



The Mary Louise Hancock Fund

Mary Louise Hancock, a stalwart, charming, and untiring advocate for working families, has been a friend and supporter of the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund since its founding.

A descendant of founding father John Hancock, Mary Louise is a longtime political and social activist and an enemy of discrimination in its many forms. She was the first female state planning director in the United States and the first woman (and the first Democrat) elected to the New Hampshire Senate from Concord. In her later life, she has assumed the mantle of the “Grand Dame” of NH’s Democratic party.

Mary Louise was steeped in political discourse and at a young age. Her father owned and operated Hancock’s Drug Store in Concord, a popular Main Street meeting place for legislators and state officials. She became a Franklin Delano Roosevelt Democrat, she said, because “his programs seemed designed to help people who couldn’t help themselves.”

Along with empathy, she shared with FDR a certain medical condition and a determination not to be defined by it. Stricken with polio as a toddler, she was nevertheless a tomboy who played football and hockey.

Likewise, as a minority (female and progressive) voice in an overwhelmingly conservative Senate, she was a tireless fighter for affordable housing, welfare assistance for single mothers, environmental protection, the rights of persons with disabilities, and against child abuse and domestic violence. On her issues, she refused to give up or give in.

A favorite quote by George Bernard Shaw, “The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man,” captures Mary Louise’s tenacious spirit, a spirit we at the Community Loan Fund have embraced in our work.

“If I’ve got a problem, I call her up and brainstorm, and in five minutes she’ll come up with half a dozen solutions,” says Community Loan Fund President Julie Eades.

The Mary Louise Hancock Fund was established on the occasion of her 90th birthday in 2010, and reached the \$100,000 mark a year later. We invite you to honor Mary Louise’s spirit and accomplishments, and to support the Community Loan Fund and the people we serve, by donating to the Mary Louise Hancock Fund.