



40th Anniversary Stories

Story 5: A Colorful Character in HCA's History: Brian Greeley

Shared by Neal Mongold, HCA current President

Twenty years ago, U.S. Representative Barney Frank — quite a strong character himself — spoke at HCA's Annual Meeting, commemorating the 20th anniversary of its creation and urging the Arlington community to build public/private partnerships to create desperately needed affordable housing. Now, HCA celebrates its 40th anniversary and derives strong support from many individuals, businesses, and agencies in Town and beyond. Through the decades, HCA has been powered by a remarkable collection of ardent, and sometimes 'colorful characters' who have been steadfastly committed to our mission of providing affordable, stable housing. The passion, tenacity, and audacity of these 'characters' have led to many of HCA's successes over the years.

One of our beloved characters was Brian Greeley, who served energetically as an HCA Board member for several years until his untimely death in 2011. Brian was the youngest brother in the legendary Greeley family of Arlington, all of whom were devoted to the civic life of the Town. Brian was also a professor of oratory and a debate coach at Suffolk University, a Realtor at Bowes Pennel & Thompson Real Estate, an instructor for the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office, a Commissioner of the Arlington Housing Authority, and the driving force behind the Town's Patriot's Day Parade, among many other leadership roles.



Brian Greeley, far right, at the HCA 2009 Annual Meeting, next to former HCA Executive Director, David Levy

At HCA, Brian was instrumental in the logistics and planning for HCA's Annual Walk for Affordable Housing. Brian's enthusiasm for helping others, especially with housing issues, was impressive, contagious, and filled with his joy and humor.

Brian also had a gift as a spellbinding public speaker, like his brothers. He told heartwarming stories sprinkled with jokes about the Red Sox, and quotes from John F. Kennedy and Thomas Jefferson, and peppered with quips about his illustrious siblings. I particularly remember one year, perhaps it was 2009, when Brian volunteered to assemble and present a PowerPoint show for HCA's Annual Meeting. The presentation was to be replete with photos re-capping the organization's projects and events over that year.

Unfortunately, on the evening of the presentation, all of Brian's PowerPoint graphics were irretrievably lost on the flash drive! We assumed there was now a major hole in the evening's agenda! Nonetheless, Brian calmly assured the other board members that it wouldn't be a problem. He would do the slide show without the slides. He did, and it was wonderful! His words described every missing photo and captivated the audience with details and stories about each non-existent image. The audience gave him a sustained ovation for his presentation. Even after 15 years, we miss Brian, but we continue to draw inspiration from his commitment for helping others to find affordable housing.

We deeply appreciate Brian Greeley's remarkable involvement with HCA and we take the opportunity of our 40th anniversary to recollect other wonderful HCA board members and leaders who have passed away, including Robert Murray, Ed Tsoi, Kevin Greeley, Mary Elizabeth Doyle, Paul Parravano, Deacon Frank Mendosa, Elaine Shea, and Charlie Lyons. These wonderful leaders -- Brian included -- are not only what made HCA special then, but their legacy helps us to advance our mission today to create and sustain affordable housing, develop active housing leaders of all incomes, and build the community connections that power it all.