

AUGUST ROUNDUP



This month, the Sandwich Fire Department helped conduct a simulated fire drill, and both residents and staff quickly and confidently responded to the alarms, while meeting or exceeding all safety perimeters. *See photo of Executive Director, Sarah and owner, Linda with Fire Chief above.*

Residents were granted a reprieve from the rigors of the stinging July heat this August, and residents and staff alike were eager to get out and enjoy the more temperate climate. Jason Furman, head of maintenance, hosted a men's breakfast at Marshland Too. Other outings included a trip to the farmer's market, two scenic joy rides to the canal and to the boardwalk. Several residents treated themselves to lunch at Dan'l Webster Inn Restaurant, and bargain shopping at Penny Lane's was environmentally friendly and fun.

A lot of people spent their free time on the patio: sunning themselves, receiving guests, reading, and creating art. While others were enthusiastic about enjoying their wine indoors in the air-conditioning with good music and good company. Janice Hannah, wonderful longtime volunteer (*see photo*), returned this month in time to play and sing at our Aloha Social Hour. Pina coladas and grass skirts make a Friday even Friday-er!

Wednesdays were great too, with Leonie Lex-Little and her well attended art class (*see photos above of the art class, as well as one of Marilyn and Ben painting*). Chris Carter and Rick Walsh, and Julie Charland (*see photo below*) delighted the residents with their music. We also enjoyed a wide variety of movies. Residents baked pineapple-upside-down donuts and sampled peach ice-cream with delicious peach puree (*see photo of Claire below*). Staff decorated a cart like an ice-cream truck and delivered sweet frozen treats to every apartment. It was cute, clever and just what everyone was craving (*What would you do for a klondike bar, Maggie?!*) We also celebrated "National Dog Day." (*Ed is pictured with his furry pal, Marney below*), enjoyed social hours (*see photo of Manny below*) and got our nails done (*see photo of Nancy D. below with her "fancy nails"*).

Next month, when vacationers have returned home and school is back in session, Decatur House Residents will be working hard to capture the very last bit of summer fun!



Spotlight Continued - Ben & Betty Merrill

Ben, meanwhile, spent his childhood exploring the natural beauty of the Vineyard with his older brother, enjoying a great deal of freedom that sparked a lifelong love of adventure. He later studied business administration at UMass Amherst and built a career in international sales, while Betty was a successful real estate broker.

After marrying, the couple moved often -16 different homes over the years - but always considered Martha’s Vineyard their true home. “It’s where we built our first house - literally with our own hands,” says Ben. That experience remains one of their favorite memories together.

Family First

Together, Ben and Betty raised four children in what they affectionately call “good chaos.” Their home was filled with activity, energy, and lots of love. “If the kids wanted advice, they’d always go to Dad,” Betty says with a grin. “And if they needed to blame the advice on someone, they’d go to Dad too.”

They enjoyed boating -“We sank a few boats,” Ben admits with a chuckle—and family sports. Betty played golf and tennis, swam, knitted, and crocheted. Ben took flying lessons (interrupted by a transfer to England), painted, and tackled word puzzles. Their love of travel took them around the world.

The Heart Behind the Humor

Those who meet Ben might not realize just how big his heart is. “He’s a big softy,” Betty confides. “He loves kids and animals.” And while Betty may seem reserved at first, those closest to her know better. “She’s an open book and outrageous around those who know her well,” Ben says.

Ask them the secret to a happy marriage, and they’ll tell you: humor, patience, and partnership. “Betty’s been a supportive wife through everything,” Ben says. “She’s beautiful, friendly, and interesting - and she’s held up well over the years!” Betty, in turn, describes Ben as “patient, funny, and a wonderful husband and father.”

Ben and Betty’s story is one of love that’s stood the test of time, of family life full of joy, and of a bond built on mutual respect. We are honored to have them as part of the Decatur House family, and inspired by the life they’ve shared, and continue to share, together.



SEPTEMBER 2025
DECATUR HOUSE
Assisted Living in Sandwich Village

Around the House

Community **SPOTlight**

BEN & BETTY MERRILL

A Love Story 69 Years in the Making



Sometimes, the most beautiful journeys begin with a blind date you almost skip. That’s exactly how Ben and Betty’s lifelong adventure started - set up by friends in Fort Knox, Kentucky, when neither was quite sure they wanted to go.

But they did go, and thank goodness for that. “I thought she was beautiful,” says Ben. Betty smiles and adds, “He was funny and kind.” Within two months, Ben proposed. One month later, they were married in Germany while Ben was stationed overseas.

Now, 69 years later, Ben and Betty are still laughing together, finishing each other’s sentences, and cherishing a lifetime full of travel, family, and shared memories. “Our biggest accomplishment?” they agree, “Staying married for 69 years, and keeping a good sense of humor about it.”

A Life of Love, Laughter & Adventure

Ben, born in Oak Bluffs, Martha’s Vineyard, and Betty, born in Louisville, Kentucky, came from very different backgrounds. Betty was raised in a large, multigenerational household with her parents, grandparents, and four older brothers. “Times were hard,” she recalls, “but we had each other.” Her grandmother sewed the family’s clothes.

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