

New holder of the Boston Post Cane



At 97, Dena Carbone is now the oldest resident in town and the new recipient of the Boston Post Cane. Cara Hogan

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Congratulations and Happy Holidays, Mrs. Carbone!	
- Ted Grozier, great-grandson of E.A. Grozier Inverness, Scotland	
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	nhtofl 12/22/2010 10:38 AM
Congratulations Dena! You have been a very special person to me and my family for many years. It is a pleasure and honor to be a recipient of your wisdom and knowledge. We love you,	

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By Cara Hogan

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PLAISTOW — At 97 years old, Dena Carbone is now the oldest resident in town and the new recipient of the Boston Post Cane.

At Monday night's selectmen meeting with her friends and family there, Carbone was presented the gold-headed ebony cane.

"I think it's terrific," Carbone said. "It made me think back on my life and the things I've done. I've been very fortunate to have the health that carried me through. I had wonderful friends, family and two wonderful sons."

At the meeting, a summary of Carbone's life, listing her many accomplishments over the years, was handed out. She was born in Bisegna, Italy in 1913, and has been a resident of Plaistow for 20 years.

Carbone immigrated with her parents and siblings to Haverhill in 1916 after an earthquake destroyed their family home and businesses in Italy.

Her father died when she was young and she left school at a young age to work and help her family.

She worked at a department store and started a dressmaking businesses in her free time. She worked as a successful dressmaker until 1968, dressing high-profile clients such as the Rockefellers, DuPonts and several of Princess Grace's bridesmaids. During that time, she married Raymond Carbone and raised their two sons, Gerry and Raymond.

After retiring, she turned her focus to volunteer work, teaching low-income women to sew though the Community Action Program.

She became heavily involved in the organization, becoming the executive director in 1974.

After retiring from that post at age 66, she attended Montserrat College of Art in Beverly and began working with local museums and teaching about art at Northern Essex Community College, always serving the local community.

Sean Fitzgerald, Plaistow town manager, said presenting Carbone with the cane was a wonderful community event.

"Mrs. Carbone is now a wonderful part of our cultural history," Fitzgerald said.

"She has distinguished herself in so many fields where she has helped people, some of those people the worst off in our community."

Fitzgerald said she will hold the Boston Post Cane until someone else is the oldest living member of the town, but that does not mean the cane is bad luck.

"It brings good luck, but unfortunately it's awarded when the recipient is transitioned to the next great chapter in their journey," Fitzgerald said. "But we're hoping to do some wonderful things with the venerable Mrs. Carbone. We're hoping to involve her in a lot of celebratory events as our most distinguished and esteemed recipient of the post cane."

The cane has been a tradition since 1909 when Edwin A. Grozier, the publisher of the Boston Post newspaper, sent a cane to the Board of Selectmen in 700 towns in New England.

He requested it be presented to the oldest male citizen of the town and in 1930, women also became eligible for the cane. The Boston Post went out of business in 1957 and as years went by some of the canes were lost, stolen, or destroyed by accident. But the tradition still lives on in some New England towns, including Plaistow.

The Post Cane was last awarded to another town resident six years ago.

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