



## Tribute to Beth Webb

When Beth Webb suddenly passed away in December, the Alleghany Foundation lost much more than an executive director.

Beth was a friend to many in the Alleghany Highlands and a person who demonstrated a strong commitment to the organization's mission of positively impacting the wellbeing and prosperity of all who live in and love this very special area of the Commonwealth.

Beth was employed by the Alleghany Foundation for 14 years, literally, working her way to the top and eventually managing the day-to-day operations of the Foundation as its executive director, starting in 2007. She actually joined the non-profit organization's staff soon after its inception in 1995 when she was hired by Lewis Nelson, the Foundation's executive director at the time.

He quickly realized that Beth "brought a deep dedication to her work."

"I've said many times that hiring Beth as my secretary was the best decision I made at the Foundation," says Nelson. "I remember on many occasions how attentive she was in board and committee meetings to the outside speakers who were talking about financial and technical matters. She was always absorbed in the business of the Foundation and was driven to improve herself, so she could assume additional duties."

Nelson was the Foundation's executive director from 1995-to-2005 and during that time Beth was promoted to the position of administrative assistant, a move that gave her more responsibilities and greater challenges within the organization.

"I admired her work ethic," Nelson says. "With her pleasant personality and her abilities, she was destined to move into new responsibilities."

Beth was always mindful of the impact the Foundation had on the community and of its mission to improve the quality of life for all citizens in the Alleghany Highlands.

"It was apparent that Beth received satisfaction from the good things resulting from Foundation grants," says Jim Snyder, Alleghany Foundation board member and former president. "She was a wonderful employee who strove to do her best in every aspect of her job and she continuously learned new skills, making her efforts even more valuable to the Foundation. We miss her very much."



“The things I remember most about Beth are that she was friendly, helpful, and had an enthusiasm and dedication when it came to seeing good things happen in the Alleghany Highlands through the work of the Foundation,” says Lisa Hicks, director of the Charles P. Jones Memorial Library.

Webb grew up in Roanoke Co. and graduated from Cave Spring High School in 1983. She worked for J.M. Turner, General Electric and Coopers and Lybrand consultants after graduation, and was actually on the job in Covington one day when she met her future husband, Rick, during a trip to Westvaco. The two married and made their home in Alleghany County with their daughter, Anna, who is now a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Clifton Middle School.

Webb’s admirers were many in the community and also at the Foundation. When she was named its executive director in January of 2007, Catherine Leonard was hired to step into Webb’s administrative position.

“Beth’s contagious energy and enthusiasm were so beneficial to me in assuming her former responsibilities,” says Leonard. “Her natural abilities as a director were exemplified in the manner in which she was always perceptive of the daily operations of the Foundation office. Foremost in her direction to me was the working of the Foundation and how it impacted the community. I treasured her guidance and leadership, as well as her friendship. It was truly my immense pleasure to have been her secretary for the past three years.”

During her time with the Foundation, Webb witnessed approximately \$29 million being awarded to organizations in the Alleghany Highlands like the Free Clinic, Jackson River Enterprises and the local YMCA.

“It was an honor and a pleasure to work with Beth,” says Gwen Bagley, the president and CEO of the Alleghany Highlands YMCA. “She had the challenging role of serving as the liaison between the grantees and the board, and one must have a solid understanding of the Foundation’s purpose and ensure the grants are in alignment with the Foundation’s priorities and outcomes. In addition, you have to fully understand the grantee as an organization and their application, so you may speak on their behalf to the board.”

Perhaps no one understood the importance of this process more, or knew Beth better, than George J. Kostel. The life-long resident of the Highlands, who represented the 6<sup>th</sup> District in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1964-to-1971, worked with Beth from the time she was hired by the Foundation. Often the two blended their skills on the all-important grant review process.

“Beth never stopped learning and growing and she was tireless in her efforts to find ways to improve every aspect of our operation,” says Kostel. “She loved her work and was dedicated to our mission of improving the quality of life for the residents of the Alleghany Highlands.”

Kostel is an original member of the Foundation’s board of directors and the former chairman of the grant review process. In essence, he watched Webb rise from a stenographer’s position to become the organization’s executive director.

“I was gratified to see the way she advanced and there is no doubt Beth had a lot of potential,” says Kostel. “We were fortunate to have her.”

I think I speak for the entire Alleghany Foundation board of directors when I say we echo all of these fitting comments. Beth took her role seriously and excelled at it. She was a champion for children, for families and for our community.

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