



The Elliott Berry Fund

Many great leaders share a trait: A deep and pure commitment to a cause that is greater than themselves.

Attorney Elliott Berry is such a leader. He leads relentlessly, without ego and without fear, in his pursuit of justice.

Elliott was one of the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund's founding fathers and a member of our first board of directors. Because he represented people with low incomes at New Hampshire Legal Assistance, he was among the first to see the potential of using financial self-reliance tools to help them climb out of poverty.

Elliott has assisted in dozens of conversions of manufactured-housing parks since 1985, but none in as spectacular fashion as his first.

A park in Milford had been purchased by a developer who planned to tear it down and build condos, and who showed little regard for the homeowners living there. He raised the rents on their house lots, illegally tried to evict them and intimidated the residents any way he could. Many feared they'd become homeless.

Elliott took the side of the homeowners with an unwavering commitment. He outmaneuvered the developer in the courts, buying time until the homeowners' last-ditch offer to buy the park succeeded (with technical assistance and financing from the Community Loan Fund). Florence Quast, the first president of the new Souhegan Valley Co-op, said, "He saved our homes, our lives, and our futures."

That was only New Hampshire's second resident-owned community, but Elliott ensured there would be many more. He used the Milford story, along with some that had less-happy endings, to persuade the Legislature and Governor to pass a law protecting homeowners from immediate park closure, then another giving homeowners the right and the opportunity to organize and purchase their communities. The latter "60-day notice" law has been the legal cornerstone of our park-conversion success ever since.

Fittingly, the formation of the Elliott Berry Fund was announced the day co-op residents from around New Hampshire gathered to celebrate the First 100 park conversions in the state.

We invite you to honor Elliott's spirit and accomplishments, and to support the people that he and the Community Loan Fund have served for three decades, by donating to the Elliott Berry Fund.