

Hours:

NORTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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It is with deep sadness that we share the news that Ruth E. Goold, the President of the Norton Historical Society, passed away at Sturdy Memorial Hospital on Sunday, March 28, 2021.

For the last twenty years, Ruth held the position of president and continued to be involved in the day-to-day running of the organization, even through the Coronavirus pandemic. While the Schoolhouse has been closed to the public this past year, Ruth continued to ensure that the bills were paid, replied to inquiries about people and places around Norton and continually clipped articles from the local paper about Norton so that they could be preserved as part of the town's history.

Those of us who knew Ruth were aware that she was very passionate about the town she was born in, grew up in and lived in throughout her lifetime. We have learned a lot more about the town's history because of Ruth. She was a well known and respected person in the town and had always believed in giving back to Norton. She had been interviewed numerous times by local newspapers over the years, including a 1999 interview for the Sun Chronicle on her then role as secretary of the Norton Historical Society. The Patriot Ledger approached her in 2013 where she shared her memories of JFK's assassination. The Norton Patch interviewed her in 2011 concerning the unveiling of the time capsule for Norton's Tricentennial.

Ruth had been an active member of the Historical Society for over 40 years. She served as Secretary for 20 years before becoming President of the society in 2001.

Ruth received her Bachelor's Degree in liberal arts from Wheaton College in 1953. She worked in the business world for a few years but decided that wasn't her calling, so she went into education. She earned her Master's Degree in education from Bridgewater State College (now known as Bridgewater State University) and spent almost 40 years as an elementary school teacher in the Ashland Public Schools. She still continued to educate others after retiring through her involvement in the Norton Historical Society. Year after year, third graders from the L.G. Nourse and the J.C. Solmonese Schools would stop off at the schoolhouse and Ruth would teach the children what it was like going to school during Norton's early years.

Ruth was always looking for presentation topics to share with the townspeople. She co-authored with George Yelle "Images of America - Norton, Massachusetts" sharing historic pictures and information about the town with the public. One of the pictures in that book shows a picture of Ruth and a few other girls in 1935 who attended the Wheaton College Nursery School. They

were participating in a pageant for Wheaton's 100th anniversary and were dressed in clothing of earlier days. Even in 1935, Ruth was helping to teach others about the history of Norton.

The Norton Historical Society was not Ruth's only passion. She felt strongly about her environment and was an active member of the Land Preservation Society. She was one of the co-founders of Norton's Nine Lives cat rescue and adoption program, was on the Board of Directors for the Daggett Crandall Nursing Home, was a member of the Garden Club, and past treasurer of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Massachusetts. She was also very active in the Congregational Parish Church in the center of Norton.

While Ruth was considered a "behind the scenes" individual, her dedication to the town and her environment did not go unnoticed. She received the "Community Citizen Award" from the Norton Grange 218 in 1999. That award is presented to a non-Grange individual whom the organization feels has been an outstanding citizen of the town. Also, in 2007, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women named her as one of the Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts.

Ruth will be greatly missed by her family and friends. We lost an amazing woman who selflessly gave her town so much. We were very blessed to have known her.

This fall, the Norton Historical Society will hold an outdoor meeting in her honor at the Schoolhouse where we will dedicate a planting in her name. Please join us for this dedication and, at that time, please feel free to share any personal memories you might have of Ruth. More details will follow at a later date.

