



On July 18, a large group of family and friends of Roger Godwin gathered at Bradley Lake to celebrate his life. Pictured here are (l-r) Vicky Mishcon, Brenda Godwin, Dennis Fenton, and Jane Slayton. Photo: Wilkey Godwin

Remembering Roger Godwin

By Bill Bardsley

Along about the late 1970s, I began to hear tales about a worldly citizen coming to Andover – a diplomat, a big oil tycoon, a secret agent, a veritable Daddy Warbucks type. He had married into the Cangiano family, long-time seasonal settlers up on the misty heights of Bradley Lake.

This man turned out to be not a mythological being but the very real Roger Godwin, friendly, modest, and warm-hearted. He never really talked much about his pre-Andover life, so I never learned how much of the Daddy Warbucks image was based on reality.

We did gradually find out, though, that in terms of what he did for his adopted hometown, Roger was a very big time operator. Quite likely it was the skills acquired in his earlier years that combined with his personal qualities to make him the effective town father that he became.

He had arrived here with Brenda, the Cangiano lady he married, as a summer resident in 1977. They became year-round citizens in 1980.

Roger first appears on the town report list of officials and volunteers as a Budget Committee member in 1984. This began his remarkable service to Andover: 18 years as a Selectman, five years on that Budget Committee, 15 years with the Cable TV Committee, 12 years with the Planning Board, and even one term as a Trustee of Trust Funds. Most of these years were as an ex-officio Selectman member, but that did not lessen his commitment to the work of these various committees or lessen the number of evening meetings. His broad perspective of the town's affairs contributed greatly to committee efforts.

We need to remember Roger when we turn on the cable TV. His persis-

tence in negotiations resulted in cable service all over Andover at a time when this was unusual for small towns. That persistence also brought equipment provided by the cable company to set up our community channel and a franchise fee agreement to keep it going.

Roger had a tendency to do good things without telling anyone. This appears to have applied to his law practice as well as his town positions. We might remember he was a lawyer only when we needed a legal view during a committee discussion or when we saw him driving off to Concord wearing coat and tie. Much of his legal work was pro bono, and Brenda can describe unusual in-kind payments for some that wasn't.

Somehow along the way, Roger and Brenda were raising 11 children while Roger indulged in a yen for keeping gigantic dogs and, for a while, a few Scottish Highland cattle, almost pets. The latter eventually went down the road, Brenda says, because Roger wouldn't eat anything that had a name.

Roger liked living in Andover. Here, he used to say, you know everybody, whereas in the city you only know your own circle of friends. We were fortunate that he put his talents to work for us. Andover is a better place because he did, and his presence will be missed – fondly missed.

DEAN'S LIST Virginia Clasby

Virginia Clasby was named to the dean's list for the spring semester at Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Virginia is a graduate of Merrimack Valley High School.



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