



Carolyn Partan

2019 HERITAGE AWARD RECIPIENT

Carolyn Partan and her husband, Ralph, moved to the Cape year-round in 1999. Although some of her family members had been summer residents for several generations, she knew very little about Falmouth's past. However, her lifelong love of history inspired her to volunteer with the Falmouth Historical Society. Her first job was selling hot dogs at the Society's Annual Antiques Fair. Since then, she's done just about every job there is to do--from stuffing envelopes to acting as interim director. She's also conducted research on Falmouth's whaling days, given talks on our whaling history across the Cape and served on the Board for 12 years. She is still a docent at the Museums on the Green, and in recent years, has led

walking tours. "I am passionate about sharing Falmouth's incredibly rich history from colonial times right through the 20th century with anyone and everyone," she said.

Carolyn considers her work with the Society's educational programs, particularly those for third grade students, to be her most significant contribution. For the past 18 years, she has helped revive, expand and lead the Society's third grade program which brings hundreds of students to the Museums each year to learn about colonial life and the history of their hometown. Many of the docents she has helped recruit and train have assisted in the program for years, and several have taken on leadership roles. Carolyn, who continues to serve in an advisory capacity, says she is proud that this program includes every student in the third grade and provides transportation at no cost to the schools.

While Carolyn was active at the Museums on the Green, her husband became involved with the Falmouth Artist Guild. Ralph Partan, an architect, civil engineer, developer and artist, helped secure the land and create a plan for the Falmouth Art Center on Gifford Street. When he passed away in 2005, Carolyn used the knowledge and skills she had developed as a real estate attorney to forge ahead and make the project happen. Out of necessity, she learned how to fundraise. With her tireless work and help from others, the new Art Center opened in 2009. From the beginning, Carolyn made sure the building was designed so it could be expanded. With the growth the new building has brought to the organization, the facility has expanded – twice. Carolyn has served as the Center's President for 3 out of her 6 years on the board.

In 2009, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women recognized Carolyn as an "Unsung Heroine" for her work with both the Falmouth Historical Society and Falmouth Art Center.

Carolyn enjoys being a part of the town of Falmouth. "I love living here with all the opportunities for talks, walks and music--and for meeting interesting people and making friends. And I do look forward to doing more research on Falmouth's whaling history."