



**Remarks of Gregory W. Powell
Harold Alfond Foundation**

Harvest on the Square

Castonguay Square, Waterville, Maine

October 18, 2016

Good evening. And thank you, Shannon, for those very kind words.

On behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, I am delighted to join this celebration of Waterville and the Arts and to make a special announcement with Colby President, David Greene. With me this evening are fellow Trustees Peter Alfond; Bill Alfond; and Foundation executive staff Travis Cummings and Jarod Deanis.

It is a special honor to be asked back to share a few words given the high-powered speaking lineup.

- Shannon Haines, new CEO and President of Waterville Creates!;
- Nick Isgro, Mayor of the City of Waterville;
- David Greene, President of Colby College; and,
- George Mitchell, brother of basketball great Swisher Mitchell, uncle of Billy Mitchell.

What a line up!

Senator Mitchell, we are so proud of you and your Waterville roots. Your life's work is an inspiration, and your contributions to our nation and the world enormous. Thank you for all you have done, and thank you for being with us tonight.

Last year at this gathering, I shared with you how it came to be that a man who loved sports above all else became a supporter of the arts.

Ironically, it was the convergence of art and athletics that first inspired Harold Alfond to support the arts. It was a pen and ink drawing sketched by one of Waterville's finest citizens, Bob Marden. In 1999, Bob wrote to Harold asking for money for the Opera House. But it was not Bob's letter requesting money that caught Harold's eye, it was Bob's pen and ink sketch of City Hall—home of the Waterville Opera House—that did the trick. Draped across the front of City Hall, Bob had sketched a giant jock strap.

From the artwork of Bob Marden, the Foundation's grants to Waterville arts began and have grown to just over \$9 million dollars today.

Harold Alfond understood well that by bringing people together you can accomplish so much more than by flying solo. He loved sports and he loved teamwork, and Waterville's future is all about the teamwork and leadership on display tonight.

Tonight, as we celebrate another year of growth and accomplishment for Waterville, the Foundation could not feel more confident in this town. The teamwork demonstrated by Waterville Creates! and its partners, the Opera House, the Film Center, the Colby Museum of Art, Common Street Arts, the Waterville Public Library, Waterville Main Street, and so many of you here this evening has been outstanding. And it's getting stronger every day.

With the great leadership of Larry Sterrs and Shannon Haines, the Waterville Creates! board and its staff, Opera House Chair Jim LaLiberty, and so many others, we know that, in the days ahead, Waterville Arts will continue to thrive and with it, this town.

Beyond the arts, we see teamwork and leadership alive and well everywhere. Our Mayor Nick Isgro; the presidents of our colleges, Laurie Lachance, David Greene, and Rick Hopper; our Chamber's president, Kim Lindlof, and business leaders both old and new, like Fred and Amy Ouellette, Charlie Giguere, Bill and Vicky Mitchell, Steve and Ginny Bolduc, Bobby and Rachael McGee, Tom Dupree, Justin Dupree, Kathy Corey, Paul Boghossian, and, now, Bill Robichaud and John Williams of Collaborative Consulting, to name a few.

So, on behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, thank you for all you are doing.

All across America, small towns and cities are struggling. In their struggle, as they face disruptive change brought on by technology and economic competition spanning the globe, they are finding ways to rebuild.

From history, we know that those who succeed are those with a legacy of community, of teamwork. We know towns are the people who inhabit them. They have a soul, a conscience, and a drive to be better as they face the challenges of change, even in the worst of times. And here in Waterville, we are meeting the challenge of change *by changing*.

Fifty years ago, those of us who grew up in this town saw the conscience and soul of which I speak, right here in this square and up and down Main Street. Looking toward Main Street, you would see customers coming and going from the Sterns Department Store and Day's Jewelry on your right. Tardif's, Dunham's of Maine, straight ahead. And, if you turned left on Main Street, Waterville Hardware and Steve's Restaurant, all thriving businesses, to name just a few. And of course, at the end of the street, was Levine's, the store for men and boys.

Fifty years ago at Levine's on a Saturday morning in October, you would find a store bustling with customers and sales clerks, many of whom were Colby and Waterville High students at their first job. Joyce Joseph would have out her measuring tape. Waterville High's championship hockey coach, Spat Roy, would be waiting on customers and talking up the hockey season to come. Howard Miller would be waiting on three customers at the same time. Legendary Pacy and Ludy Levine would be hanging out in the front of the store to meet and greet every customer, especially the athletes.

And the savvy Levine's customer would know to steer clear of Pacy on a Colby game day. For if Pacy were headed to a Colby football game, there was no chance the new jeans he sold you would fit right. Just ask Dana Sennett.

At the back of the store was where so many young men were fitted for their first suit. For many, the price would be forgiven. And there in that back room, overhead, was an enormous aerial photograph of Mayflower Hill and Colby College.

Colby and Waterville were one, their conscience and soul conjoined in the hustle and bustle of this town's Main Street.

Tonight that conscience and soul is with us, nurtured and renewed, as Waterville changes to meet the challenge of change.

Since 1952, Harold and Bibby Alfond held Waterville dear in their hearts. Together with their family, they helped support this town and its great institutions. Looking to the future as Waterville prospers and grows, you can count on the Harold Alfond Foundation. When this community steps forward and rolls up its sleeves, the Foundation will step up to match your efforts.

In his most recent book, Senator Mitchell has extolled the virtue of patient listening. But he also warned that in listening, as you have so generously done for me tonight, “you have to endure a lot of chaff to get to the wheat.” So thank you for patiently listening. Now for the *wheat* of our announcement.

Harold Alfond loved to say, “You ain’t seen nothing yet.”

With Harold’s saying in mind, the Foundation has supported and will continue to support the only combined Boys and Girls Club and YMCA in America, the only Educare in the northeast, Colby College, Thomas College, the Kennebec Valley Community College, MaineGeneral, Waterville Creates!, the Maine Children’s Home, and more. But tonight, we want to double down and announce a new grant.

Over the past year, like so many of you, the Foundation has been awed by the outstanding leadership of David Greene and the prominent role Colby College is playing in the revitalization of Main Street. When we heard President Greene declare it was Colby’s time to help Waterville, as Waterville has always helped Colby, we wanted to do our part.

And so tonight, it is with great pleasure that we announce a fund for Main Street, a fund where the Foundation will join Colby by matching the College’s investments dollar for dollar. Together, we are creating a downtown fund totaling \$20 million dollars.

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce President David Greene.

And to put our money where our mouth is, here is the Foundation’s check for Main Street.