

In gratitude to man who ga

BY ELLEN HARDE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Editor's note: Following are comments made at the Dec. 28 memorial service for Gordon B. Seavey held at First Parish Church. Harde spoke at the request of Barbara Seavey.

Thank you Barbara for inviting me to speak at this time, to remember Gordon with all of you and to remember what he meant to the town of Westford.

I do know that if everyone who lived in Westford did as much for the community as Gordon Seavey did, we would have an even more extraordinary town than we already do.

We know that Gordon served on the Westford Academy Trustees for so long a tenure he was honored at Town Meeting this past May. And he was a Cemetery Commissioner for two terms in the 1980s. (When I went to check the Town Report to find the year he was first elected, I found that although unopposed in

1981, Gordon was the second highest vote-getter, an envious record for a first-time politician.)

We know that his generosity helped to make the Westford Museum a reality, and to convert the former Frost School — which he attended as a child — into the Roudenbush Children's Center at Frost Daycare in 1992.

As important as these are — serving on town boards and giving financial support to town projects — there is something which Gordon gave us which I think is longer lasting: he gave us the understanding and appreciation of the history of this town, a sense of the past on which the present is built.

And that simply cannot be underestimated. Without Gordon's unending hours at that typewriter of his, remembering, researching and recording Westford's past, much would have been lost to us.

In her beautiful piece in the *Eagle* the week Gordon died, his friend,

local historian June Kennedy, referred to Gordon as her "mentor." In many ways, Gordon was mentor to the entire community — our historic Jiminy Cricket, our conscience about the town's past.

It was Gordon who quietly waged the battle to have street signs spell the street names correctly. It is "Powers Road" named for Walter Pow-

ers, not Power — Road. The "Cold Spring" in "Cold Spring Road" is two words please, named for the spring on J. Varum Fletcher's land between that road and Stony Brook. And that's "Stony" with no "e." Check those street signs out as you next drive by. That's Gordon's hand showing.

In 1984, it was Gordon who got the tree warden to plant half a dozen shade trees along Main Street, citing the precedent of the Westford Ornamental Tree Association organized in 1871 by J. W. P. Abbot.

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ve town its sense of history

Gordon was the one who first wrote to the selectmen and of course at the same time sent an article for the *Eagle* and the *Sun* to publish — about restoring Westford Common. His July 1990 letter to the board he stressed the Common's history as "the training field for soldiers, a playground for Academy students and later others, and uncluttered with many foreign objects." As early as 1978, he wrote an article about the 1883 granite trough which was on the Common, but originally sat next to the Town Hall to catch the overflow from the town pump. When the Historic Commission was working on the Common this year, it was Gordon who suggested the trough be returned to the Town Hall, which it was just eight weeks ago, and Gordon was there to watch, and of course record the history on film.

As recently as the November

commission meeting, Gordon was on the agenda to lobby for the removal of a little more clutter from the Common. Fighting the good fight still at 91.

And there were some versions of Westford's history which Gordon felt it incumbent on him to correct. The legend of the Westford Knight was one. Three falls ago when I was set to do my annual Roudenbush tour of the town, Gordon phoned and said he would like to give each person on the bus a set of the Westford postcards he'd had made. This church, the Museum, the Minutemen on the Common and Roudenbush. Barbara dropped the package off, and attached was a note from Gordon — typed of course — which said:

"Hi, Ellen: What a glorious day to ride through a glorious historical town.

"Please go easy on that 'Knight on the Rock' stuff. An unfortunate legend, based on no facts.

Gordon"

Maybe it's best Gordon will not be here for the 600th anniversary celebration of the Knight in 1998:

The list goes on and on. Each of you can probably come up with your own example of Westford history learned from Gordon — and I urge you to do that — and then to remember it this afternoon and tomorrow as a way of remembering the knowledge of Westford history which Gordon gave each of us individually — and the town collectively.

Barbara, you asked me to speak at this service on what Gordon meant to Westford.

An assignment made easy, Barbara, because of what Westford meant to Gordon.

Thank you.

Ellen Harde is Town Moderator, a member of the Board of Directors of Roudenbush Associates, and serves on the committee which has undertaken the restoration of Town Common.