

Maureen Bleday
Recipient of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award

Each year, the John J. Cronin Public Service Award committee awards this high honor to an individual who has served the Town of Westwood. John J. Cronin Sr. served the Town for thirty-three years and selflessly gave of his time and expertise for the betterment of the community both as an elected official and in numerous volunteer activities. To recognize this same spirit of community involvement as exemplified by John Cronin's life, it is with great pleasure that we have chosen Maureen Bleday as the sixth recipient of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award.

Maureen Bleday has displayed exemplary service, dedication and commitment to the Town of Westwood. Through her service on numerous Town committees and organizations, Maureen has made valuable contributions to Westwood, as well as other communities.

Maureen is the oldest of seven children. Her parents, Edward and Teresa moved to Westwood in 1968. Edward, her father who passed away last June, preceded John Cronin as Westwood's Town Treasurer from 1976 through 1979. Maureen, a practicing attorney, received her undergraduate degree from McGill College and her law degree from McGill Law School. She is currently the Executive Vice President of Boston Trust Management. She and her husband, Ron, live in Westwood and have three sons, Peter, Alex and John.

Maureen was the Town's first Business Liaison for the Business Development Task Force between 1993 and 1997. As the Business Liaison, she assisted with the establishment of the Task Force, initiated the review of environmental conditions affecting the financing of University Avenue properties, suggested and oversaw modifications to the zoning bylaws in order to encourage the establishment of businesses in Westwood and she initiated a workshop for the business leaders, land owners and brokers on University Avenue. Maureen also engaged in discussion with land owners and business leaders to discuss various proposals for renovating, expanding, and/or reusing existing space on University Avenue, Washington Street, Route 1 and High Street.

Maureen also served on several of our local government boards and committees which include:

- Business Development Advisory Board from 1998 through 2001.
- Finance Commission from 2002 – 2005.
- Economic Development Advisory Board from 2005 – 2007.
- Long Range Financial Planning Committee beginning in 2003 and to the present time as a liaison from the Economic Development Advisory Board and then as a community representative.

Maureen has offered her expertise in real estate, municipal finance and general laws. Her counsel is sought by many town officials and staff in Town due to her insight, knowledge and compassion for Town issues.

Maureen is also involved in a number of other organizations:

- She was involved with Caritas Communities, which for over twenty years has been Boston's largest nonprofit, nonsectarian owner of single room occupancy properties, which provide affordable housing to over 600 individuals including the working poor, as well as homeless veterans. Maureen was elected to the Board of Director of Caritas Communities in August 1992 and was elected as Board President in 1996 until 1999. During her tenure, she was responsible for a significant increase in foundation support, as well as presiding over a rapid increase in the number of properties acquired by Caritas Communities.

- She joined the Board of Directors at Hale Reservation in April of 1999. Her ability to balance Hale's land stewardship objectives and dedication to programs for youth from many diverse communities made her an obvious candidate for leadership positions. In 2003 she was appointed as Vice President and in March of 2008 she was appointed President of Hale Reservation's Board of Directors. Not only is she a leader among all the volunteers, but she is an active supporter of the programs – specifically those that benefit children who would otherwise not be able to spend a summer at a camp like Hale Reservation.
- Maureen is currently volunteering at Xaverian High School, assisting with many of their projects. She has been a member of the High Rock Garden Club for 7 years, and is involved in their Community Garden Project and the Adopt an Island Program.

It is also noteworthy that Maureen and her husband biked in the PAN Mass Challenge.

Maureen Bleday has touched the lives of many Westwood residents through her involvement in many volunteer committees, giving her time, expertise and commitment.

On behalf of The John J. Cronin Public Service Award Committee, it is with great pleasure that I present this prestigious award to Maureen Hanley Bleday; and we add her name to the plaque which contains the names of the previously honored individuals which hangs in our Town Hall.