

Longtime Maldonian Dr. George Holland is being remembered today as a wonderful man, an exemplary educator and champion of the city in which he grew up and to which he dedicated his life.

By Wendall Waters

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Longtime Maldonian Dr. George Holland is being remembered today as a wonderful man, an exemplary educator and champion of the city in which he grew up and to which he dedicated his life.

Holland, who passed away Wednesday, August 10 at the age of 78, was born in Malden in 1937. He attended Malden schools and went on to become an educator here himself, earning praise from those who knew and worked with him. He taught mathematics, became assistant superintendent, and then served as the superintendent from 1984 to 2000.

Former Malden High School Principal Dana Brown, who also grew up in Malden, was hired by Holland when Holland was superintendent.

“He was just a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful man,” Brown said.

Brown said Holland brought many talented educators into Malden schools, educators who in turn have had a positive influence on the system over the years. In addition, Brown said, Holland was always calm and knew what to do in any situation.

“He was a thinker. He was not a reactor,” Brown said. “He had a great way about him.”

“I think he was tremendously bright,” Brown said, “One of the most intelligent people I’ve ever known.”

Holland’s passing, Brown said, is the end of an era in Malden education.

David Haskell has known George Holland almost his whole life. The two played on the baseball team together when they were in high school. Most recently, they worked together for the Malden High School Alumni Association (MHSAA), for which Holland was president.

“He’s been an inspiration to all of us,” Haskell said.

Under Holland’s leadership, MHSAA had some significant accomplishments, Haskell said, including providing scholarships for the city’s students and inducting accomplished Maldonians into a Hall of Fame each year.

“He was a primary mover in all of this,” Haskell said.

Holland, who graduated Malden High School in 1955, was himself inducted into the MHSAA Hall of Fame in 2015 for his work in the field of education. In accepting the award, he said success “came from working in a group. You do it as part of a team. You don’t do it alone.”

Haskell said of Holland, “He was a Malden guy through and through. He gave all his efforts to Malden.”

Mayor Gary Christenson said Holland was truly passionate about education.

“It was on his mind 24/7,” he said.

Even after Holland stepped down as superintendent, he was still dedicated, Christenson said.

“After such a stellar career,” Christenson said, “he could have easily gone off and never looked back.”

Instead, the mayor said, Holland remained active with MHSAA and with Malden Kiwanis.

“He was always trying to think of ways to help our students succeed,” Christenson said. “That’s how dedicated he was.”

Christenson was a sophomore in high school when Holland became superintendent. In 1999, in what was a controversial move at the time, Christenson was appointed, rather than elected, to the Malden School Committee. How he got there, however, wasn’t important to Holland, he said.

“It didn’t matter to him as long as you were passionate about education,” Christenson said.

Christenson said Holland’s staying on as superintendent for an extended period was beneficial to the district. During those years, the schools didn’t experience as much turnover in personnel, he said.

“He had a leadership style that provided stability, which is important to a city like ours,” Christenson said.

Holland’s approach to his work was an inspiration for Christenson.

“To be able to watch what it took to truly get the job done [right...it](#) rubbed off on me,” he said.

George Holland is survived by his wife of 37 years, Marilyn Holland (O’Hara), his son, Ted Holland, his brother, retired Malden Police Chief James Holland, and his wife, Maureen, Dennis Holland and his wife, Marsha, of Utah, and many nieces, nephews.

A funeral Mass will be held in the Immaculate Conception Church, 600 Pleasant St., Malden on Tuesday, August 16 at 10 a.m., followed by interment in Forestdale Cemetery Malden. Visiting hours are at the Murphy O’Hara Funeral Home, 519 Broadway, Everett on Monday, August 15 from 4 to 8 p.m. In lieu of flowers, make contributions in George’s name to the Malden High School Alumni Association, Salem St., Malden, MA 02148.

