

## Person of the Year

### Phyllis Parrish

Fri April 17, 2026

WINDHAM - It's harder than pulling teeth, getting Phyllis Parrish to talk about herself and her ever-flowing work in the Windham Foundation.

Parrish has been the visible presence of the philanthropic association since its inception, though you wouldn't know it, conversing with her.

She will wantonly discuss this or that program and easily wonder out loud if there is anything that would be worthwhile bringing to the community.

Phyllis will also warmly welcome you to the Windham Fine Arts gallery on Main Street, a gorgeous building that adds a gentle grace to downtown, under the proprietorship of husband Jim Parrish and herself.

But it's like doing a root canal with a Civil War tooth key, tugging anything out of her related to personal efforts with the Windham Foundation.

While she won't do it, fellow members of the Foundation did, last fall, during their annual fundraising event in the Big Apple.

The non-profit Windham Foundation, to date, has disseminated \$5.5 million toward cultural and community initiatives, recreational and educational programs and disaster relief efforts.

Paul Mutter, current chairman of the Foundation, in the tribute to Parrish, said, "this honoree epitomizes the Windham Foundation and is, and remains, the face of the Foundation in Windham.

"She has singularly anchored this organization from its founding by Peter Kellogg and Harvey and Karen Silverman.

"For many years, our great organization was an active board of Peter, Harvey and [Phyllis]," Mutter said, noting a scholarship program for Windham-Ashland-Jewett school students they established.



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“The college scholarships were very important, but [Phyllis] got more excited about the technical school (BOCES) awards,” Mutter said.

“Ahead of her time, she recognized the profound need in our society for learning trades like plumbing, electrical, auto repair, culinary, etc.

“[Phyllis] partnered tirelessly with [former Windham Mountain Club president] Chip Seamans on getting the Windham Mountain Ski Tuesday up and running which is so important for local kids,” Mutter continued.

“The [Windham Public Library] reading program she championed gives kids something constructive to do in summer break.”

Getting to the metaphorical teeth of the matter, Mutter said of Phyllis Parrish, “her idea of a dental van was a huge success.

“The van provided service for both kids and adults for many who rarely saw a dentist. The arrangement with NYU would have been a big success, but for the COVID [pandemic] that put all on hold,” even while committing to finding a new mobile dental partner.

Harkening back to the summer of 2011, Mutter informed everyone that “Hurricane Irene presented the shining moment for Phyllis.

“Next to [Peter Kellogg’s] \$1.2 million for the WAJ school basketball and tennis courts, ball field, gym, etc, the Foundation’s second largest raise was around \$750k for Hurricane Irene damage.

“Distributing those funds to needy residents was so powerful, and an eye opening experience,” Mutter said.

“I don’t think anyone understood the hardship existing throughout Windham better than Phyllis. It was a momentous time for this honoree to connect with so many locals.

“She went to their homes, met their kids and experienced a bit of their life,” also “working with the VFW to build their new kitchen, celebrating an amazing group of vets doing good things for the community.”

Those examples of human art would be plenty “but there is more,” Mutter said, noting Parrish’s “countless hours building mailing/emailing lists.



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“Before it was put online, Phyllis spent countless hours in [Greene County offices in] Catskill going through tax records to identify new homeowners who could be ideal Foundation donors.”

Her legacy of fine deeds includes securing, “the new [Hope Restoration Church] food pantry fridge and the Windham Hose [Company No. 2 volunteer firefighter] equipment,” Mutter said. There have appeared, “uniforms for the school’s marching band, the Sugar Maples art explorers program, the Sugar Maples natural organic farm, CD Lane Park improvements and Windham Chamber Music [concerts at the Centre Church in Windham] for over 10 years.”

The Foundation has been part of “the school science program, the Heritage Festival, the Taiko Drummer concerts, 3 years funding for the town shuttle bus [with the Windham Mountain Club], the Girls Quest kitchen and other equipment, little league uniforms and equipment, WRIP radio station equipment, and more,” Mutter said.

“And perhaps most special, Phyllis and her amazing husband, Jim, since they first bought their home in Windham in 1989, have worked tirelessly against factionalization in our community.

“Stewards like Phyllis and Jim lead by example,” Mutter said, breaking down boundaries between generational residents and second homeowners, resulting in a spirit of beneficial cooperation.

It is for all those reasons - not to mention her in the trenches participation in clearing trash along local roads and other beautifications - as well as her partnerships with the Community of Windham Foundation and Catskill Mountain Foundation, that Phyllis Parrish is the Mountain Eagle 2025 “Person of the Year” in Greene County.