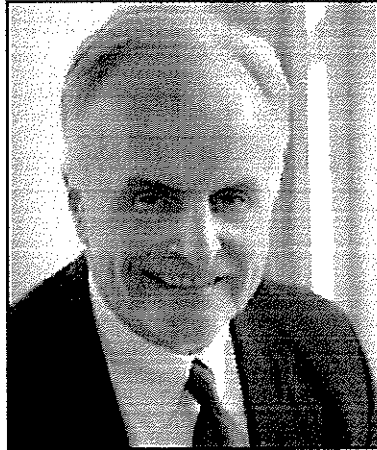


# DeLong to retire

**BAR HARBOR** — Gary A. DeLong, executive director of the Maine Sea Coast Mission, has announced plans to retire at the end of this year. By that time, he will have completed 11 years at the mission and will be 66 years old. Mr. DeLong is the eighth person to serve as director in the institution's 105-year history.

Mr. DeLong grew up in Maine and graduated from Beals High School in Washington County before going away to college with the support of a mission scholarship. After serving as a youth minister for churches in the Boston and Springfield, Mass. areas, Mr. DeLong became the associate pastor at the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, Mass., in 1975. He became co-pastor in 1977 and then served as senior minister from 1987 until he returned to Maine to serve as director of the mission in May 1999.

During Mr. DeLong's tenure at the mission, two major new programs were initiated. The EdGE, an after



FILE PHOTO

*Rev. Gary DeLong*

school and summer program in Down East Maine, was initiated in 2002 and currently serves 500 children in 17 communities through nine schools in Washington and Hancock counties. Island Health Services, begun in 2001, provides access to health care to residents of Maine's outer islands through a nurse and telemedicine equipment on board the *Sunbeam V* and in island clinics, which links

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## **DELONG/1:** *Retirement set*

island patients with health care providers.

The total budget for the mission in 1998, the year before Mr. DeLong came on board, was \$827,000. Twelve years later, the 2010 budget is \$3,116,000, a 285 percent increase. This change in the budget reflects a dramatic increase in the programs and services being provided to Maine's islanders and Down East residents. In addition to the two new programs, college scholarships have significantly increased in amount and number, food pantries now serve islands as well as Down East communities, and emergency assistance now serves hundreds of people each year with fuel and weatherization assistance.

The mission also launched its first capital campaign since \$1 million was raised for *Sunbeam V* in 1994. The mission's Centennial Campaign "Hope in Action" was launched on July 11, 2005, exactly 100 years from the date of the founding of the mission. The campaign sought to raise \$12 million for youth development and island outreach programs. Its successful conclusion was announced at the mission's 2009 annual meeting.

In reflecting upon his service as the mission's director, Mr. DeLong commented, "It has been a won-

derful privilege to come home to the coast of Maine and the Sea Coast Mission for what will most likely mark the end of my ministerial career. Leading the 105-year-old mission means striving every day to honor the competence and commitment of staff members, volunteers, and donors, past and present. And it means being grateful for the opportunity to know and partner with our constituents. My most enjoyable and productive moments were spent at the kitchen tables of those the mission is privileged to serve on islands and way Downeast."

Lee Judd, president of the mission's board of directors, observed: "Gary DeLong's tenure as the leader of the mission has been marked by significant program expansion to meet real needs on Maine's islands and in its Downeast communities. Gary will be leaving the mission in excellent shape and he will be sorely missed by all."

The mission's board of directors has formed a search committee, headed by past president Jill Goldthwait, to identify a highly qualified candidate to succeed Mr. DeLong. A New York City search firm, DRG, which specializes in searches in the nonprofit sector, has been retained to assist in the nationwide effort.