

The 2018 Lamoine Conservation Award

The Lamoine Conservation Commission is pleased to present the 2018 Conservation Award jointly to Eleanor Norris and Terry Towne, to recognize their roles in the conveyance of a portion of Marlboro Beach to the citizens of Lamoine. Accepting the award on behalf of Eleanor Norris, who passed in 2008, is her son Jim Norris—who himself deserves credit for donating a portion of Marlboro Beach to the Town nearly four decades ago, and who played a key role in fulfilling his mother's wish to keep the rest of Marlboro Beach open to the public. The Lamoine Conservation Commission is pleased to honor Eleanor and the Norris family for making it possible for this significant section of the shore to be preserved in perpetuity for all legitimate public uses, from recreation to traditional harvesting activities.

The Norris family's roots in Marlboro date back to 1945, when Jim's father, James Norris, Sr., purchased 60 acres that included Marlboro Beach. James and Eleanor came to Lamoine from Massachusetts. James Sr. served in both the Navy and Coast Guard in World War II and felt a strong connection to the sea. He understood the importance of the shore to the members of the local community, many of whom made a living from its resources. From the beginning, James and Eleanor made Marlboro Beach accessible to the public, preserving the ability of many residents to earn their livelihood in traditional ways dating back generations.

Eleanor's civic engagement took many forms beyond her commitment to ensuring public access to Marlboro Beach. A graduate of the New England Music Conservatory of Rhode Island, Eleanor taught music to students in Lamoine, Ellsworth, and elsewhere. She was a church organist and a member of the Lamoine Grange and Lamoine Historical Society.

Jim Norris and his wife Cynthia live in the comfortable, unassuming home that we all pass on our way to Marlboro Beach. Many people do not realize that they have been entering private property as they head down to the beach, because the Norrises have been so welcoming—making no fuss about sharing this extraordinary place with strangers, day in and day out. For decades from their living room window, Jim and Cynthia have witnessed a parade of people using the beach. There are clambers, wormers, and lobstermen, people walking their dogs, taking in the scenery, stargazing, or gathering with their antique car clubs. There have been funerals and weddings on the beach—three weddings in the past year, by Jim's count—attesting to the significance of this spot in people's lives. Jim has embraced the value his mother Eleanor placed on keeping Marlboro Beach open to the public, and has served as a responsible steward of the property over the years. Now, as the Town takes over ownership of the entire beach, Jim Norris is gratified that public access to the beach will be safeguarded, and that the property can be managed in a way that will deter erosion, ensure security, and facilitate the range of appropriate activities that take place on the beach.

For these reasons, we are pleased to honor Eleanor Norris and the Norris family with this award.



Larissa Thomas, Chair



Linda Penkalski, Secretary



Doug Stewart



Jeff Cosulich



Kerry Diskin



Mike Jordan, Alternate



Diane Nicholls, Alternate