

THOMAS DUNN
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, Town Treasurer, for many years 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 illustrated by John Cronin's life, it is with great pleasure we announce that Thomas J. Dunn was chosen as the thirteenth recipient of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award.

Thomas J. Dunn was first elected to serve as a member of the Westwood Board of Selectmen in 1977. Dedicated and devoted to the Town of Westwood, Tom went on to serve as a Selectman for twenty four years until he retired in 2003, serving as Chairman eight times over his tenure including 1978, 1983, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1995, 1998 and 2001. During his terms of office, Tom gave generously of his time and was committed and compassionate to the issues and concerns of residents, senior citizens and Town staff.

Within his first year as Selectmen, the Board requested a public-spirited group to step forward and conduct a fund raising program to secure funds to install a clock in the Town Hall tower. The Westwood Glen Association volunteered and under the direction of the Selectmen and raised over \$11,000. The clock was installed in 1979 and still exists on Town Hall today.

Under his first Chairmanship in 1978, the Selectmen established a new committee, the Veteran's Memorial Park Committee, which was charged with planning a proposed Veteran's Park at the corner of High Street and Lakeshore Drive, including a monument in honor of those Westwood residents who served in the military. The park was dedicated on Veteran's Day November 11, 1979.

During the January 20, 1978 blizzard, a group comprised of eleven youth forced entrance and committed vandalous acts to the Martha Jones School building. In response, Tom organized and chaired a Vandalism Committee made up of himself, Chief Francis Abbate, Kenneth Foscaldo, Dana Coggins, Arthur Beggeroer and Kathleen Fitzgerald which conducted monthly meetings and authored an anti-loitering bylaw which was enacted at the Special Town Meeting in December of 1978.

In 1979, after much discussion, the Board signed a contract with McNeil and Associates to begin the construction of the 180 elderly housing units under Chapter 121A of the General Laws known as Highland Glen. The official ground breaking ceremony was held on December 20, 1979. Highland Glen continues to provide affordable housing for the elderly today.

In his early years on the Board, Tom was instrumental in tasking the Cemetery Committee with the responsibility of expanding the Baker Cemetery using four and a half acres of Baker Conservation Area. The committee worked for many years on planning and designing the expansion, including a new gated entrance and roadway, which opened in 1993.

In 1986, the Boards of Selectmen in Westwood and Dedham organized and established the Dedham Westwood Water Commission, which negotiated and purchased the Dedham Westwood Water Company. After the November 20, 1986 Town Meeting, the Commissioners along with Tom in the forefront set the stage to make many necessary improvements to the water distribution system and deliver an improved quantity and quality of water at a stabilized price.

In 1992, Tom as Chairman urged the Selectmen to seek construction funds for a Senior Center. With the professional assistance of the Council on Aging Director Patricia Carty-Larkin, Westwood received a CDBG grant from the Commonwealth to build a new Senior Center on Nahatan Street to expand services to the senior population.

During Tom's Chairmanship in 1998, the Board created the Organization for the Preservation of Environment and Nature (OPEN) which negotiated the purchase of a 68.8 acre parcel bounded on two sides by 142 acres of town owned land, mostly conservation land off Sandy Valley Road from the Lowell Family which made it a natural reserve through which the Town can provide passive recreation activities including hiking, biking, skiing, jogging and picnicking.

Finally, in Tom's last term on the Board from 2001 to 2003, the Selectmen sought, received and expended a \$2.6 million appropriation at the Annual Town Meeting in 2001 for the construction of a municipal office building on Carby Street which provided much needed office space for all the land use departments including the Department of Public Works, Planning, Building, Conservation, Health and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Tom and his wife Polly moved to Westwood in 1964 where they raised two children, Polly Ann and Thomas Jr. Polly Ann and her husband Jeff live in Westwood where they are raising two daughters Kailey and Ali, and Thomas Jr. and his wife Kozue live in Japan. Tom's dedication to the Catholic Church, its priests and religious education programs, has helped enrich and enhance the lives of those involved in Westwood's spiritual community.

On behalf of the John J. Cronin Public Service Award Committee, it is with great pleasure that we present this prestigious award to Thomas J. Dunn and we add his name to the plaque displayed in Town Hall listing all previously honored individuals.