

## Woman leaves \$500K to local nonprofits

### NONPROFIT

By Derek Gomes

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MIDDLETOWN- The leaders of the Aquidneck Land Trust and Norman Bird Sanctuary knew Beth Everett as a member - or at least a likely member - of their respective nonprofits. That is to say they knew virtually nothing of the Middletown resident.

“We never had any conversations with her,” said Natasha Harrison, the bird sanctuary's executive director. “I did not know her. She was probably a member at one point but wasn't on my radar at all.”

The organizations were on Everett's radar, though.

After she died in April 2017, the attorney handling her estate sent the nonprofits a letter to say that Everett bequeathed \$250,000 to each of them in her will. Both organizations recently received checks from the estate.

“I fell off my chair,” recalled Charles Allott, executive director of the land trust. The donations were made in honor of her late husband, Walter Everett, who died in November 2005. He was 95.

Everett specified that the gift to the land trust

was for acquiring land to preserve it; the bequest to the bird sanctuary See **NONPROFIT, A5**



**The Aquidneck Land Trust plans to install a bench similar to this one on the Spruce Acres property along the Gewirz Trail to honor Beth Everett, who gave the organization \$250,000 in her will. [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]**

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came with no strings attached and will be devoted to invasive plant management and removing trees that pose a hazard or are knocked down by a storm, Harrison said.

Everett never revealed during her lifetime why she singled out the land trust and sanctuary or why they resonated with her and her husband.

“I would just speculate it's obviously based on nature and keeping the island with some natural areas that they would have picked our two organizations,” Allott said recently in his Aquidneck Avenue office.

Conjecture and speculation are likely the only ways to fill the gaps in Everett's story of giving.

The couple, who were married for 50 years, had no children together,

for Beth Everett. She was 94 at the time of her death, said Gretchen Markert, the communications and outreach manager for the land trust.

She labeled Everett a “quiet giver,” someone who doesn't “make a big fuss,” but does something “transformative.”

Her gift will go a long way for the land trust toward acquiring a parcel, one that will promote the island's aesthetics to align with the Everetts' vision, Allott said.

“All of our projects are funded from dollar one up,” he said. “We don't have a land acquisition fund. We did in the early 2000s. ... Land is so expensive on the island. It's great leverage money.”

“You're planning so much as a nonprofit, trying to budget, trying to make it work so you can do the things you want to do ... and you've got these strategic plans with long-term goals,” Harrison said. “And then all of a sudden you've got this windfall to go toward that, and it's a nice problem to have when someone gives you money with

To honor the Everetts, the land trust will install a memorial bench somewhere on the newly conserved Spruce Acres Farm property on the Portsmouth-Middletown line that will be opened as a public park soon.

Both the land trust and bird sanctuary have planned-giving programs so they are aware of individuals who include the organizations in a will. But with Everett serving as a prime example, some gifts fall through the cracks, especially those from individuals who keep a low profile.

“We always encourage people to do [planned giving], but you never know what will come from your efforts,” Allott said.

“I only wish we could have thanked her when she was alive,” Markert added. “I mean we'll honor her now, but it's nice when we know because we like to thank people.”

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according to Walter Everett's obituary in no designation out of nowhere and it  
The Newport Daily News. He had a puts you ahead on things.”  
daughter from a previous marriage. A  
search of The Daily News's digital  
archives turned up no obituary