high school girls' cross-country team achieve an unprecedented 7 to 1 victory. Shirley served as chairperson for the State Division of Girls and Women Sports, president of the York County Retired Teachers organization, and longtime member of the Girls' Sports Committee for the State Principal's Association. Maine Parks and Recreation Association honored Shirley for her distinguished service.

Former students fondly remember her spirited guidance on staying safe and looking out for one another. Her practical advice—be aware of your surroundings, make good choices, stay in groups, and support your friends—became words many carried into adulthood. Now in the later years of her life, Shirley resides at the Alzheimer's Care Center in Gardiner, Maine, where she brightens exercise class with her encouragement and continues to share her hard-earned wisdom with a warm, familiar sparkle in her eye.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*

# Richard Judkins

Montello Manor, Lewiston

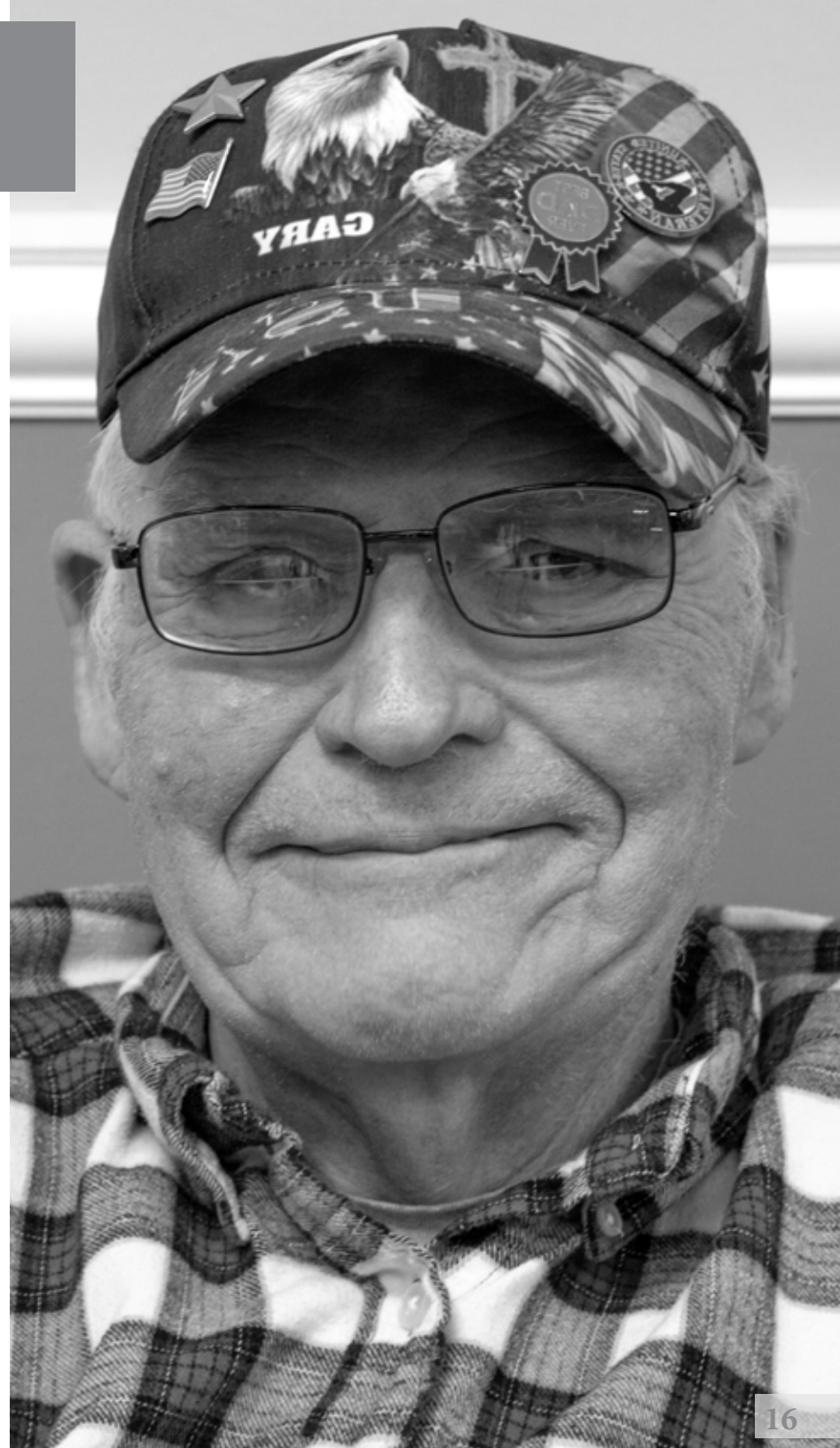
Richard “Gary” Judkins has devoted his life to service, integrity, and community. Born on September 19, 1940, in Augusta, Maine, to Viola and Steven Judkins of Belgrade, he grew up as the youngest of four children learning early the value of hard work, responsibility, and compassion that would define his life’s path.

Gary’s commitment to service began with the United States Army, where he served honorably from 1963 to 1966 as a heavy equipment operator stationed in Germany. During this time, he and his wife, Donna Jean Boston—whom he married on May 8, 1965—welcomed their first child. After returning home, Gary and Donna settled in Gardiner, Maine, purchasing their first home in 1968 and later welcoming two daughters. Their home became a place of warmth, resourcefulness, and constant activity, thanks in part to Gary’s remarkable ability to fix anything—from cars and radios to lawn mowers, televisions, and bicycles. A self taught mechanic and lifelong nature and animal lover, he approached every challenge with patience and ingenuity.

In 1968, Gary began what would become a distinguished 28 year career with the Augusta Police Department. Rising to the rank of lieutenant, he earned a reputation for calm leadership, fairness, and unwavering dedication to public safety. His courage was evident during critical moments, including the 1976 Central Maine Power bombing incident, where he was among the first responders protecting the community during a time of fear and uncertainty. His service left a lasting impact on the department and the city he proudly served. Beyond his professional life, Gary contributed to his community through his involvement with the Masonic Lodge, embracing its principles of brotherhood, charity, and moral integrity. After retiring in 1999, he and Donna moved to Kissimmee, Florida, where he continued to embody resilience and strength. Across every chapter of his journey—soldier, police lieutenant, husband, father, mentor, and friend—Gary Judkins has exemplified a lifetime of service.



*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*





# Judy LaMarr

Seal Rock Healthcare at Atlantic Heights, Saco

Judy LaMarr, born in 1941 in Ohio, devoted her life to faith-based service and compassionate leadership. In 1960, she moved to New York City to enter training with The Salvation Army, beginning a lifelong commitment to serving others. Judy faithfully served as an officer (minister) for 50 years, retiring in 2011. She and her husband of 57 years spent the majority of their ministry in New York City, reaching some of the most vulnerable members of society.



Judy consistently embodied compassion, humility, and unconditional love. During the late 1980s and 1990s, she was appointed chaplain for all Salvation Army shelters throughout New York City. As she walked the streets, individuals experiencing homelessness often greeted her by name as she distributed socks, blankets, and comfort. At a time when fear and misinformation surrounded the AIDS crisis, Judy regularly visited the AIDS ward on Roosevelt Island, offering dignity, care, and human connection to those suffering.

Believing deeply in holistic and restorative care, Judy organized and led weeklong retreats at the Salvation Army Star Lake Camp in New Jersey for men, women, and families living in shelters. She thoughtfully planned and led these retreats for over a decade, providing rest, hope, and renewal to countless individuals. While raising three children and maintaining her full-time ministry, Judy returned to school and became a Licensed Practical Nurse in the late 1980s, providing basic healthcare to marginalized individuals.

On September 11, 2001, Judy and her husband were serving as divisional leaders for The Salvation Army of Greater New York. Within hours of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, Judy was at Ground Zero alongside first responders, offering coffee, prayer, and comfort. She continued to serve there for the next eight months. Those who worked with Judy describe her as the truest example of servant leadership. No task was ever beneath her, and she was always ready to listen, serve, and offer compassion. Judy is a hero of faith to many, including her three children, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*

# Priscilla Lightcap

Kennebec Assisted Living & Respite, Farmingdale

Priscilla A. Lightcap's life is a masterclass in curiosity, courage, and service—lived boldly and generously, with humor never far behind. What a woman indeed. If Priscilla Lightcap is part of your day, it is a great day.

Originally from Florida, Priscilla's brilliance was evident early. She entered college at seventeen, an academic journey that took her to Hobart and William Smith Colleges and onward to Cornell University, where she crossed paths with legendary scientists Dian Fossey and Jane Goodall—an early signal of her deep connection to the natural world.

Although her dream was to become a veterinarian, life took a meaningful detour. Encouraged by her husband, Ken, Priscilla became a teacher, shaping young minds in sixth grade, junior high, high school, and eventually at the community college level. Her impact was profound. Students at Nassau Community College on Long Island recognized her excellence by naming her Teacher of the Year.

At thirty-seven, when many might hesitate to begin anew, Priscilla followed her heart. She applied to Cornell, was accepted into veterinary school, and fulfilled the dream she had never let go. While raising three daughters, she built a veterinary career in Connecticut where she practiced until the age of seventy-five. She treated everything from tarantulas and snakes to monkeys and birds, employed and mentored veterinary professionals, and offered extensive pro bono care to organizations such as Guiding Eyes and the ATF. She also served on the board for addiction and recovery services and volunteered at local animal shelters.



Even after a fractured pelvis led her to move to Kennebec Assisted Living & Respite, Priscilla's spirit remained indomitable. Staff and residents alike are energized by her vivacious humor and warmth. Her interests—friendship, reading, nutrition, and cross-country skiing—reflect a life still fully engaged. Priscilla Lightcap has never stopped learning, giving, or delighting those around her.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*





# Janice Littlefield

Fallbrook Woods Residential Memory Care, Portland

Janice has dedicated her life to caring for others, beginning with a childhood dream that grew into an extraordinary 53-year career in nursing and service. Even as a teenager, her commitment was clear. At just 15 years old, she enrolled in a Nurse's Aide course at St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, Maine, walking miles to attend classes and volunteering for every opportunity to learn. She supported herself by waitressing while earning her nursing diploma from St. Mary's School of Nursing.



Janice went on to build a distinguished career as an operating room nurse, specializing in open-heart surgery and mastering both scrubbing and circulating roles. Over decades in the OR, she witnessed and adapted to major advances in surgical medicine while maintaining exceptional standards of patient care and safety. While some viewed operating room nursing as distant from patients, Janice saw it as the ultimate form of advocacy—protecting patients when they were most vulnerable and unable to speak for themselves.

Driven by a deep sense of patriotism and service, Janice took her expertise even further by joining the U.S. Army Reserve as a Registered Nurse in surgery and was commissioned as a First Lieutenant during the Gulf War of 1990. While training with the 347th General Hospital Unit at Camp Parks, she helped construct a fully operational 1,000-bed mobile hospital in just 24 hours and trained under intense conditions, including rapid deployment readiness within 24 to 48 hours. Her service reflects courage, leadership, and unwavering dedication to caring for those who serve our nation.

Beyond her professional achievements, Janice is a devoted mother to two daughters and a loving grandmother. She is also known for her warmth, curiosity, and love of learning, with passions that include cooking, reading, and music. Janice's life reflects compassion, resilience, and lifelong service.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*

# Percy Madore

Fallbrook Commons, Portland

*In Memoriam*

One of seven children raised by a single mother in Van Buren, Maine, Percy grew up knowing poverty firsthand. Life demanded resilience early, and by the age of fourteen he was already working to help support the family. As a young man, he moved to Chicago with his brother for better opportunities, but eventually Maine called him home. There, he asked a friend's sister to join him at a dance; the first date convinced him she was the woman he would marry. Together, he and Arlene built a family, raising three children while he worked long, demanding days in the woods. In April of 1974, everything changed. A logging accident left Percy paralyzed. Devastated, he leaned on the strength of the woman beside him. Arlene was determined they'd, "figure this out one day at a time." Through relentless rehabilitation and creative problem solving, he learned to navigate life in new ways. He credits much of his success to his "toys." He could transfer onto snowmobiles and ATVs himself. He fitted his riding lawn mower with wooden rods to reach the clutch. His favorite design was "Percy's coach," a canopy-covered trailer with seats and a grill. Percy's coach trips became a cherished tradition, bringing three generations into the northern Maine woods for picnics, adventures, and lifelong memories.

Later in life, Percy would be featured in the Bangor Daily News for one of his designs, a bright red hooked rod used to prevent people from parking too close to wheelchair vans. His children were the first to learn from his creativity, however. Before the Americans with Disabilities Act made handicapped parking ubiquitous, they made their own signs featuring their dad in a wheelchair with the words "NO PARKING." Through all the obstacles he faced, Percy never lost sight of what truly mattered.

His disability, rather than limiting him, allowed him to be more present for his family. He attended every school event, every game, every milestone. He instilled in his children the same work ethic, optimism, and perseverance that had carried him through life. During his time at Fallbrook Commons, he drove his van, explored North Deering in his wheelchair and remained the most enthusiastic dancer at every party.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*





# Mary “Jan” Michaud

Dirigo Pines, Orono

Mary “Jan” Michaud was born on August 7, 1944, in Augusta, Maine, and was raised speaking French. Brought up in a close-knit community, Jan developed a strong sense of family, service, and cultural pride that shaped her life and career. She met her future husband, Victor Michaud, while attending Saint Augustine’s Catholic School in Augusta, beginning a lifelong partnership grounded in shared values, devotion to family, and community involvement.



Jan’s distinguished career in education began in 1963 at Machias Teachers’ College and Farmington State Teachers’ College, earning a Bachelor’s in Education, a Master’s in Educational Administration, and a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) in Educational Administration. Throughout her career she taught English, served as department chair, assistant principal and later as Principal. Her excellence in education was recognized with both the Teacher of the Year Award and the Principal of the Year Award. While serving as assistant principal, Jan faced the traumatic experience of being held hostage at gunpoint by a student. She emerged resilient, and as an even stronger leader and advocate for students and staff.

Beyond education, Jan’s been deeply involved in civic and cultural organizations in Augusta. She is a life-member of the Calumet Club, having served as Chair of the Outstanding Citizen Committee; the Kennebec Historical Society, Friends of Mill Park, and served as a school board member for Augusta schools. Her dedication to preserving Franco-American history through historical research and fundraising efforts to preserve important Franco-American oral histories, landmarks, and artifacts in Augusta led to her induction into the State of Maine Franco-American Hall of Fame in March 2024. Jan and Victor shared a love of travel, enjoying a European cruise to France, Spain, and Italy, and had many adventures across the United States in their camper. Jan is a loving mother and grandmother, known for her kindness, generosity, humor, and willingness to help others. Jan Michaud remains a strong, outgoing, and deeply dedicated presence in her family and community.

*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

# Bernard Miller

Sylvia Ross Home, Bangor

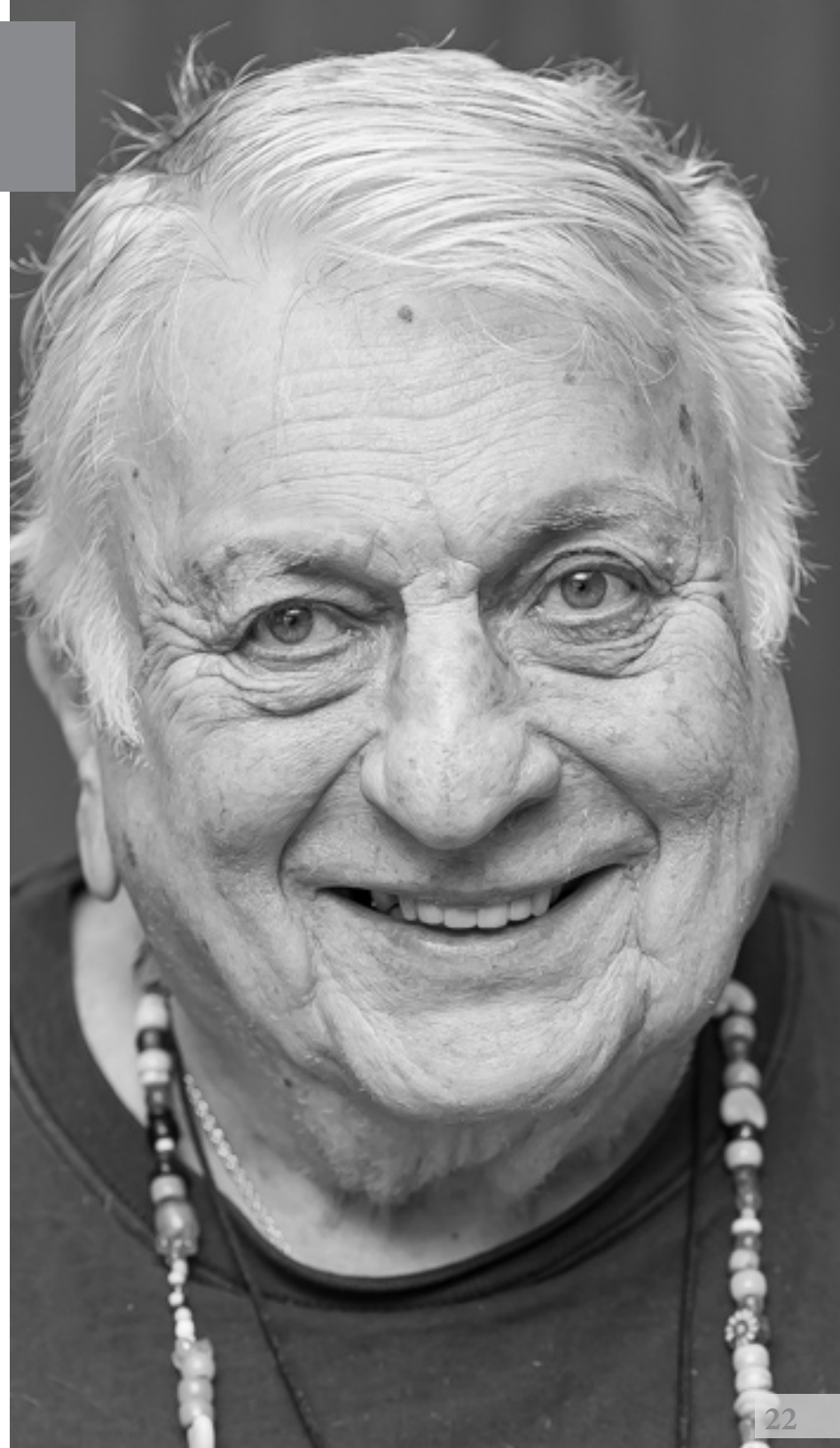
Born in 1934 in Bangor, Maine, Bernard grew up in a family guided by this family motto: "If you have not helped someone today, then it has not been a good day." This belief shaped Bernard's character and continues to be reflected in every chapter of his life.

Bernard pursued pharmaceutical studies and, upon earning his degree, added a prescription drug section to his parents' small store. The store was already known for its kindness, and Bernard extended this spirit into his pharmacy, ensuring that no one was ever denied medication due to financial hardship. The store grew into Miller Drug, a pharmacy recognized throughout Maine. The store employed over 120 locals and filled thousands of prescriptions each day, making it the most successful pharmacy in the state. Bernard was honored with the State of Maine's Innovative Pharmaceuticals Award before selling the business to Northern Light Health.

Bernard's heart for service can also be seen through his music and community involvement. Before graduating high school, he joined the Bangor Symphony, performing for over 60 years until his recent retirement, and was once featured in the Bangor Daily News as the symphony's "Music Man." He remains a devoted member of the Bangor Band playing weekly at the Bangor Waterfront during the summer. Bernard continues to serve as a board member for OHI and Camp Capella in Dedham, Maine. He received the 2023–2024 Charles Sullivan Community Service Award for decades of volunteer service, including work with the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen, the Red Cross, and local religious organizations. A devoted member of the Jewish community, he was inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame in 2024 and serves as a Lay Leader at his synagogue, which he continues to visit weekly.

Above all honors and achievements, he is most proud of the loving family he built and the life of kindness he has lived.

*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*





# Maria Otero

Mid Coast Senior Health, Brunswick

Born in Havana, Cuba, Maria was raised by a nanny as her parents made the difficult decision to leave her in Cuba while they came to the United States to build a better future, hoping to establish themselves before bringing their daughter to join them. When Maria was 12, her beloved nanny passed away, leaving her alone in Cuba. This loss created urgency to reunite Maria with her family. Securing the proper paperwork was no small task, but eventually she made the journey. Maria still remembers the only plane ride she's ever taken—from Cuba to New York—where she was finally reunited with her parents. Maria established citizenship after completing high school and then attended Fordham University in NY.



Maria has a rare, effortless kindness about herself - one that asks for nothing and gives without hesitation. In her words, "When you are shown love, you give love unconditionally." In her presence, people feel seen, valued, and reminded that they matter. Her presence has a positive impact on residents and staff. She lightens every room she enters.

At 20, inspired by her experiences in Catholic schools, Maria chose to become a nun and spent three years in a convent. Before taking her final vows, Mother Superior encouraged Maria to share her gifts beyond the convent, believing her spirit belonged in the broader world. Maria embraced this guidance and worked for 20 years in the records department at Maine Medical Center. Everything Maria has obtained in life is the result of hard work, determination, and perseverance.

In Maria's words, "Perseverance keeps us moving forward, and forgiveness frees us from the weight of what may try to hold us back." Forgiveness today has the power to heal divisions, break cycles of anger, and create a more compassionate and peaceful world- a message for all to live by. Maria's legacy shows how one kind soul can strengthen a community in remarkable ways.

*Photography by Sarah Labonte, Westbrook*

# Jean-Paul Ouellette, Jr.

Forest Hill Nursing Home, Fort Kent

Born on April 24, 1947, in the small French Catholic community of Frenchville, Maine, Jean-Paul was the eldest of five children born to Jean-Paul Sr. and Odette Ouellette. Raised in a home deeply rooted in faith and service, two of the Ouellette sons pursued seminary studies, including Jean-Paul and his brother Richard, who later became a priest.

As a teenager, Jean-Paul's life changed dramatically. At age seventeen, an ice-skating accident caused a severe head injury leaving him paralyzed and unable to speak. Doctors believed he would not survive beyond the age of nineteen. Yet Jean-Paul faced this devastating prognosis with remarkable trust in God, repeating the words of his mother: "Thy will be done."

While confined to his room, Jean-Paul prayed and asked God to help "a little boy in Frenchville who really needed Him." The next day, he was invited to a charismatic prayer gathering, where he experienced the first signs of healing. Slowly, over time, he regained movement in his arms and the ability to speak. Jean-Paul not only survived — he flourished. Today, nearly sixty years later, he continues to live as a testament to hope.

Though his dream of becoming a priest was taken from him, Jean-Paul never stopped serving. He traveled widely throughout Europe on religious retreats, shared his testimony at spiritual gatherings across the region, prayed with and for others seeking healing, and encouraged countless people through his gentle humor, kindness, and unwavering belief that "God is good."



Jean-Paul remains a source of comfort and inspiration. He lives not with bitterness, but with gratitude, choosing joy, faith, and love. Jean-Paul Ouellette's life is a powerful witness to resilience, devotion, and service. He is truly a pillar of our community and a reminder that even through suffering, one life can quietly change many.

*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*





# Sanford Phippen

Orono Commons, Orono

Sanford “Sandy” Phippen, born on June 19, 1942, in New York and raised in Hancock, Maine, says his early experiences exploring the shores of Frenchman’s Bay instilled in him a deep appreciation for Maine and a strong work ethic. It was also during these formative years that he discovered a lasting devotion to literature in the Hancock Point Library, where books opened new worlds and laid the foundation for a lifetime dedicated to learning, teaching, and storytelling.



Sandy pursued his undergraduate studies at the University of Maine, earning his bachelor’s degree in 1964, and later completed his master’s degree at Syracuse University, then choosing a career teaching English literature. He began his professional career teaching in New York, and after fifteen years he returned to Maine, where he taught at Orono High School and served as an assistant professor of English at the University of Maine until his retirement in 1996.

At Orono High School, he founded and advised the award-winning Inside student newspaper, which earned consistent state-level recognition. His professional contributions were further acknowledged through his involvement with the National Council of Teachers of English, the Orono Teachers Association, and his inclusion in Marquis Who’s Who. He was a dedicated advocate for Maine literature, a member of the Maine Humanities Council, and instrumental in establishing the Hancock Historical Society.

Following his retirement, Sandy devoted himself fully to writing. Drawing upon decades of experience teaching, supporting the Hancock Point Library, and serving as president of the Hancock Historical Society, he authored several works that vividly portray life in Downeast Maine, including *The Police Know Everything*, *Kitchen Boy*, and *The Best Maine Stories: The Marvelous Mystery*. From 2001 to 2004, he even hosted the PBS program *A Good Read*, spotlighting prominent Maine authors. Sandy continues to be known for his warmth, intellect, and lifelong dedication to literature, education, and the cultural heritage of Maine.

*Photography by Monty Rand Photography, Bangor*

# Joseph Poulin

Mount Joseph at Waterville

Joseph Alphonse “Alphy” Poulin was raised in Augusta, Maine, as the eleventh of fourteen children in a lively household where hard work, music, and family were central to life. One day his older sister dragged him to her dance class, only expecting him to watch. Instead, he stepped onto the dance floor that afternoon. Alphy recalls the teacher taking notice of his sheer talent and encouraging him to attend. Although dance was not a common path in his hometown, Alphy showed an early talent and followed his passion with courage.

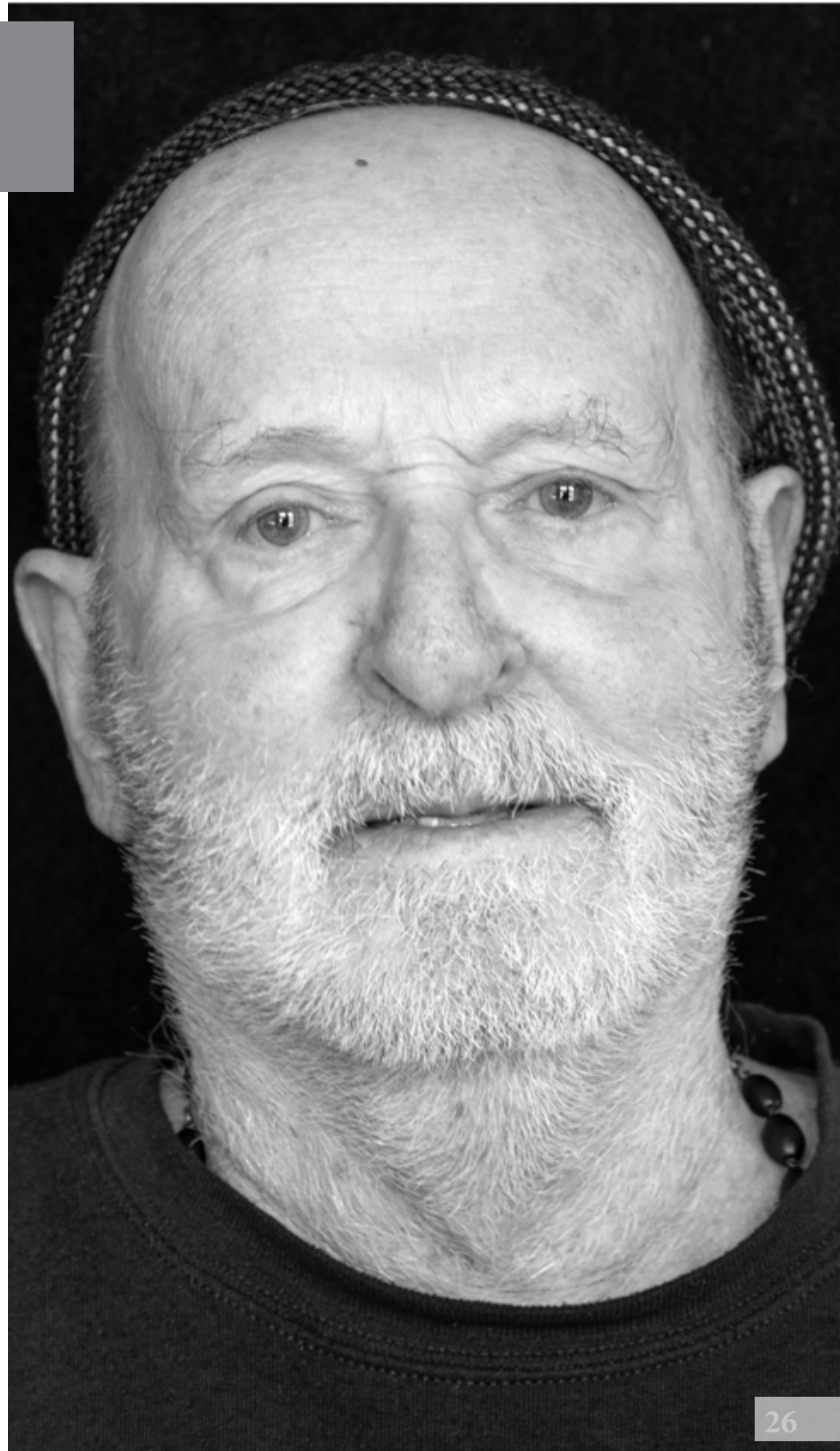
After turning eighteen, Alphy took a leap of faith, boarding a Greyhound bus from Maine to Boston, changing the course of his life. He was quickly recognized by leaders of the Boston Ballet School for his physical ability and artistic promise, and within just a few months, he found himself performing in *The Nutcracker*, beginning his extraordinary career.

Over the years, Alphy danced, choreographed, and taught across the globe, working in countries such as Brazil, Portugal, Germany, Russia, and Switzerland. He became fluent in several languages and spent many years as a ballet master in Europe, helping shape dancers at the highest professional level. Later, his career brought him to New York City, where he taught at the prestigious Juilliard School for fifteen years. To this day, he reminds others that he does not work with “amateurs,” holding those around him to the same ambitious standards he has always set for himself.

Despite his remarkable accomplishments, Alphy has always remained humble and shied away from attention, even when it comes to the attention he has earned. Steven Belber, playwright, met Alphy and, after spending a day together, was inspired to write “Match”, a play and later a film, based on his distinctive personality. Patrick Stewart was cast as the character inspired by him. Alphy, who was met with great applause at the premiere, never felt the praise belonged to him. Alphy reminds us that no dream is too big. Succeeding is not a miracle, but the result of persistence, discipline, and determination, and joy must be found along the way.



*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*





# Joan Rodrigue

Sunset Home of Waterville

Joan LaCroix Rodrigue was born March 30, 1931. Joan and her husband Richard were married for 71 years, and raised two daughters Betty and Sandra.

Joan has always lived on the edge and explored many passions. She was a race car driver, competing in the Powder Puff class at the Unity raceway, and an avid golfer. Joan made front page news when she scored a hole-in-one at the age of 77 in Zephyrhills, Florida, where she and Richard spent their winters. But it was country music that really spoke to her.



As a child Joan taught herself to play guitar and took to yodeling. It was at the WTVL radio station she met and began singing on the air with "Yodeling Ike". At the age of 17, Joan began working at Keyes Fiber Co. in Waterville where she met Arlene "Kitty" Plisga, Jim Doody and Joan Quirion. Together they formed the country western band "Big Jim and His Harem". As a band, they played for several years together throughout Central Maine, often headlining shows at the Waterville Opera House.

Even after Big Jim passed, Joan continued to perform, playing and yodeling on local radio stations, especially WMHB Radio 98.7 out of Colby College. On the radio, Joan performed many cover songs and in addition, began performing original songs that she wrote herself.

During a trip to Nashville, Joan and her sister met country music singer Margo Smith, Margo ended up inviting Joan up onto the stage to perform and yodel with her. Joan's talent for yodeling was unique and caught the attention of many. She could double and triple yodel-a rare talent!

Today Joan is 94. She and her best friend and former bandmate, Kitty Plisga (91) lives across the hall from one another.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*

# Doris Smith

Durgin Pines, Kittery

Born on March 2, 1928, in New York City, Doris Smith was the eldest of four children, assuming responsibility early, helping raise her siblings in the absence of their father. Growing up in poverty in the city demanded strength and self-reliance, qualities that shaped her later in life.

A strong student, Doris earned a scholarship to Providence Bible College in Rhode Island where she met her husband, Theodore Smith. Married on August 19, 1950, Doris and Theodore raised five children while relocating across Maine, Massachusetts, and Canada. Over decades of involvement, Doris became a steady presence families and neighbors relied on in times of need. She addressed food insecurity by organizing meals, supported children and elderly neighbors, cared for individuals during illness or loss, and offered practical assistance that helped families regain stability. Doris's impact extended powerfully through education. She organized learning programs for children and later became an educator herself. Beginning in 1962 at Mitchell Elementary School in Kittery, Doris influenced generations of students while continuing her own education. She earned her teaching degree from the University of Maine at Gorham at age 43, modeling perseverance and lifelong learning.

Her service never diminished in the face of hardship. After the tragic loss of her son, Doris continued to support others with empathy and strength while carrying her own grief. Later, following Theodore's diagnosis with Parkinson's disease, she became an advocate for awareness, support, and research, raising funds and assisting families navigating the disease. Doris Smith's impact is measured in decades of sustained service, countless lives stabilized during crisis, students inspired to learn, and communities made stronger through her presence. Her legacy lives on through her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and through the many individuals whose lives are better because she chose to serve consistently, quietly, and without hesitation.

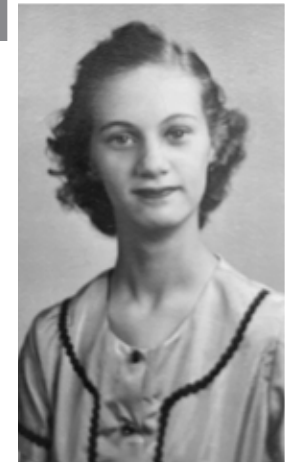
*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*





# Maybelle Sturgeon

Russell Park Rehabilitation & Living Center, Lewiston



Maybelle's commitment to helping others began early. As the eldest child, she was tasked with caring for her younger siblings, while her parents worked. Growing up she was a student worker in her school library, assisting classmates to learn library skills, reading, and math. In adulthood, she made history, while working for SD Warren, when she was named the first lady weighmaster in the State of Maine, breaking barriers for women in public service.

While raising three children of her own, Maybelle devoted herself to caring for many more. She operated a State licensed daycare for years, supporting families to include those of local physicians, attorneys, and Bowdoin College professors. Long before community supports were available, Maybelle provided full-time care to a child with cerebral palsy—transforming that child's quality of life through her dedication and love. Maybelle and her husband also operated a foster home for over a decade, welcoming children ranging from newborns to teenagers in need of stability and care. On more than one occasion, foster children arrived on holidays to include a year where Maybelle welcomed three children late on Christmas Eve; Maybelle ensured—without hesitation—that these children felt the warmth of the holiday, complete with gifts and a sense of belonging.

Maybelle dedicated many years of service to the Rebekah Assembly of Maine. She is a 35 year member where she has served in leadership positions, ultimately becoming the Assembly President—an office she held a couple times. This achievement reflects the confidence, respect, and trust she has earned by her peers. Maybelle's legacy is one of selfless commitment to others, unwavering generosity, and leadership rooted in kindness. Her lifetime of service has strengthened families, uplifted children, and enriched her community in ways that will be felt for generations.

*Photography by Dianne Chicoine, West Gardiner*

# Donna Thurston

Scarborough Terrace Assisted Living & Memory Care

Donna Thurston is a true Maine trailblazer, whose vision and dedication helped establish Therapeutic Riding Programs as a meaningful and lasting resource for children, teens, and adults with disabilities across the state.

Raised in Portland's Deering Center neighborhood to a family of devoted animal lovers, Donna's early years were filled with dogs, cats, and even a diaper-wearing rabbit named Brandy. Her love of horses began young, with riding lessons during her junior and high school years and grew to include therapeutic riding in adulthood.

At age 31, Donna purchased her first horse, Trixie, and soon after discovered an article on therapeutic riding. Intrigued, she sought out advanced training with leaders in adaptive riding on Boston's North Shore and was later accepted into an intensive, month-long immersion program at the Cheff Center in Michigan—one of the nation's foremost therapeutic riding centers. Remarkably, on the very day she returned, Donna was hired by the Baxter School for the Deaf to teach horsemanship and equestrian sport to their students, launching her professional journey in adaptive education. Donna went on to teach for the Portland Recreation Department and then spent nearly 20 years leading the Spurwink Therapeutic Riding Program, the first program of its kind in Maine. Working most often with youth who have what was termed "hidden disabilities" like autism, and children in foster or residential care, Donna created a structured, nurturing environment where participants were entrusted with real responsibility. Students learned to care for, groom, tack, and ride their horses, building confidence, independence, and connection through each lesson.



Through her leadership, compassion, and unwavering belief in the healing power of horses, Donna Thurston expanded access to nature-based, supportive education for countless Mainers. Her pioneering work laid the foundation for therapeutic riding in Maine, and the lives she touched remain a living testament to her passion, innovation, and enduring legacy.

*Photography by Wyndee Grosso Photography, Westbrook*



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## **Alton Barter**


### **Marshwood Center, Lewiston**

Born on January 22, 1938, Alton is a veteran, father, husband, and former educator. He graduated from Richmond High School, and shortly after high school married the love of his life. Following graduation, Alton proudly served four years in the United States Air Force during peacetime. After completing his service, he returned home with a strong commitment to education and personal growth. He attended Farmington Teachers College, where he earned both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education. Alton began his teaching career as a math teacher in Winthrop, before moving on to teach science at Hall-Dale High School. It was there that he made a lasting impact by creating and developing an Industrial Arts program. In addition to teaching science, Alton instructed students in woodworking, plumbing, electrical basics, and automotive mechanics. The program he built was so successful that other school districts sought his guidance to help establish similar programs in their own schools. Alton was passionate about teaching life skills—skills he believed would help students become capable, and successful adults. Many of his former students still visit him at Marshwood, expressing their gratitude and sharing how lessons as simple as basic repairs made a difference in their lives. Even after retiring from full-time teaching, Alton continued to give back. He helped Richmond High School establish night courses and also taught classes at Wiscasset High School, ensuring learning opportunities were accessible to more people in the community. Outside of the classroom, Alton was a master builder with his final and proudest project being a 45-foot tri-hull sailboat!

## **Miriam Bisbee**

### **Ledgewood Manor, Windham**

Born October 15, 1922, Miriam Bisbee is an extraordinary representative of the typical person of her generation, embodying a spirit of resilience, quiet pride, and selfless commitment to her community. She was raised in Gray, Maine, and lived there almost her entire life. Her earliest memories involve working on her father's poultry farm, raising potatoes, corn, and receiving a penny for every tray of eggs turned. She learned to operate a sewing machine at age 6, which became a useful skill later as she worked as a seamstress at a dress factory. While both of her parents were schoolteachers, she paved her own way through steady work and service within her community. From commuting to school by horse and buggy to flagging down the Portland-Lewiston Interurban Trolley, Miriam witnessed major advances in technology throughout her lifetime. She attended the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, which introduced her to new inventions such as the television and the air conditioner. Miriam's experience as a seamstress guided her to work at an osteopathic hospital at Maine Medical until retirement. She spent the next twenty years volunteering at Maine Wildlife Park in Gray, spending Friday afternoons greeting customers at the front gate. Scarcely missing a shift, she earned respect and affection from her colleagues and visitors from all over. That respect was embodied in their naming an animal - a beaver - in her honor, a rare event. In recent years, Miriam has participated in oral history interviews with the Gray Historical Society and local newspapers, providing detailed recollections of Maine life, such as riding the Portland-Lewiston Interurban as a young girl. She also made meaningful



contributions to the First Congregational Church of Gray, serving as an elder in the church. At 103 years-old, Miriam continues to be a light within her home at Ledgewood, participating in Bingo, a first experience here, with friends each week, and reading for fun. Her sharp wit and warm sense of humor continue to shine through with every person she meets. Her story is one shaped by hard work, community engagement, and a deep respect for the land and the people who share it.

## **Harland Bragg**

### **Lakewood Healthcare Center, Waterville**

Harland Bragg was born on May 22, 1937, in Oakland, Maine; he grew up in Sidney on a plot his ancestors settled in 1772. As a seventh-generation farmer, Harland and his wife, Shirley, continued the tradition and purchased their own farm in 1968. In 1969, Harland hosted the first Maine Farm Days, which served as a platform for farmers to display their work and provide education to the public about the importance of agriculture. Farmers could see the equipment or techniques that other farmers were using, and the public could see where their dairy products came from. Harland also hosted the 25th Maine Farm Days in 1993. Harland has a servant's heart, and over the years, he has served his community in many ways including as a state representative for two terms (1985-1988), serving on the town's planning board, as fire chief and warden with the Sidney volunteer fire department, and as an elder at his church; he was also active in the Maine Farm Bureau. In honor of his extensive community service, Harland and Shirley were presented The Spirit of America Award. In 2012, Harland's son, Jeff, purchased the farm from his parents, though Harland continued to work on the farm, mostly growing vegetables, managing compost, and making his famous mustard pickles which he sold at his farm stand. Today, through the hard work and dedication of Harland and his family, Rainbow Valley Farm has become one of Maine's largest organic dairy farms with 185 milking cows and 550 acres. Despite multiple challenges, including the recent loss of his wife of 65 years, Harland strives to maintain a cheerful outlook and great sense of humor. In 2025, the Bragg's received the Maine Dairy Farm and Family of the Year Award, which speaks to their continued dedication to the dairy industry and to their community.

## **Thelma Brooks**

### **Oak Grove Center, Waterville**

Born the eldest of 3 children on September 10, 1925, Thelma (Eye) Goggin Brooks is a lifelong resident of Maine. After spending her formative years in Calais, the whole family moved south to Gardiner in 1943. Thelma's life of service to her community and country began with her first job doing aircraft machinery repair during WWII. Returning from Rome, NY, to Maine, she married her first husband after he returned from active duty in WWII. They had four children, three of whom served in the military. Tragically, Thelma became a Gold Star Mother when her son Richard was killed in Vietnam (Army) in 1971 at the age of 24. Her daughter Donna served in the Air Force as a mechanic and son Chester was a Navy corpsman. Thelma's service to her community spanned the decades with a special place in her heart for the children of Maine. Always an avid volunteer, she was a 4H leader and taught swim lessons for years at Cobbosseecontee Lake. She served as a teacher to disabled children at Farmingdale in a tiny historic schoolhouse. After moving to Waterville in 1974, she gave two decades of her time to the Waterville Library. She took up the study of genealogy with a passion and ultimately had related works published. Thelma's personal life was characterized by perseverance and determination, outliving all her children. In September, Thelma celebrated her 100th birthday. She was joined by her family, extended family and the community to celebrate her century of life serving and caring.

## **William Burmeister**

### **Birch Bay Retirement Village, Bar Harbor**

Born in Chicago in 1936, William "Bill" Ramsey Burmeister is a man defined by service, leadership, and lasting impact; qualities that have guided every stage of his life. From an early age, he showed a natural curiosity for how things worked and a steady, thoughtful approach to solving problems,

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traits that would become hallmarks of his leadership style. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree at the Case Institute of Technology, studying engineering and management. His education instilled a respect and propensity for careful planning and sound judgment; principles he carried with him throughout his career. In 1959, Bill joined the United States Coast Guard. After completing Officer Candidate School, he was commissioned as an officer and stationed in Honolulu. From 1960 to 1961, he served as a deck watch officer aboard the Coast Guard Cutter 'Kukui.' His work took him across the western Pacific, where he contributed to the construction and maintenance of LORAN navigation system facilities. Following his military service, Bill earned a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. In 1964, he joined Ford Motor Company as a product planning analyst, beginning a career that would span more than thirty years. From the early 1970s until his retirement in 1995, Bill served senior leadership as secretary to Ford's technical advisory committees, helping translate expert insight into long-term strategy. From 1989 to 1995, he also served as Administrator of the Office of the Chief Executive, and Secretary of the Policy and Strategy Committee, providing trusted support during a period of significant change. Beyond his professional achievements, Bill is a devoted husband to Cynthia Ross Burmeister, and a proud father of Dr. Alice Ross Burmeister and Dr. Jill Burmeister Allen. In retirement, he continued a lifelong commitment to service in the Paris, Maine community, helping establish the McLaughlin Foundation, supporting the McLaughlin Garden, and serving as an officer and director of several local nonprofit organizations. Through steady service and quiet leadership, he leaves a legacy felt by family, colleagues, and community alike.

## **Lois Chazaud**


### **St. André Health Care, Biddeford**

At age 99, Lois Chazaud is an accomplished artist, dedicated teacher and compassionate resident at St. André Health Care. During her life, Lois has shared her love and talent of art to benefit children, servicemen, fellow elders and the wider community; exemplifying service, creativity, compassion, excellence, integrity and collaboration. Raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, Lois credits her public school's art program in igniting her love of art. In college, she majored in art, specializing in ceramics and pottery. Following college, she worked at a hospital serving those with mental illness. After WWII, Lois joined the United States Army Special Services, raising morale among servicemen by providing recreational and cultural activities. She later became the crafts director in Aschaffenburg, Germany, and later promoted to director of the service club in Hammelburg. After marrying her spouse, Jacques, and returning to the United States, Lois worked in the Riverdale Neighborhood House in New York, hiring professional artists to support budding artists in the local community. As the mother of four, Lois later taught art at a Catholic school and then substitute taught at public schools while earning her master's degree in art education from the College of New Rochelle. She also worked in a foundry with sculptors, studied jewelry making, participated in Colonial-era weaving, spinning and candle-dipping. After moving to Maine in 1987, Lois became active serving her church, Holy Cross, in South Portland. Moving to an assisted living facility in Portland, Lois began teaching art to fellow elders, which she continued at St. André Health Care. Lois advocates for art programs for residents, explaining that "doing art supports the aging brain, opening up new channels and in improving cognition and mood." Following the residents' art exhibit, "Journey of Art," last year, Lois reflected on her students' works in multi-media collage and their pinnacle work (self-portraits). Lois shared encouragement and praise, noting the ways each person had progressed and developed their skills. Without fail, Lois' conscientious designing of art projects, instruction and empowerment have helped her fellow residents grow and flourish. She is a strong voice, advocating for herself and others, raising concerns for the good of her community.

## **Shirley Cleveland**

### **Norway Center for Health and Rehabilitation, Norway**

Born in Portland, raised in Westbrook, Shirley was one of eleven children living above her family's Italian restaurant, next door to their sandwich shop. When Shirley was old enough, she came home from school, helped do housework and assisted in the restaurant, until it received its liquor license, preventing her from working due to her age. The last day of working in the restaurant, she had the pleasure of waiting on Governor Ed Muskie and his staff. Shirley continued working with her dad in the sandwich shop. When she was about 20 years old, she married her husband Gary, whom she had met at a dance. He was attending the Maine Maritime Academy to become a Naval officer. Their first date was at Old Orchard beach to see the



Glenn Miller band. They moved to Kansas due to Gary's deployment. Shirley and Gary had five children, all born in different states. Shirley and her husband were in Sicily, Italy, when she went into labor and the closest hospital was in Signato, Italy. Shirley was taken by plane, and her husband was the pilot. Her son was born flying over Pozzallo on the way to the hospital. Upon landing at the airport, Shirley and her son were taken by helicopter to the hospital. Shirley began a new chapter in life, becoming a CNA working in a few different facilities. With her busy schedule, Shirley volunteered at Preble Street Resource Center, served meals at her church. Shirley had a life-changing stroke; however, she realized that she was still able to play the piano, which helps her get through some days.

## **Roger Clukey**

### **Cedar Ridge Center, Skowhegan**

Roger Allen Clukey was born on September 9, 1939, in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. As the eldest of four children, Roger learned responsibility early in life. Though his childhood had its challenges, being raised by his aunt provided him with stability, guidance, and love—foundations that shaped his steady and compassionate character. He spent his early years in Sangerville before settling in Guilford, Maine, a place he proudly called home. Roger honorably served his country in the United States Army. After initial training at Fort Belvoir in Maryland, he was stationed at Fort Kobbe in Panama during the Korean War. There, he worked as an engineer on the Pacific side of the country for three years, demonstrating dedication, teamwork, and resilience—qualities that would define his life. After his military service, Roger devoted nearly 40 years to Central Maine Power as a lineman. He took great pride in his work, mentoring new hires and traveling out of state to assist with storm recovery. His perseverance and strong work ethic inspired those who worked alongside him. Roger believed deeply in giving back to his community. He volunteered with Notre Dame de Lourdes Church—Christ the King Parish, where he served meals and washed dishes at Saint Anthony's Soup Kitchen in Skowhegan, Maine. His quiet service reflected his generous heart and humility. In 1963, Roger married the love of his life, and together they raised three children. Known for his sense of humor, Roger often shared the story of the Christmas he gifted his wife a stuffed coyote—an unexpected present that became a beloved family memory. They shared 46 years of marriage until her passing in 2009. Roger has always found joy in nature, continuing to enjoy the outdoors through the bird feeder outside his window, which attracts birds, squirrels, deer, and even the occasional turkey. Roger's calm demeanor, gentle wit, and positive energy draw people in. He brings warmth and smiles wherever he goes, especially when speaking proudly about his three children—his greatest joy.

## **Paul Cyr**

### **Chase Point Assisted Living, Damariscotta**

Paul James Cyr was born in Lewiston, Maine, on August 26, 1934. When he was quite young, his family moved to Waterville when his father, a pharmacist, purchased a pharmacy in town. His mother was a homemaker and helped in the pharmacy. Paul, one of three children, worked in the pharmacy as an adolescent and later in summers later when he was teacher. After graduating from the University of Maine majoring in business and economics, the desire to teach led him to start teaching grades 8-12 at a small public school in New Sharon, outside of Farmington, Maine. There were only 75 students and three teachers in the school, so Paul also coached boys' basketball and girls' basketball. He taught math and simple science for a year before transferring to Cony High School in Augusta to teach math. Paul went on to get his master's degree on a fellowship to strengthen his math background. Those were financially difficult times because the fellowship was quite modest, yet he still had two children to feed, clothes, plus rent, etc. His wife worked in a Howard Johnson's to help make ends meet. Paul considers this time a significant challenge and he's proud of what they accomplished as a family. After earning his graduate degree, Paul moved his family to Connecticut where he taught math. Paul was proud of his membership in the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England, promoting professionalism in mathematics. After about ten years in Connecticut, they moved back to Maine where he taught at Lincoln Academy. After retiring from 35 years of teaching, Paul volunteered for AARP through Senior Spectrum covering Kennebec and Lincoln Counties, serving as a volunteer board member. All his life Paul has been committed to doing good and helping people, which is why he joined a Lions Club in Connecticut and later in Bristol, Maine. It was a good fit with the Lions Club, which is all about service to those in need.

# Honorable Mentions

## **Stuart Dawson**

### **Sentry Hill at York Harbor**

Born on April 27, 1935 in Urbana, Illinois, Stu Dawson had a happy childhood in an idyllic small city. Stu's father fought in Germany and returned a hero, shaping Stu's civic morals at an early age. Stu was in the Boy Scouts, achieving Eagle Scout status, and served in the Army himself and was a "good soldier, though [he] didn't fight in any war". Stu's commitment to the Boy Scouts not only led him to his military service, but later to becoming involved with Outward Bound, a program originally designed for troubled or disadvantaged youth that taught them survival skills and instilled confidence and respect. Stu's motto is "Do a good turn daily. Every day I had to do something notable and helpful. I still try- though these days, it is mostly financial." Stu's life was shaped by his love for his hometown, a small city, with its beautifully designed lakefront, only a short trip by train to Chicago. He attended the University of Illinois, pursuing a degree in Landscape Architecture. It was there that he met Hideo Sasaki, renowned landscape architect and professor at Harvard. Sasaki convinced him to study with him at Harvard for graduate school. Under Sasaki's mentorship, Stu and a few other classmates founded Sasaki while attending school, a landscape architecture firm named after their professor, which funded their education and fueled their passion to improve urban design. Stu worked at Sasaki for over 50 years, working on projects such as: Charleston Waterfront Park, Indianapolis Waterfront, Hilton Head resorts, John Deere Headquarters, the Christopher Columbus Waterfront and Long Warf in Boston, and the projects he is most proud of, the restoration of Newburyport, Boston City Hall and the Christian Science Center. He served on the Boston Landmarks Commission and has been awarded the highest awards given in his profession: The American Society of Landscape Architecture Medal in 1999 and the American Society of Landscape Architecture Design Medal in 2013. In his later life, Stu dedicated himself to the York Land Trust, offering his extensive experience in working with the federal government to improve infrastructure and to preserve resources without raising taxes for the community. Stu still lives by his motto "Do a good turn daily" and the culture of giving more than you get.

## **Geraldine Delmonaco**

### **Wellmore Point Assisted Living, Calais**

Born on September 22, 1929, in Oak Bay, Canada, Geraldine "Gerry" Delmonaco's life is a testament to the power of family, faith, and community spirit. After graduating high school, Gerry made a life-changing move at the age of 18, crossing the border to the United States to marry her husband, Nick. Their union would span an incredible 65 years, forming the foundation of a family that today proudly boasts five living generations. In her early adult years, Gerry worked as a telephone operator, a role that required patience and a service-oriented mind. However, her true calling blossomed when she became a mother to her two sons. Choosing to stay home to raise her children, Gerry's nurturing spirit extended far beyond the walls of her own house. She became a tireless volunteer for the Salvation Army, dedicating her time to securing donations for the homeless, the less fortunate, and the elderly. This altruism was also expressed through her lifelong love of crochet, spending countless hours crafting children's clothing, which she generously donated to her local church and families in need. Alongside her husband Nick, a prominent businessman in the road construction industry, Gerry was instrumental in shaping the local landscape. In 1956, her family's vision came to life with the creation of the town pool and a local park through the recreation department—facilities that have served as the heart of the community for decades. One of her most cherished memories was helping her family establish a massive community Christmas tree. Set high upon a crane on DiCenzo's land, the tree served as a glowing beacon of holiday spirit for the entire town to see. Today, at the age of 96, Gerry remains a vibrant and wonderful member of the community, where she participates enthusiastically in daily activities and exercise classes. Whether traveling to England and Denmark in her younger years or staying active today, Gerry has always embraced life with purpose. She takes great pride in everything she continues to accomplish, proving that a life of connection and contribution is truly timeless.

## **Richard Deschenes**

### **Country Village Estates, LLC, Madawaska**

Richard “Dick” Deschenes was born on April 13, 1940, to Joseph and Isabelle Deschenes. He was raised with his 5 brothers and 3 sisters in Madawaska, Maine. Richard enjoyed playing basketball in his high school years, where he and the team achieved state level recognition. After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving his country for 2 years, with most of his stretch done in Korea 1954-1956. On his return to Madawaska, Richard joined the Madawaska Police Department where he served 9 years protecting the community. Richard left the Madawaska Police Department to work at the Madawaska Post Office, serving as Postmaster of the Madawaska Post Office for 10 years. Throughout his career he maintained strong relationships with the local, state, and national postal units. During his time at the Post Office, Richard was part of the group of Madawaska citizens that worked with Joe Lachance to make Madawaska one of the 4 Corners of the United States. Before Joe had made the official 4 Corners Park, Richard allowed Joe to hold the 4 Corners stop at the Madawaska Post Office, where motorcyclists from all over the country would stop to take their pictures to share for the 4 Corners of the U.S. route. Throughout his work years, he and his wife, Jeannette, raised 3 daughters. Upon Richard’s retirement from the U.S. Post Office, he relocated to California to be near his daughter. It was at that time Richard decided he wanted to see the country, so he jumped on his bicycle and peddled from the coast of California to the coast of Maine just over 3,000 miles. After being gone for 20 years, Richard returned to Madawaska, reconnecting with old friends and family. Richard loves to listen to music and socialize with other residents. Always with a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye.

## **Robert Emery**

### **Maine Veterans’ Homes, Augusta**

Robert Clyde Emery was born on March 29, 1932, in Gardiner, Maine, to Eleanor (Smith) Emery and Clyde Hartwell Emery. He attended schools in Farmingdale and Gardiner before being drafted into the U.S. Army in 1952. Bob served two years on active duty and trained as a Heavy Weapons Infantryman. His troop of 300 men was only one week away from being shipped to Korea when the war ended. Bob often said they “got a lucky break,” a moment he never forgot. That short time in the Army changed him forever and shaped a lifelong commitment to serving other veterans. After returning home, a friend introduced Bob to Mary Ann Baker and married on March 16, 1956, raising four children. Mary Ann passed away in 2000 after battling cancer, and Bob says he misses her every day. Bob built a home for his family in Augusta, which became the heart of their lives and memories. Early in his career, he worked as a wrecker truck driver and at a gas station before joining the Rideout Oil Company, where he worked for 25 years. He also spent several years working in the maintenance department at the Maine Veterans’ Homes in Augusta, continuing his dedication to caring for veterans in a very personal way. In the early 1960s, Bob joined American Legion Post 205 in Augusta. Over the next 57 years, he remained an active and deeply respected member, holding leadership roles including Post Commander, County Commander, and District Commander. He also served as a liaison, helping veterans connect with the VA to receive the benefits they had earned. Through the Legion, Bob became the longtime organizer of the Adopt-A-Vet Christmas program at the Maine Veterans’ Homes in Augusta. For more than 20 years, he ensured every resident received a gift on Christmas Day, making countless trips to collect, organize, and carefully match donations so no one was ever forgotten. To many, Bob became their own Santa Claus—thoughtful, dedicated, and full of joy. Bob says his greatest pride is his “super family”: four children, seven grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. He reflects often that he has lived a truly blessed life.

## **Madonna Flanders**

### **Seal Cove, Ellsworth**

Madonna Flanders was born in Maine and raised with a strong sense of community, service, and perseverance. She attended Orono High School and went on to the University of Maine at Orono on a scholarship, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in teaching. As the first person in her family to attend college, her achievement marked an important milestone and reflected her determination and commitment to education. Throughout her life,

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Madonna has been deeply involved in her church, where she devoted time to visiting older individuals who were unable to attend services, ensuring they remained connected and cared for. Guided by compassion and fairness, she was also a vocal advocate for acceptance and equality for people who loved the same sex, standing firmly for inclusion during times when such advocacy required courage. Madonna actively worked in rape response services in Bangor, Maine, serving both on the board of directors and as president of the Mabel Wadsworth Center. Her leadership and dedication helped support survivors and strengthen community resources during her tenure. After leaving Maine, Madonna lived in Washington, D.C., Tennessee, and Florida, where she resided for ten years before returning to her home state. Following a surgery, she moved into Seal Cove in Ellsworth, Maine, where she currently resides. Over the course of her life, Madonna has undergone 18 surgeries, yet she remains known for her open mind, resilience, and consistently positive outlook. Her lifelong commitment to service has been recognized through several honors, including an Award of Service from the Maine Department of Education and a Rotary Award for her work planning and holding fundraising auctions. Madonna Flanders' life reflects compassion, advocacy, and unwavering dedication to helping others.

## **Barbara Gardella**


### **Ross Manor, Bangor**

Barbara Lown Gardella was born in 1938 in Red Hook, New York, towards the end of the Great Depression. During this time her family was struggling financially to make ends meet, when her father, unable to handle his responsibilities, abandoned his family. Barbara's mother was left to raise three children on her own, all while working for the Hudson River Psychiatric Hospital. She left her children for long absences while she worked. Barbara learned from a young age what this hardship cost her family, thus she quickly learned how to provide meals for her two older brothers, as well as sew and make her own clothing. Barbara was fortunate enough to attend college at Oneonta State University in New York, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in education. While going to college, she worked part-time with her mother, where she met Larry Gardella, later marrying after her college graduation. They moved to western New York, where they started their family. Her husband was the assistant YMCA director, located in Batavia, New York. and she worked as a medical assistant at the camp infirmary, supervised the female staff, ran the Y-camp arts and crafts program, as well as serving on the YMCA Board, all while being a full-time mother. In the early 1970's, Barbara's family moved to Maine, where she was the YMCA summer camp female staff director and was responsible for 24-plus staff members, running the arts and crafts program and filling in at the camp as needed. During the off-season, Barbara started a daycare center from her home, as well as served as a substitute teacher for her local school, volunteered as referee for the swim meets and assisted with coaching teams during this time. She later worked at the School for the Blind for six years. She was an active member of her church, sewing choir robes, served as a troop leader, and worked with special needs children. Barbara is well known for her inquisitive questions, speaking her mind, and keeps us laughing.

## **Jack Kaiser**

### **Schooner Memory Care, Auburn**

John M. "Jack" Kaiser of Winthrop, Maine, has lived a life defined by service, leadership, and a lasting curiosity about the world around him. On November 23, 1963, he married his wife, Caro, beginning a partnership that has anchored both his personal and professional life for more than six decades. Together they raised two children and today enjoy a close-knit family that includes their children's spouses, two grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Jack devoted nearly thirty years to the U.S. Navy, serving as a P-3 Orion pilot. His naval career took him and his family to duty stations across the country, including Hawaii, California, Norfolk, Virginia, Washington, DC, Brunswick, Maine, and Lakehurst, New Jersey. He served as Commanding Officer of VP-10 in Brunswick; Executive Officer of Brunswick Naval Air Station; and Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Lakehurst. These assignments presented both challenges and opportunities, shaping Jack's approach to leadership while exposing his family to life in diverse communities. Stationed in Lakehurst at the conclusion of his service, Jack retired in August of 1989 with the rank of Captain. Jack entered the Navy with a degree from Rutgers University and continued his education while serving, earning a master's degree from the University of Southern California and a PhD from Nova University in Learning and Training Technology. Following retirement from



the Navy, Jack and Caro settled in Winthrop, where he began a second professional chapter with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Maine. He later became involved in the early days of internet technology, leading the start-up of Commtel, one of Maine's first internet companies, at a time when digital communication was still emerging. His work helped build infrastructure that supported the state's growing connectivity. A later period in the real estate industry with ERA Webb kept him active until his full retirement in 2013. In addition to his professional pursuits, Jack remained deeply engaged in civic life. He served on the Winthrop Town Council, ran for the Maine State Senate, and was an active member of both the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Winthrop Rotary Club. Today, Jack's greatest pride is his family. As a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, he values time spent together and the shared history they continue to build. His life reflects a thoughtful balance of service, curiosity, and commitment—qualities that have consistently defined both his career and his character.

## **Edward Klimcsak**

### **Hibbard Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, Dover-Foxcroft**

Edward Klimcsak was born on September 28, 1928, to John and Anna Klimcsak in South River, New Jersey. Ed has four siblings, including three brothers and one sister. While attending South River High School, Ed participated in track and field, setting a New Jersey state record that held for 40 years. Upon graduation, Ed went into the service as a part of the Military Police, earning the rank of Corporal. During his service, he was stationed in Germany during the Korean War. When he returned from his overseas service, Ed started a family with his wife Elizabeth, having five children. Throughout Ed's life, he has enjoyed a wide variety of hobbies, including stamp and coin collecting, looking for Native American artifacts, and searching for shark teeth. During his searches, Ed discovered a previously unknown early settler's graveyard in the town of South River, earning Ed a feature in the local newspaper. A noteworthy hobby and skillset, he would sketch Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy and Pluto, as well characters of his own invention that were set on a remote desert isle. He was known to his family and friends as the local wine maker, often getting calls from around the area when berries would ripen so that he could come and gather them. Those around him looked forward to his wine crafted from grapes, pears, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. Ed would give away jars of pickles and tomatoes from his garden in addition to the wine he would craft. When he wasn't enjoying his hobbies, he worked as a refrigeration engineer for Bristol Myers for over 43 years, holding the highest license for his position. He was a member of the VFW and American Legion in his hometown of South River, New Jersey, and was active within their groups. In 2021, Ed came to live in Maine at Hibbard Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation to be closer to his dear family, where he has since resided, enriching the lives of those around him.

## **Albert Kossler**

### **Westgate Center for Rehabilitation & Alzheimer's Care, Bangor**

Albert William Kossler was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1929 to Albert and Edna (Rogers) Kossler, beginning a life grounded in service, curiosity, and compassion. Even as a child, Albert showed both talent and character. One especially meaningful moment from his youth was playing the trumpet for First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt during her visit to his school - an early brush with history that foreshadowed a life of meaningful contribution. Albert pursued his education with dedication, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy from the University of Pittsburgh in 1951 and a Master of Science degree in Hospital Pharmacy from the University of Maryland in 1953. He completed his residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he developed a strong commitment to patient-centered care. In 1954, Albert married Marilyn Jean Bashore in Alexandria, Virginia. Together, they built a loving family and raised five children. From 1954 to 1956, Albert honorably served his country as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 11th Airborne Division Medical Service Corps. Alongside his military responsibilities, he taught human anatomy and physiology at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He was honorably discharged at the rank of First Lieutenant, remembered for his leadership, professionalism, and willingness to teach others. Following military service, Albert dedicated his civilian career to advancing healthcare as a registered pharmacist in Pennsylvania, New York, Arkansas, and Kansas. He served in numerous leadership roles, including first Chief Pharmacist at Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn, Chief of Pharmacy Services at the University of Arkansas Medical Center, Director of Pharmacy for the Sunflower Hospital Alliance for Resource Economy (SHARE), and pharmacist at Stormont Vail Hospital. Throughout his career, he helped shape hospital pharmacy practice, strongly advocating for pharmacists as vital members of the clinical

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care team. Albert also shared his knowledge as an educator and mentor, teaching at the University of Arkansas College of Pharmacy, lecturing nursing in-service trainings, publishing in respected journals, and securing over \$856,000 in grant funding for the National Drug Monitoring Program. Beyond his profession, Albert devoted his life to volunteer service, supporting churches, youth organizations, cultural institutions, and humanitarian causes wherever he lived. His life reflects kindness, dedication, and quiet leadership.

## **Thelma LaVoie** **Bella Point Fryeburg**

From Hanover, Massachusetts, Thelma moved to Bangor, Maine, after high school. Her mom was a teacher and a homemaker, and her dad was a well-driller. She has two brothers whom she hung out with often and became “one of the boys”. When not with them, she spent her time with her mom learning how to knit, sew, bake, craft, work in gardens and grow flowers. Later she became a proud mom to a son she named Roland or Roli, as she lovingly refers to him and a daughter named Linda. She also cared for foster children in her home, treating them as her own. She was always an active member in her community, teaching Sunday school, volunteering her seamstress skills to make dresses for local girls. Later she got a master’s degree in mathematics from Bridgewater in Massachusetts, teaching calculus in one of the local high schools. Thelma suffered immense spousal abuse for many years. Using her wit and strength, she escaped one night, with her children, eventually bought a home and courageously rebuilt their life. Sadly, Thelma suffered heartache again when her daughter Linda passed away due to suicide and again when one of the girls she cared for passed away at 16 in a car accident. Being a free spirit, then and now, she rollerbladed state to state, for fun, followed/saw The Grateful Dead over 100 times. Every entertainer/singer who comes to Bella Point honors her with a song from them and she dances like she’s still a teenager. Thelma’s not only been a vital core person to those around her growing up but for us at Bella point. She’ll knit someone a hat or scarf if they’re cold. In the summer she decorates the facility with flower arrangements from our garden. She paints and/colors pictures for people to cheer them up. At 81, she does morning exercises, takes one of us for a walk—she’s still fast on her feet. “We must stay fit”, she says. Thelma reminds us, no matter how hectic life is, we must see the beauty around us, be kind, and stop to smell the roses.

## **Marjorie Lewis** **The Lodges Assisted Living, Springvale**

Marjorie Elizabeth Lewis was born on June 11, 1926, to Jeannie and Arthur Kenney in Lynn, Massachusetts. She moved to Sanford, Maine, at age 5 after the death of her father. She attended Sanford High School where she met her future husband, Ernest Lewis. She graduated in 1944 and attended nursing school in Boston while Ernest was a part of the Air Corp serving as a bomb deer parachuter. Ernest was shot down in the line of duty, but luckily survived, becoming a prisoner of war, and not returning home until 1945. In May of 1947, Marjorie and Ernest became married and relocated to New Jersey in 1955 where she lived for 35 years working as a nurse. Unfortunately, Marjorie lost her husband Ernest in 1972 after a long illness. Together they had six children and as they became older, Marjorie decided to return to the Sanford area. In 1989, she retired and started doing volunteer work for many organizations such as the Auxiliary of the American Legion, the Sanford Springvale Historical Society, the local soup kitchen of the Baptist church in Springvale, and the “Books We Visited” bookstore in Sanford. She was also a founding member of an elderly acting group from 2015-2020, where she was in six plays before COVID shut down the program. Marjorie spent 35 years being heavily involved in her local community by volunteering and bringing awareness to the community’s history before she moved to the Lodges Assisted Living facility in 2024. In May of 2025, she lost her son at the age of 73 who was a singer that recorded a variety of folk style music in the 1970’s, a talent passed down to him from his mother. Marjorie is cherished for her compassion, resilience, and lifelong dedication to caring for others, continuing to inspire her family and community through a legacy of service, creativity, and love.

## **Delsay Lozier**

### **Crosswinds Residential Care, Fort Kent**

Delsay Lozier was born on November 17, 1938. He is a native of Fort Kent where he spent his entire life aside from the 11 months spent working in Connecticut. Delsay returned home and married the love of his life, Claudette, shortly after. He's a loving father to his one daughter, and granddaughter who is the apple of his eye. Delsay enlisted in the U.S. Navy for six months in his early 20s and returned home when he was needed on his family's farm, an endeavor that is important in and of itself. He was immersed in farm life and developed deep values and a hard work ethic that followed him throughout his life. Delsay led a life of dedication to his community, retiring at the young age of 81. A man that wore several hats, including working for Dead River Company delivering oil all over the St. John Valley, driving a bus for the local school and a long-haul truck driver delivering potatoes throughout the Northeast. He was also self-employed at D & L Sealing for over 50 years. Despite suffering a stroke at the age of 74 that landed him at EMMC, he was resilient and returned to work only two days later. When he was 79, he developed an intestinal abscess which jeopardized his life, spending approximately five weeks in the hospital, nevertheless returning to work later that summer sealing driveways. Now residing at Crosswinds Residential Care in Fort Kent, he is always in good spirits and has an easy-going personality. He will leave a legacy of gratitude, selflessness and a life well lived. He is loved by his family and everyone who knows him.

## **Catherine Lynch**

### **RiverRidge Center, Kennebunk**

Cathy was born in 1958 in Salt Lake City, Utah. She moved to Brunswick, Maine, in 1964, where she grew up, attended school and graduated. Cathy was very close to her twin brother, who passed away in 2015, and family has always been an important part of her life. Music has been a central part of Cathy's identity since childhood. She began playing violin at the age of 10 and remained deeply involved in music throughout her life. As a young musician she played with the Portland Junior Symphony, Regional Youth Orchestra, and various state music festivals. Cathy went on to attend and graduate from Bates College, where she was a member of the Bates College Orchestra. She also spent time studying in England, where she played with a group called Madge with the Fladge. As an adult, she continued her love of music by playing with the Midcoast Symphony Orchestra. Cathy earned degrees in music and theatre arts, reflecting her strong connection to the arts, though her professional career ended up being in accounting. She married her first husband in 1981 and together they had two sons, Stephen and Sean. She went on to marry a second time to Ron, who passed away in 2010. In 2003, Cathy experienced a medical event that led to her first admission to RiverRidge Center. With time and determination, she was able to rehabilitate and return to her home, regain her driver's license and lived independently for several years. Cathy remained in her home until another event caused her to transition back to RiverRidge Center a second time, where she continues to reside today. Even as a resident, Cathy's love of music has never faded. She continued to play the violin and finds great joy in music and the arts. She is often the first to join in when there is singing or musical activity and truly comes alive during anything music related. Music brings her comfort, connection, and happiness, and it remains one of the best ways to engage with her and support her sense of self.

## **Ida "Ellen" Mahr**

### **Odd Fellows' & Rebekahs' Home of Maine, Auburn**

Ellen grew up on her family farm in rural Ohio and was a member of the 4H. After high school, she was recruited by the FBI, by way of a telegram, and moved to Washington, DC. She was responsible for delivering mail throughout the agency and even to director J. Edgar Hoover himself! She was honored to serve her country for a year and a half. Her son shared this story: When I was 7 years there was a letter for my mom from the FBI. I took the mail in and promptly asked my mom why she was getting mail from the FBI and was she in some kind of trouble? She explained that she had worked for them at a time when women weren't permitted to be agents. My mom was a trailblazer for women to blast through glass ceilings that were put in place to keep women from advancing their careers in the FBI. After DC, she returned to Ohio to study nursing. She had a part-time job at the

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faculty club where she met her future husband Edward. Ellen has three children: Mike, Stefanie and David. She had a lovely fashion sense and eye for interior design and always had art supplies on hand. Later she worked as a secretary at the church. Ed became a pastor at a church in Random Lake, Wisconsin, where they jointly served the community with amazing grace. Her thoughtful and kindhearted nature was the epitome of a pastor's wife. She and other women made and donated hundreds of quilts. When Ed died in 1988, Ellen moved to Massachusetts with her daughter's family. She went to work with the Visiting Nurses Association and loved being able to care for people. She then worked at Macy's. At times, Ellen struggled with feeling like her job wasn't anything "special"; but then after prayer, she realized that "it's not about the job, it's about the people." She had a favorite daily affirmation: "Mine may be the only face of God that someone sees today". Her strong faith has been an inspiration to family and the people she meets with her gentle, kind character.

## **Avril Marin**


### **Ridgewood Estates, Madawaska**

Avril M. Marin was born on December 15, 1941, the younger daughter of Eloi and Laurie Pelletier and was raised in Fort Kent, Maine. She graduated salutatorian from Notre Dame de la Sagesse High School in St. Agatha in 1959. After high school, she entered the convent earning a Bachelor's degree in Theology. While in the convent, she taught at a private Catholic school in the Bronx where the Mafia sent their daughters for an education. In 1965, she left the convent, came back to the Maine's St. John Valley and taught history at Madawaska High School. Avril fell in love with Paul Marin, also a history teacher, marrying in 1967 and raising two children. In 1973 when her youngest was three, Avril was asked to help launch the St. John Valley's first real estate business. She received her real estate license and entered a non-traditional occupation that wasn't initially understood or valued in the region. In those early years, she spent most of her time educating the community on the advantages of hiring a realtor to sell and buy real estate while establishing credibility with local bankers, attorneys, and contractors who were involved in the sale of property. Proficient in both French and English, she explained and translated sales contracts in either language for her clients. Her tenacity paid off. Avril cherished 33 years in the business and her name became synonymous with selling real estate in the St. John Valley. Even today, folks will thank her for helping them buy their home. While their oldest daughter completed college, Avril helped raise their grandson, Andrew. When Avril's mother could no longer live on her own, Avril had her live with them. At one point, their home had four generations. Throughout her life, Avril gave back to her community through volunteerism. Through her parish she served in a number of positions over several decades, including: lector, Eucharistic minister, religious teacher and coordinator, Parish council board member, and the church decorator during Advent season. She also received special training and served as part of the Tribunal Process for those wishing to annul their marriage within the Catholic Church. Additionally, Avril was proud to serve as a Supervisory Committee at Norstate Federal Credit Union. Avril can be seen welcoming new residents, introducing them to others and pruning plants.

## **Waltrud McCaslin**

### **Maine Veterans' Homes, Machias**

Waltrud "Wally" Schwartz McCaslin was born on February 18, 1940, in Leimen, Germany, during World War II, when her small town lived under Nazi rule and constant uncertainty. As a young girl, Wally experienced the realities of war firsthand. She vividly recalls a Sunday morning when an airplane circled overhead, followed by a siren and a bomb that fell just three houses away, directly across from the church where her father was attending service. Her family was ordered to leave their home and take shelter in an underground bunker with lights off and windows sealed. At fifteen, Wally began working in a shoe factory and attending local dances with friends. One evening, she was asked to dance by an American Air Force GI named Sherman. Although she spoke no English and he spoke limited German, Sherman had learned enough of the language for them to communicate. That simple dance began a courtship that would change her life. Despite her father's concerns, Wally and Sherman married in March of 1958. That August, she bravely left her homeland, family, and everything familiar behind to move to the U.S. Only days later, Sherman was released from active duty. Wally embraced her new life, learning English and becoming a citizen on July 23, 1962, in Boston, Massachusetts. Wally's life in America was shaped by her husband's career, which brought their family to several different locations. Through each move, Wally focused on creating a loving and stable home while raising their two children. She adapted to new communities, cultures, and surroundings with quiet strength, always placing



her family first and building a sense of belonging wherever they lived. Eventually, family ties brought them to Lubec, Maine, and later to Cutler. There, Wally became deeply involved in her church and community. She was well known for her cooking, especially her macaroni and cheese, scalloped potatoes, and pound cake. She was also active in the Women's Club in Lubec, helping organize Thanksgiving food baskets, toys for children, and support for families in need. Wally continues to share her kindness and leadership, encouraging others to attend activities, started a walking group, invites residents to join her family gatherings, and brings laughter wherever she goes. Her life is a powerful reflection of resilience, generosity, and a lifelong commitment to caring for others.

## **Charles Osborne, Jr.**

### **Katahdin Health Care, Millinocket**

Charles J. Osborne, who likes to be called Charlie, was born in Millinocket, Maine, living there his whole life. Charlie always puts others' needs before his own. Some of Charlie's fondest memories was when he walked to or from school, but most importantly who he walked with, especially a young girl named Elodie. When Charlie was around seven years old, he told Elodie that he would marry her someday. On June 16, 1956, they were married. They had five children together, four boys and one girl. Around 1952, Charlie was around the age of 16, while attending St Martin's Catholic School, he began working at the Millinocket paper mill. Charlie said he only got that job because his dad had worked there, and his dad was very respected, so they felt they could trust Charlie. When Charlie started working at the mill, he only worked one day a week to get his foot in the door. After graduating from school, he started to work full time. He had done various jobs until he began testing the pulp in the paper and that would be his primary job until he retired. In his teenage years, Charlie joined the Millinocket Volunteer Fire Department. Charlie said his dad had been on the Millinocket Volunteer Fire Department and he wanted to work along the side of his dad and help him. Charlie served the fire department for many years until his body could no longer physically do it. Charlie was involved in many rescues where he was able to save people's lives and homes. He had a fear of heights, and when he had to climb the ladder, he said his adrenaline would get pumping, and his focus would change to saving lives and homes. Charlie has worked hard his whole life. He loves being with his family and friends, reminiscing about his life, and how blessed he has been, especially being married to the love of his life, Elodie. Charlie treats the staff with respect and appreciates the care he gets. The irony is, we are all blessed to have Charlie in our lives, and he has made our world a better place.

## **Valerie Plourde-Ouellet**

### **St. Joseph's Memory Care, Frenchville**

Valerie Plourde-Ouellet is a 69-year-old resident born in Connecticut. After college, she moved to Fort Kent, Maine, to be closer to her family. It was there that she met her husband, Bob Ouellet, who was born and raised in Fort Kent. Together they raised two sons and is a proud grandmother. Remembered as a dedicated and caring teacher who truly loved helping students grow, Valerie taught high school students for two years in Van Buren, Maine, and spent 36 years teaching at Fort Kent Community High School. She also served as an adjunct professor at the University of Maine at Fort Kent and Northern Maine Technical College. Education runs deep in Valerie's family, with her father serving as superintendent and her mother and siblings serving as teachers. Continuing that tradition, her son Mitchell is a Vice Principal in South Portland, Maine, and her son Aaron is a middle school teacher in Gorham, Maine. In her free time, Valerie enjoys reading, sewing, and traveling. One of her most cherished memories come from her years of teaching, when she organized fundraising events with her junior and senior students. Every other year, the group would raise funds, and the following year they would travel together to Europe with families and chaperones. On the alternate years, Valerie and her family enjoyed traveling to the Caribbean for family vacations, creating memories. Valerie is also a devoted member of the Ladies of St. Anne. After retiring, she taught religious education and volunteered as the secretary for the Fort Kent Ecumenical Food Pantry, continuing her lifelong commitment to helping others. After Valerie's retirement, she and her family enjoyed spending more time boating, water skiing, swimming, and simply enjoying family time with her husband, her sons, and their families at their family camp on Eagle Lake in Northern Maine. Valerie is known by her family and friends as kind, patient, organized, and thoughtful. Her calm presence and caring nature made her not only a wonderful teacher, but also a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and friend.

# Honorable Mentions

## **Sandra Pottle**

### **Marshall Healthcare, Machias**

Sandra Pottle born June 27, 1938, the only daughter of Archie and Greta Morang in Machias. She married James Pottle of Perry shortly after high school. Sandra and Jim grew old on the family's dairy farm, Pottle's Tree Farm, started by Jim's father upon his return from WWI. Wanting to share the property, they hosted an outdoor classroom through Project Learning Tree for local schools and welcomed students for several years. They also hosted Strong Hearts for 20 years, a non-profit started by a young local couple for the benefit of children with heart disease. Sandra has a deep love for the outdoors, organizing picnics, hikes and camping trips. Sandra climbed Mount Katahdin many times during her lifetime. She loved to spend time combing the local beaches for beach glass and arrowheads and was credited with finding some historically and geographically significant artifacts. Sandra worked for the postal service for over 30 years. During that time, she went above and beyond in the performance of her duties as a rural carrier, often delivering packages to the door of customers who had limited mobility. She made many friends on her postal route in the Alexander/Crawford area. Upon retirement, Sandra immediately started volunteering for hospice and became fast friends with all her patients and families. She took Reiki classes, a hands-on healing technique, to benefit the patients and promote good health. In the spring of 2025, the farm hosted the Boyden Lake Half Marathon to benefit several veterans' organizations. She and Jim received many awards and recognition over the years, including: Maine Outstanding Tree Farm (1974 and 1998); Washington County Outstanding Tree Farm (1994, 1995 and 1998); Outstanding Forest Stewards (1997); American Tree Farm System (recognition for work with Shared Streams in Maine); Maine Project Learning Tree Stewardship Award (2005) and recognition for many years of support to the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District. Sandra is a Daughter of the American Revolution and a Mayflower descendant.

## **Jeanette Rand**

### **Sandy River Center, Farmington**

Jeanette Rand was born on July 24, 1938, a lifelong resident of Wilton, Maine. She graduated from Wilton Academy in June 1956 and married Kenneth Rand on June 17, 1956, at the Methodist church in Wilton where she remained an active member throughout her life. She has two children, three grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. She worked at the Wilton Town Office and the GH Bass company until they closed, finishing her career at Franklin Memorial Hospital working as a Physical Therapy Aide for 25 years where she continued to help numerous patients regain their ability to succeed and meet their goals to regain control and involvement in their life based on her compassion, empathy and skills. She was honored for her dedicated service at Franklin Medical Hospital many times. Jeanette not only dedicated her life to her family, she was also very active in her community, volunteering for Wilton Ambulance service for over 20 years until it was dissolved. She was also an active Grange Officer and leader in her community where she set up programs for children, food banks, clothing drives, senior services and made outreach to seniors by going to their houses to help them whenever in need. She exemplified her compassion for her family and her community in all her endeavors. Jeanette's compassionate care of others has extended beyond her career years as a humanitarian and Physical Therapy Aide. Jeanette keeps herself busy continually helping everyone she meets. She brings positive energy and a smile to all who encounter her. Jeanette does not let her own health needs stop her from lending a helping hand to a friend even if she is struggling herself. During the warmer months, Jeanette loves to enjoy the outdoors and eagerly encourages her friend to tag along. She enjoys all that life has to offer and truly spreads the gift of kindness to everyone she encounters. She believes life is beautiful and wishes everyone to see it too. She has a heart of gold and is truly one of a kind.

## **Donna Small**

### **Caribou Healthcare Center, Caribou**

At 93 years young, this remarkable woman carries with her a lifetime rooted in service, faith, and deep community pride. Born and raised in Caribou, Maine, Donna has spent her entire life giving back to the place she calls home. After graduating from high school and attending college, she pursued a career in nursing, devoting herself to caring for others long before it became her family's legacy. She is a proud widow of Ogden Small, a man whose life mirrored her own values of service and leadership. Ogden's impact on Aroostook County was profound: an optometrist, Army veteran, church leader, educator, conservation advocate, and community servant. Together, they built a family whose name became synonymous with dedication and integrity. Their son continues that legacy today through a fourth-generation optometric practice that has served the community for more than a century. What began in 1920 with Dr. William A. Small now thrives with multiple generations committed to excellence, innovation, and heartfelt care. It is a family tradition grounded in long-term relationships and a belief that serving others is both a privilege and a responsibility. For many years, she was an active member of the Cary Medical Center Ladies Auxiliary, volunteering countless hours, supporting patients and families, most notably by helping to create handmade heart pillows for cancer patients. Each stitch carried compassion, comfort, and hope. She remains deeply proud of this work, as it reflects who she has always been: someone who gives from the heart. She speaks warmly of her family, her community, and the generations of caregivers and healers she helped shape. An Episcopal woman of faith, she has long drawn strength from her beliefs, carrying them with grace throughout her life. She loves the outdoors, meaningful conversation, and the simple joys that come from connection. Her story is not only about longevity, but it is also about legacy. It is about a woman whose life reflects service, humility, and devotion to others.

## **Dennis Whall**

### **Piper Shores, Scarborough**

Dennis J. Whall's life is defined by service, resilience, and a deep commitment to volunteerism. Born on February 6, 1950, in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dennis graduated from Everett High School in 1969, just as the nation was entering one of its most turbulent eras. That same year, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, answering a call to duty that would shape the course of his life. Assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers, Dennis completed a one-year tour of duty in Vietnam in 1970. His experiences overseas strengthened his sense of responsibility, honor, and devotion to his fellow service members. In 1975, he continued his military career by joining the Army Reserves, where he served for two decades. He retired with distinction as a Master Sergeant, U.S. Army Combat Engineer—an achievement reflecting both his leadership and unwavering dedication. After returning home, Dennis married his first sweetheart, Linda, and together they raised three daughters in Wells, Maine. Their life was built on love, laughter, and strong family values. When Linda passed away from cancer in the early 1990s, Dennis faced profound loss with remarkable strength. During this time, he began volunteering with York Hospice, facilitating grief support groups and working closely with veterans facing the end of life. It was through this work that he found love again with Ronnie, who was also a Hospice volunteer. Both had lost spouses at young ages, and their shared experiences fostered a relationship rooted in empathy, healing, and purpose. Dennis devoted 40 years of his professional life to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, where he retired in 2010 as a crane instructor and inspector. Known for his integrity, attention to detail, and willingness to mentor others, he earned the respect of colleagues across generations. Equally meaningful has been his lifelong dedication to youth sports. For more than four decades, he volunteered as a Little League umpire in Maine, rising to Umpire-in-Chief and officiating championship games and the Softball World Series. He was also a member of Bikers With A Heart, bringing joy to sick children across Maine, and a volunteer with the Pease Greeters, welcoming home military troops with gratitude and pride. Dennis has been known for his sharp wit, warm personality, and unwavering desire to help others.



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