



Martha's Vineyard Bank president and CEO James Anthony and bank community engagement director Jennifer Ray.  
*Ray Ewing*

## Scholarship Started in Honor of Longtime Edgartown Moderator

**Brooke Kushwaha** *Friday, February 10, 2023 - 9:41am*

When Martha's Vineyard Bank board chairman Ron Rappaport first heard Philip J. (Jeffrey) Norton, Jr. died in November, he immediately looked for ways to honor the life of his friend, former colleague, and longtime Edgartown town moderator.

In just a few days, Mr. Rappaport came up with a plan to create a \$250,000 memorial scholarship fund for post-secondary students pursuing a career in public service. The idea became a reality last week when the bank announced the creation of the Philip J. Norton Jr. scholarship.

Reflecting on Mr. Norton's life and legacy, both Mr. Rappaport and Mr. Norton's surviving sons, Jeff Norton 3rd and Andy Norton, said that the Edgartown stalwart known to most as Jeff, held a longstanding aversion to fanfare.

“The last thing he would have wanted is a scholarship with his name on it,” Mr. Rappaport laughed. “He’d say, ‘Stop blowing smoke up my...you-know-what.’”

Each year, the fund will award a scholarship estimated at \$12,500. It will be open to students of all ages and can apply to tuition costs outside of traditional four-year degrees. The parameters of the scholarship were born out of many conversations on Mr. Norton’s life and legacy, Martha’s Vineyard Bank president and CEO James Anthony said. The scholarship’s emphasis on public service as well as its accessibility to students of different backgrounds were all intentional, he said, drawing upon Mr. Norton’s own values.

“What I really love about this scholarship is that it’s open to a wider group of individuals than just high school seniors,” Jeff Norton 3rd said. “It could be someone pursuing an advanced degree, someone transferring their sophomore year, a certificate in emergency services...it has the potential to make an impact for a wide variety of age groups.”

Mr. Norton was the chairman of the board of trustees for the bank before Mr. Rappaport and served as Edgartown town moderator for 43 years, running town meetings with a ready ear and deft wit.

“Jeff once told me that presiding at town meeting was like catching a fish,” Mr. Rappaport said. “You have to let them run for a bit and get tired, and then you can reel them in.”

Although Mr. Norton was best known for his role as moderator, his sons said that Islanders continue to share stories of his generosity as an attorney and neighbor.

“He was always available to help anyone at any time of day,” Andy Norton said. “He never turned anyone away, and the fact that people felt so comfortable turning to him really spoke to how compassionate he was.”

Both sons said they will miss their dad’s level-headedness in the face of adversity.

“He never got emotional one way or the other,” Jeff Norton 3rd added. “One of the only times he yelled at me, it was during one of his last days in his sickbed at Martha’s Vineyard Hospital. I was getting emotional, and he yelled, ‘Stop it!’ He wanted us to have a stiff upper lip.”

Looking back at the ways their father has impacted their own lives and the community on-Island, both sons said they were incredibly grateful to see his generosity continued.

“It’s an honor knowing his legacy will live on in a number of ways, but this one is the most impactful,” Jeff Norton 3rd said.

For more information about the Philip J. Norton, Jr. scholarship, visit [community.mvbank.com](http://community.mvbank.com).

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