



Eileen Miskell was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of The Falmouth Fund of The Cape Cod Foundation in 2009. She has served as the Chair of its Advisory Committee ever since. Under her leadership, the endowment fund has grown to \$1.4 million and awarded over \$360,000 in grants to more than 70 local nonprofit organizations serving the town of Falmouth. As she passes the baton to Sharon Nunes, a fellow Falmouth resident who has been on the grant review and advisory committees for several years, we thought it was time for a little Q&A with these fascinating Falmouth leaders.

HUB: Eileen, you moved to Falmouth when you were in high school.

EILEEN: That's right. I have fond memories of those days, but happily left for college in Boston, where I earned a BS degree from Boston College and an MBA from Boston University.

HUB: What brought you back to town?

EILEEN: I met my husband, (Dana Miskell) when I was home one summer. He grew up here. His grandfather started the Wood Lumber Company in 1912. After living in the Boston area for a few years, we returned to Falmouth in 1986 to manage the company and raise our two children. In 2015, we purchased Eight Cousins Bookstore on Main Street with two other partners.

HUB: What do you love about Falmouth?

EILEEN: Its natural beauty, interesting people and great opportunities to enjoy life. Last weekend, I caught a lecture on the Russian Revolution at the Falmouth Historical Society, took in a play at the Woods Hole Theatre Company, rode in the Falmouth Housing Corporation's first Murray/Kirwin Bike Ride and attended a Falmouth Chorale concert.

HUB: You're currently on the Community Preservation Committee for the Town of Falmouth and on the Board of Directors of Independent Bancorp (Rockland Trust). Volunteering seems to be part of your DNA.

EILEEN: My mother was my early influence. She was a "quiet" good friend and neighbor. She knit sweaters for friends' babies and helped with kids and meals when a family was in need. The Falmouth community is like that. When people see a need, they step up to meet it.

HUB: And, that's how The Falmouth Fund started?

EILEEN: The directors of The Cape Cod Foundation actually saw the need. They're the professional powerhouse behind all the Town Funds. I was on the Foundation's Board at the time. We had convened a group of interested people from Falmouth to see how we could positively impact the community through this type of fund. The time was right, the support was there, and we needed a chair to move it to the next level. I saw the position as a productive way to be involved in the Foundation and the community.

HUB: Who else has been instrumental?

EILEEN: Tucker Clark, Vicky Lowell, Jodee Bishop and Bob Ament have been involved from the beginning. They all have years of philanthropic work to their credit. Also, Sarah Pring, a professional fundraiser, offered her services at no charge. She trained me in the fine art of solicitation.

HUB: What were some of the early challenges?

EILEEN: We were trying to raise money in 2008 during an economic meltdown.

HUB: But you did.

EILEEN: Yes. We gained early support from Community Philanthropists who pledged at least \$5,000 over a five-year period. We also received--and continue to receive--generous donations from other supporters in the community.

HUB: Why is The Falmouth Fund important to the community?

EILEEN: It's a permanent endowment, ensuring there will be funds to meet the needs of the town now and in the future. Each year, we take the fund's earnings and invest them back into the community through grants to local nonprofit organizations.

HUB: What types of programming do you fund?

EILEEN: *Great* programming. Really, the categories are broad: health and human services, environmental concerns, and educational and cultural enrichment. I think that when residents see programs The Falmouth Fund has supported, they pause and pay closer attention to them.

HUB: What programs do you think have been among the most needed?

EILEEN: The two that are important right now are Calmer Choice and the Gosnold Counseling Program at the elementary school level. Sadly, as the opioid crisis has grown, our educators have worked to find programming that helps our most vulnerable—our kids—deal with these problems.

HUB: What do you want nonprofit organizations to know about The Falmouth Fund?

EILEEN: You add so much to our town. We do this to support the work you do for us. We want to help you raise the bar and leverage the limited resources you have to be successful.

HUB: What do you want to tell prospective donors?

EILEEN: We can accomplish more together. Your donation to The Falmouth Fund is pooled with others to make a larger impact: a gift that keeps giving. Sure, many of us will--and should--still support our favorite organizations. But, a gift to The Falmouth Fund supports the entire community.

HUB: What do you see ahead for The Falmouth Fund?

EILEEN: We are in a really good place. Being part of The Cape Cod Foundation gives us the investment and grantmaking expertise we need to be effective in our town. My successor, Sharon Nunes, is a very strong leader. I met her and her husband, Ron, when they first came to Falmouth. They have used their talents and experience to help groups in the community in very original and meaningful ways. She has assembled a strong advisory committee and they will be very, very successful.

HUB: Any final thoughts?

EILEEN: People can choose to live in many places. I am so pleased that many want to make Falmouth their home. It tells me we have built an inviting, caring community.

HUB: Next up: a conversation with Sharon Nunes, the new chair of The Falmouth Fund.