

Mary Doyle  
9/6/07

Mary Doyle's enthusiasm for the Women's Fund is very straightforward. "I absolutely adore the Women's Fund," she said recently. "There's no really creative reason for that. I just believe that women get short shrift ... It just drives me nuts."

Doyle and her husband, Allan, had just moved to New Hampshire from Longmeadow, MA, when she was – as she says in a friendly tone – “accosted” by the “dynamite duo” of Molly Scheu and Barbara Zeckhausen who were touting the idea of a charitable fund to benefit women and girls in New Hampshire. Doyle said she left with the impression she had no choice but to ante up for the new Women's Fund. So she did. She became a founder.

There was no family wealth to draw on. "I didn't really have any money," she said. But her husband had sold a business in the process of retiring to New Hampshire. "So we just did it," she said, "wrote a check (for \$25,000). .. If I had a million dollars, I'd give it all to the Women's Fund."

Mary Doyle was born in Ohio but grew up in upstate New York in a household where girls ruled. She had two sisters, and she said they were never told they couldn't do something because they were girls. "Our parents always said you can do anything you set out to do."

Doyle went to a women's college, Mt. Holyoke, majored in sociology and thought she might become a social worker. But that didn't turn out to be a good fit.

Instead, she worked two years in the admissions office at Mt. Holyoke contacting new students and old alumnae. "It was," she said, "a great job for a wet-behind-the-ears-not-sure-what-she-wants-to-do kid." And then, in 1965, she and Allan married.

From then on, Doyle's career centered on being a wife, mother to two sons, and a tireless volunteer, board member and often president of arts groups, social services, Junior League, college activities, "the gamut". Her only paying job during those years was a 2-year stint as development director for a home/school for emotionally disturbed children.

In 1982, the Doyles built a summer home on Lake Sunapee, and that's where they moved when they decided to retire 10 years later. And that's when the dynamic duo found Mary Doyle a willing target. She agreed with everything they wanted to accomplish for needy women and girls. She not only agreed to be a founder; she agreed to serve on the board and she hosted one of the first brown-bag lunches to introduce women to the Women's Fund mission.

"I believe in what the Women's Fund is doing," she said. "We concentrate on what's best for women and girls. We believe that women and girls should have the same opportunities as men and boys."

As the Women's Fund entered its second decade, Doyle said the task became one of basic identity – getting the word out. "I still think we're an untold story in a lot of places," she said. "Money's the issue. New Hampshire is a problem state. It is so diverse geographically; there is a great need for the kind of work we can do."