

## **A Member's Perspective - Rik Bole**

Among those who have played a role in maintaining Gates Mills Village's unique charm is Rik Bole, a longtime resident whose deep family roots, professional achievements, and passion for conservation have helped shape the community we know today.

Rik's journey began with a family legacy of ambition and service to the environment. His grandparents, Benjamin Patterson Bole and Roberta Holden Bole gave the first 100 acres to the Holden Arboretum. His grandmother was also one of the four founders of Gates Mills School, emphasizing the importance of education and civic involvement from an early age. Rik's father was a biologist/botanist at the Natural History Museum and his mother was an accomplished horticulturalist.

Rik's own path took him beyond the village - first to the Choate School in Connecticut, then to Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, where he was inspired by global affairs and leadership. His career in international banking led him across Europe, including time spent in Eastern Europe and Moscow during pivotal moments in history.

However, Rik's heart remained in Gates Mills, where he and his wife, Mary, established their home. Mary's family also had deep ties to the community—her grandfather was a prominent village figure, and her family owned a significant amount of land in Gates Mills. Their shared love of the area and its traditions made their home here a natural choice, allowing them to raise their family in the same place that had meant so much to previous generations.

Rik's legacy in Gates Mills is one of thoughtful leadership, historical awareness, and a deep appreciation for the land. His own property reflects his commitment to preservation. He has actively promoted efforts to combat invasive species, protect the tree canopy, and encourage land conservation throughout the village.

In 1987, recognizing the importance of thoughtful conservation, Rik helped introduce measures to slow development and encourage responsible land stewardship in Gates Mills. As development pressures increased in the village and surrounding communities, Rik proposed the idea of creating a local land trust to Mayor Dan Collister. With legal documents drafted by Tom Quintrell and contributions from 200 villagers, the Gates Mills Land Conservancy was established.

Rik's story is a testament to the profound impact that one person's dedication can have in preserving a community's character and ensuring that conservation and community remain intertwined for generations to come.