



Friends of the Wilmington Memorial Library 25th Anniversary History

In the early 1950's, the Literature Committee of the Wilmington Women's Club created the Friends of the Wilmington Library to supplement the public library "for special needs not provided in the budget." This informal group was never incorporated as an official Friends of the Library. In Annual Reports after the early 1960's, there ceased to be any further references to a Friends of the Wilmington Library.

Organizing a Friends of the Library was identified as a goal in the library five year long range plan 1995-2000. Subsequently, library patrons were invited to an informational meeting to learn about how Friends groups operate and support the library. An organizational meeting was later held to create by-laws and begin recruiting members. On September 25, 1997, the Friends of the Wilmington Memorial Library, officially established as a 501c3 non-profit organization, held its first annual meeting with 51 charter members and elected the following to serve on the Friends Executive Board: President Karen Campbell, Vice President Patricia Banda, Recording Secretary Terry McDermott, Corresponding Secretary Christine Hauray, Treasurer Janet Cahill.

Providing financial support for services beyond the town's budget was identified as a key tenet of the Friends mission. To this end, the Friends began collecting gently used books and held its first annual book sale in July 1998. This primary fundraiser was held every year in the large meeting room until 2005. Following the loss of the proposal for the new library facility in November 2005, the staff was faced with challenging space constraints and book storage for the book sale was shifted to property next to the library that had been recently purchased by the Town at the November Special Town Meeting. Soon after, an idea was proposed to use this house for a book store rather than just a storage place. The Book Store Next Door opened in April 2007. In 2011, the Book Store Next Door received the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award. Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, fifty volunteers work approximately 2,000 volunteer hours over the course of the year serving as book sorters and cashiers. The gently used books which are donated sell for \$2 (hardcovers) and \$1 (paperbacks). All proceeds support the library by funding hundreds of programs every year.

Since the loss of the proposal to build a new library in 2005, the Friends have been supporting the library makeover in order to meet challenging space constraints and create a user friendly space for library services. In 2006, the Friends launched its first annual appeal to raise funds for the makeover project. In recent years, annual appeal donations have supported creation of the

Peggy Kane Reading Garden and the StoryWalk® at Rotary Park. Other fundraiser over the years include gift basket raffles, restaurant fundraisers and a Wilmington House Tours in 2003 to 2005. The Friends began hosting an annual used jewelry fundraiser in 2021. The Friends have funded staff attendance at national library conferences including the American Library Association Conference, the Public Library Association Conference and the Computers in Libraries Conference.

The Friends also raise money through its membership dues. The annual membership renewal drive is held annually in the spring. As of the March 17, 2022 annual meeting, the Friends had 193 members. The Friends Executive Board meets monthly from September through June on the second Tuesday of the month. The annual meeting is held on the third Thursday in March. All members are welcome to attend.