

# Sea Coast Mission to Honor Dixon, Stanley

**BAR HARBOR** — Boat builder and local historian Ralph Stanley and philanthropist Edith Robb Dixon will be honored by the Maine Sea Coast Mission at the eighth annual *Sunbeam Awards Gala*.

The event will be at the Bar Harbor Club on Friday, Aug. 19. The gala is not only a fund-raiser for the Mission's many programs, but also provides an opportunity for the Mission to publicly acknowledge individuals who have furthered the social, cultural, financial and/or educational experiences of those living along the Down East coast and on Maine's offshore islands.

Born in 1929, Mr. Stanley grew up in Southwest Harbor and has a long-standing association with boats. In addition to making toy wooden boats as a child, Mr. Stanley drew boats and in his early 20s made his first boat — a 28-foot wooden lobster boat. Because of the success of that endeavor, Mr. Stanley began building boats, and by the time he sold his business to his son, his shop had built about 70 boats, ranging from small sailboats to large offshore lobster boats crafted out of local pine, cedar and oak.

In 1999, the National Endowment for the Arts named Mr. Stanley "a master boatbuilder" and awarded him a National Heritage Fellowship for his work in building wooden boats and in restoring and building Friendship sloops, a sailboat used by commercial fishermen in the late 1800s and built in Friendship, Maine.

But boats are not the only thing Mr. Stanley has crafted out of wood. He also makes violins, and he uses them to play regularly at Grange dances in Union, Northport and Searsport. On Sunday afternoons he plays for the senior citizens in Bucksport.

And while he readily admits that a lifetime is not enough time to do all that he wants to do, he has found yet another calling —



PHOTO BY MAINE COAST MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

*Edith Dixon*

researching and compiling genealogies and lists of wooden boats and their uses. In mid-July, he spoke on Great Cranberry Island about rum-running during the Prohibition.

Mr. Stanley serves on the board of a number of historical societies — Penobscot Maritime Museum, Mount Desert Island Historical Society and the historical societies of Islesford, Tremont and Southwest Harbor. He is also a fellow of the G.W. Blunt White Library at the Mystic Seaport Museum. At Mystic he documented a list of wooden boats built on Mount Desert Island between 1782 and 1902. He is currently writing a book about the Stanley family.

Ms. Dixon has a long history of philanthropy, both in Downeast Maine where she has summered for 60 years and in Philadelphia. She said one of her goals is to help Maine people preserve their way of life and the environment. In pursuit of that

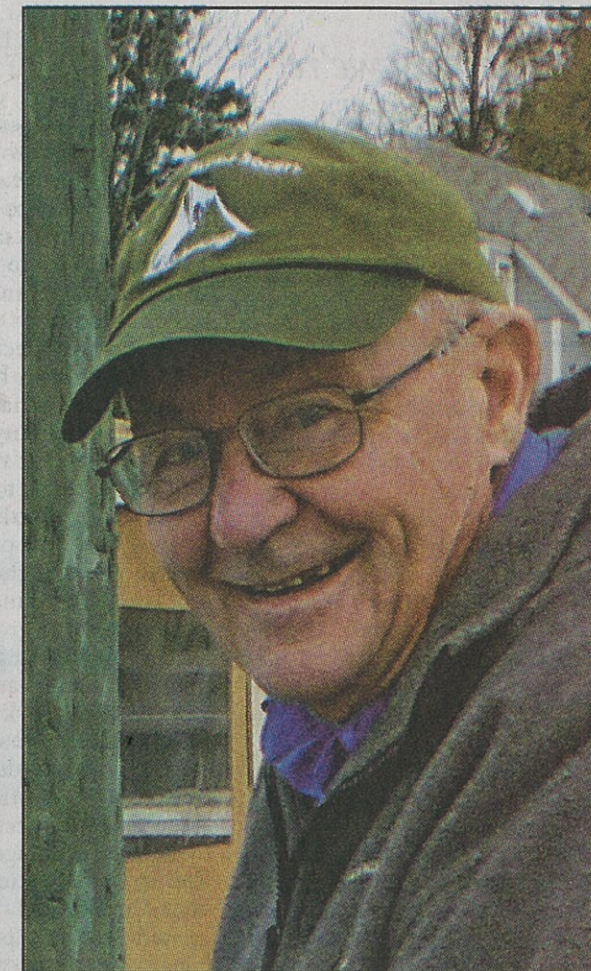


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*Ralph Stanley*

have for many years supported the Maine Coast Memorial Hospital and were pivotal in ensuring funding for the hospital's recent expansion. Because of her belief that theater is an important part of the life of any community, she has been a strong supporter of The Grand in downtown Ellsworth.

Ms. Dixon's commitment to protecting the environment is evidenced by her generous support of Frenchman Bay Conservancy,

Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Schoodic Education and Research Center, a spokesman said. In addition to her unrestricted contributions, Ms. Dixon also has made restricted gifts for specific land purchases, said Frenchman Bay Conservancy director Tom Sidar. This interest in protecting land prompted her to donate two islands to Maine Coast Heritage Trust: Ned Island is just south of Grindstone Neck in Winter Harbor, while Flat Island is due west

of Grindstone Neck and in Frenchman Bay.

Acadia National Park superintendent Sheridan Steele calls her a "terrific leader" and credits her with playing a major role in helping the park convert the former Navy base at Schoodic into a dynamic science and education campus.

Recently Mrs. Dixon donated a lead gift of \$1 million to accelerate the restoration of the historic Rockefeller building, a building that will become the welcome center and focal point for facilities on the Schoodic campus. "We at Acadia offer our hearty congratulations to Edie for this richly deserved recognition of her many contributions to the people of Maine and Acadia National Park," said Mr. Steele.

In Philadelphia, Ms. Dixon is recognized for her financial support and years of service to Cabrini College, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Fairmont Park Conservancy and Philadelphia Zoological Society.

The gala will begin with cocktails at 6 pm, followed by dinner at 7:00pm, and the recognition of the honorees following dinner. Brian Catell and the Jump City Jazz at will provide music following the program.

Fund-raising events such as the *Sunbeam Awards Gala*, allow the Mission to continue its programs to residents of offshore islands and Down East Maine. The gala planning committee of 20 is led by chairman Shari Roopenian and vice-chairman Barbara Hepburn. The gala's lead platinum sponsor is Bar Harbor Bank & Trust. Gold level sponsors are The First, Prime, Buchholtz & Associates Inc., and Jasper Wyman & Son. For more information about the *Sunbeam Awards Gala*, call Sarah Clemens at 288-5097.

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