

Marie Ray Fraley  
Narrative: Biography 2020

The granddaughter of Azorean immigrants from the island of São Miguel, Marie Fraley was born in Providence, and raised and educated in the small Portuguese parish of St. Anthony's in Riverpoint, RI. Although all four grandparents were born in S. Miguel and immigrated at the turn of the century, learning the Portuguese language was never encouraged, so strong was the desire for assimilation into American society at that time.

Graduated from West Warwick High School (1968), she achieved her parents' American dream as the first in the family to attain a college education, from the University of Rhode Island with a B.A. (1972) and a M.S. (1974) in Speech-language Pathology. Her career as a speech-language pathologist working with language disabled children continued in Providence and then Cumberland School Districts for over 20 years.

Following retirement, curiosity raised its head and a desire to learn about her own family history, previously a mystery, sparked a round of research that led her to the island of São Miguel to the *Biblioteca Pública e Arquivo de Ponta Delgada* where she not only traced her family tree but met long-lost family as well. Eager to learn more, she enrolled in Portuguese classes at Rhode Island College, eventually becoming more enamored with and involved in the traditions, the language, the culture and the Portuguese community in Rhode Island and beyond.

With faculty, staff and students, she helped to lead a community movement to establish the Institute for Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies at Rhode Island College serving as its Director until retiring in 2018. RIC now claims a major in Portuguese Studies in the Department of Modern Languages under the able direction of a tenured, full time professor, and the Institute's Director, Dr. Silvia Oliveira.

She has served on the RI Day of Portugal Committee since 2004 in various roles including President (2008), Vice-President, Public Relations Chair, and Fundraising Chair and served several terms on the Board of Directors.

She has been a charter member of PALCUS since 2004 serving on the Board of Directors since 2007 in various capacities of Vice-Chair, Secretary and Managing Director. Most recently, she is the architect and national director of the campaign, Make Portuguese Count™ in the 2020 U.S. Census that oversees the participation of 220 affiliated organizations and 75 captains from Hawaii to Massachusetts.

Marie Fraley also holds a Certificate in Non-Profit Studies from Rhode Island College and is a member of the American Association of Fundraising Professionals. She is married to her husband of 47 years, David Ross Fraley, is the mother of two sons and has one granddaughter.