

Evan Cowles and Brie Quinby ~ Influencing the Future with Lessons from the Past

When Evan Cowles and his wife, Brie Quinby, moved to Farmington in 1986 they knew a bit about his family's long and influential history in the area. Evan had heard stories about his great grandfather, William Sheffield Cowles, an admiral in the United States Navy who married, as his second wife, Anna Roosevelt, the elder sister of U.S. president Teddy Roosevelt. He'd visited his grandfather, their only child, at Oldgate, the Cowles family home in Farmington. But it wasn't until he moved to Farmington when he was in his mid-thirties that he began to truly understand the legacy his family left—a past rich in history and community commitment.

His was a typical boyhood enjoying nature and growing up in rural Vermont in a family of six children. He moved to New York City to go to Columbia University where he received an MBA in finance and, then, continued to work in New York as a banker for Morgan Guarantee.

Brie's upbringing was similar. She was raised in Vermont in a family of four that included parents who were active in the community. She loved reading from an early age, so it was natural that she earned her college degree in English. When she and Evan moved to New York after college, she began a career as a writer and editor, working for *Mademoiselle*, *Child*, *Redbook*, *Ladies Home Journal* and other publications.

After ten years in New York, they realized they wanted to raise their children—a baby daughter and a son on the way—in an environment similar to what they'd grown up in—a small town where they could put down strong roots.

They moved to Farmington. A short time later, Evan recalls, he was asked to become president of the Farmington Historical Society. In that role, he was seeded with an education about his family history, the area, and the other hardworking philanthropic families that had built and maintained Farmington as an unrivaled sanctuary for historic preservation in Connecticut. Brie, meanwhile, had joined the board of Hill-Stead Museum, where she was getting a similar education.

Both Brie and Evan have continued their community involvement since then—from Evan's service on the Town Zoning Board, the Town Council and the board of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, to Brie's active commitment in the Farmington Garden Club and the boards of the Farmington Land Trust and the Hartford Association of Retarded Citizens (HARC). Her recent participation on the fundraising committee for the Barney Library renovation has given her immense satisfaction.

"This is our community and the Barney Library is a beautiful, historic building," she explains. "Preserving its appearance and updating it to make it accessible for all is an investment—our opportunity to make it shine. And the community has been so supportive and generous. It's a real pleasure to hear people tell their stories about the role the Barney has played in their lives."

They decided to make their financial commitment to the fundraising effort with a gift of appreciated securities spread over two years. Using this asset rather than cash helped them avoid the capital gains taxes that would have been due had they sold the assets first. They were also able to take an immediate income-tax deduction for the fair market value of the donated stock.

Today, with children grown and out of the home, Evan has recently retired and Brie is taking on less freelance work. Their days are filled with things they enjoy—traveling, gardening, visiting friends, being active, serving as advocates for preservation, and, as Evan's family has been for so long in Farmington, contributing to the community they call home.