

In memory of Eleanor Stefani, 1933-2019



In 1963, my mother Eleanor, and Loris Stefani, an artist and interior decorator from Andover, decided to spend the summer in Wellfleet, operating, on a trial basis, the former Mayo Hill Colony Club, the Bauhaus brainchild of Boston architect and socialite Nathaniel Saltonstall. Since membership at the Colony Club had required social and financial references, it took a while to build up a clientele, but it only took a moment for Eleanor and Loris to realize that running The Colony was a dream come true. Loris did much of the maintenance and Eleanor managed the business and tended the gardens. I went to the beach with guests who had children my age and showed them the wonders of the lower Cape.

My parents' adventure also served as an opportunity to hire a generation of young Wellfleetians. For many, it was their first job. My mother delighted in mentoring them about their work, but also about life. She baked muffins every morning and gathered her staff for conversations that invariably strayed from work to just about everything else.

After Loris died in 1978, Eleanor wintered in Georgetown, and managed an annex of the Madison Hotel in Washington, D.C. While there, she met Robert Hankey, a retired foreign policy and intelligence analyst. Robert eventually moved to Wellfleet full-time until his death in 2012. Robert was a friend of the environment and the preservation of open space. During his years on Cape Cod, he was a founding member of the Wellfleet Conservation Trust and the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, the Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund, and he served on the Zoning Board of Appeals, the By-law Redrafting Committee, as well as the Charter Review Commission.

Throughout her five decades running The Colony, Eleanor remained true to its Bauhaus roots. She encouraged guests to live simply while on vacation by enjoying the beauty of nature around them, consistent with the principles of Bauhaus architecture built into each cottage. She always made time to talk to her guests, getting to know them as a friend, exchanging letters, cards and gifts, and welcoming their adult children and even grandchildren as guests to The Colony years later.

As my wife, Mihae and I take on this beautiful legacy, we look forward to making it our own, but also continuing the traditions that make The Colony such a special place. We look forward to seeing you at our Colony.

Jeffrey & Mihae Stefani