

## Erica and Jay Ball



The 2018 Natick Town Report is dedicated to Erica “Ricky” and Jay Ball for their decades of leadership, citizenship, and fellowship in their beloved community of Natick, where they have made enduring contributions to our civic and cultural life.

Ricky came to the United States as a refugee from Austria, from which her family escaped persecution during the Holocaust. She has never taken for granted our freedoms and responsibilities.

Jay is a native of New York City, having moved to the area to study at MIT, where he received both a Bachelor’s and Master’s in Electrical Engineering, and had a long career in the field. Ricky earned a BA at Brandeis, where her studies in sociology prepared her for her pioneering work. They married in 1958, and settled in Natick in 1959 during a time of community growth and upheaval. The Town’s postwar increase in population, development of new residential neighborhoods, and growth in school population and services was often contentious.

Ricky was President of the Natick League of Women Voters from 1967-1971, when the League was instrumental in proposing zoning changes, bringing METCO to Natick, and starting the Lake Cochituate Watershed Association.

In 1975, she was the first woman elected to the Board of Selectmen, serving three terms in office. During her tenure, Natick adopted a Town Charter, hired its first Town Administrator, established a process for hiring Town Counsel, and conveyed land that would become the Community Farm. Through her initiative, many institutions were established that are part of the community’s fabric, such as public Board interviews and appointments, the Neighborhood Bus (now part of MWRTA), and Natick Extended Day (now part of the Public Schools).

She was appointed by Governor Dukakis to the state’s Housing Appeals Committee, and more recently has served multiple terms on the Natick Housing Authority Board. She has served in Town Meeting for over 35 years, and is a founding Board Member of the Center for Arts in Natick. Professionally, she was known as the “Luggage Lady” at Filene’s and Macy’s.

Jay has been a dedicated public servant, with 25 years on Town Meeting and three terms on the Board of Selectmen from 1997 to 2006. On the Recycling Committee, he helped lead the way to Pay As You Throw. He was on the team that established Natick Days as a cherished community event. His work on the Cancer Study was invaluable, and his nine years on the Grants Panel for the MetroWest Health Foundation speaks to his interest in public health.

Jay has served on the Affordable Housing Trust Board, the Advisory Boards of the Community Farm and the Historical Society, at Temple Israel on their Board and as a member of the Ark Builders, and in countless other ways has made Natick a welcoming place to live.

The Balls have generously donated to many community causes, both monetarily and through labors of love. From TCAN, to the Morse Library, to Cedar Gardens, to the Community Farm and beyond, Jay and Ricky have helped to shape and nurture this town.

Jay and Ricky raised three children in their Wethersfield home: Alan, a professional actor; Lt. Col. David Ball (USAF Ret.); and Jonathan, killed tragically in a school bus accident in 1967.

Jay and Ricky Ball have set a high standard for public service, and have always encouraged other residents to become engaged in local government and in other endeavors. In dedicating the 2018 Annual Report to Ricky and Jay Ball, the Town honors their love of community.