

## Mary Coutant, A Legacy of Love and Leadership



*Beloved children's advocate Mary Coutant succumbed to chronic health illness on October 9, 2012, at the age of 71.*

On October 9, 2012, the community of Northwest Connecticut said goodbye to a beloved community leader, a woman revered for her advocacy work, a woman who gave countless hours to improve the lives of children in the community she loved.

Mary Coutant was born Mary Humeston in 1941 in New Haven, the youngest of the six Humeston children. A high-energy athletic young woman, Mary was an active member of the local YMCA, working with the Torrington YMCA as the Women and Girls Secretary and working as a camp counselor at the YMCA Camp Mohawk for Girls each summer.

She earned a degree in psychology from Springfield College in Massachusetts, a school with a strong athletic focus and historical partnership with YMCA USA. In 1998, she established the Winchester Youth Service Bureau, an agency that functions as a case manager for families of at-risk children, helping them to access agencies and resources, so their children experience success at school, at home and in the community.

"Mary was a force for good," Foundation President Guy Rovezzi said. "And her contributions to the welfare of our community, especially where it concerns children, will be felt for generations to come."

Over the course of her life, Mary received the Torrington Rotary Club's Paul Harris Fellowship award; was named Person of the Year by the Torrington UNICO Club; and earned the Chamber of Commerce of

Northwest Connecticut's Community Leader Award.

In recognition of Mary's contributions to the community, The Mary H. Coutant Fund for the Summer Fun Club was established at the Foundation in 2001. Recently renamed The Mary H. Coutant Fund for Rising Star Camp, the endowment is used to support programs that benefit at-risk children through the Winchester Youth Service Bureau aged 5 to 15 by encouraging healthy choices and goal-setting.

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### *Mary Coutant's Legacy Lives at Camp Mohawk*

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waterfront director, senior unit director and eventually led the CIT program. In 1962, she met another fellow camp counselor named Roger Coutant; the two married four years later in 1967.

"Mary emanated the spirit and energy of Camp Mohawk," said Fran Marchand Camp Mohawk Executive Director.

In addition to establishing The Mary H. Coutant Fund for Rising Star Camp, Mary bequeathed seed money to Camp Mohawk for the establishment of a non-restricted fund. The Camp Mohawk Fund will support Camp Mohawk and enable others to continue Mary's legacy by including the Camp in their estate planning.

In 1960, Mary Coutant was Mary Humeston, a teenage girl attending Camp Mohawk, a camp for girls nestled among 1,500 acres of state forest in the hills of Northwest Connecticut. As a Counselor in Training (CIT), Mary worked to develop leadership, public speaking, teaching and counseling skills. During her time at Camp Mohawk, she served as assistant



*In her youth, Mary worked as a Counselor in Training at Camp Mohawk, developing leadership skills, including public speaking, teaching and counseling. She met her husband, Roger Coutant, at the Camp in 1962.*



*Dedicated to public service, Fred Petersen served on the Foundation's Board for eight years. He passed away in October of 2012.*

### **Fred Petersen: Public Servant, Veteran's Advocate, Compassionate Man**

An avid genealogist, sailor, UConn women's basketball fan and active citizen, Fred Petersen was a man of many pursuits, with ample energy to follow wherever his heart led him. Fred's passion for public service and his compassion for others made him the ideal community leader, as his résumé readily proves.

"From firefighter and ambulance driver to auxiliary policeman and Boy Scout leader, dad was active in the community—wherever he was," Mary Elizabeth Whitaker said of her father, who was born and raised in Newport, RI.

Fred's passing on October 9 leaves a void at the Foundation, where he served on the board of directors for eight years, as well as at the countless civic organizations that benefitted from his service. Among those were the Connecticut Heritage

Foundation, which Fred chaired for 10 years, the Connecticut State Library, and the Torrington Area Health District.

A longtime resident of Falls Village, Fred spent much of his career as a financial and business affairs officer at colleges and independent schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Michigan. He also served in the Navy and was a lifelong advocate for veterans and those actively serving in the U.S. military.

"Fred was the salt of the earth, and he will be sorely missed," Foundation President Guy Rovezzi said. "His dedication to the Foundation's mission—to promoting the common good—was a model for us to emulate."



## Camp Mohawk and Foundation Fundholders Help Girls Reach Their Potential

For almost 95 years, Camp Mohawk in Litchfield has helped girls and young women from Northwest Conn. and around the world build confidence, hone skills and work toward reaching their potentials. From June 23 – August 17, more than 700 girls arrive at the camp for one or two weeks of activities, including swimming, horseback riding, animal husbandry, arts and sports programs and curriculum that develops their confidence, leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

“Every activity at the Camp has a curriculum,” said Fran Marchand Camp Mohawk Executive Director. “We push our girls and our staff to continue in their personal growth, knowledge and appreciation of themselves. Our expectation is that every girl is going to go home and change the world as a positive force for good in the community.”

Camp activities are geared toward girls learning about themselves and their relationship to their natural environment as well as how to work as a member of a team. Girls work in pairs or in groups, learning to push themselves and support and encourage each other. Every night in the cabins, they sit down for a counselor led non-denominational discussion about values, spirituality and their relationships with their natural environment. Camp counselors then meet with each camper individually on the front porch of the cabin to discuss her day, including any happy experiences, frustrations and comments about activities.

In 2012, 70 campers attended Camp Mohawk using financial scholarships, a number that grows every year. Marchand hopes that number will represent 10 percent of campers by 2015.

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*Mohawk Campers choose from activities, including swimming, horseback riding, animal husbandry, arts and sports programs.*



*Mohawk Campers are challenged to complete ropes courses, some of which are as high as 35 feet.*

Camp Mohawk staff to use monies wherever they are needed, including new signs for the camp, which is currently underway.

### Providing for Momentum: New Funds Benefit Community

**One Twenty One Fund** – was established as a donor-advised fund supporting charitable scientific, and educational initiatives primarily in Northwest, Connecticut.

**The Litchfield Garden Club Centennial Fund** – was established in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Garden Club’s 1913 founding. The endowed charitable fund supports projects and programs in the greater Litchfield area in the fields of gardening, horticulture, civic beautification, environmental awareness, and historic preservation.

**Camp Mohawk Fund** – was established through a gift from Mary Coutant, a longtime advocate for women and girls and a former Camp Mohawk counselor. The unrestricted fund supports Camp Mohawk, a camp for girls in Litchfield County.



*Drew Harlow, (middle) Litchfield Garden Club president and Garden Club member Susan Magary (right) present a check to Guy Rovezzi, Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut president, establishing The Litchfield Garden Club Centennial Fund.*



*Mohawk Campers spend a lot of time getting to know each other through group activity and counselor-led conversations. They build friendships that last well into adulthood.*