

**From:** [Talbert, Lilly](#)  
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It is with overwhelming sadness that we share the news of our beloved commissioner and friend Marion Milne's death yesterday morning.

Marion was first appointed to the Commission in 2001 by Governor Dean and continuously served by reappointment through both the Douglas and Shumlin administrations. We valued her leadership, business and legislative experience, but most of all her thoughtful, intelligent and kind nature.

She was a powerful business leader, the founder and president of Milne Travel American Express, and a former Republican state legislator from 1994 to 2000, representing the town of Washington. Marion endured truly shocking treatment by people she had known in her district for her support of civil unions and lost her seat in the House in 2000 because of her stalwart, unwavering support for what she felt deeply was an issue of civil rights. Marion frequently brought that moral compass, that sense of morality and social justice to our discussions and deliberations. She was someone who could sit and listen carefully during discussion, synthesize all points, ponder and then change everyone's mind with a persuasive and effective fact driven opinion, delivered with humility and heart.

She deeply believed in the power of women and the benefits of the Commission's work. Sharing her words about our work from the speech she made at our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the State House this spring: "We are 50 years further along in the journey from chattel to full respect as equals, a muddy road leading to equal rights, equal pay, and equal opportunity for all women...What a different world we live in. How vast and unexpected the changes. What wonders have come through improvements in science, medicine, art and life style in that time. And yet, there are still so many miles ahead. The present has not kept its promises to many. This is no paradise for those who live in poverty, those who live in abusive relationships, those who find gender as a barrier to advancement...My time on the Commission, through three governors, has been an enriching and enlightening experience. I have felt the strength of sisterhood, and I have discovered over and over that what we dream can come true, as long as we can stay focused. Change is hard. Tradition is often an excuse for not changing. Yet we must be patient and we must be smart. And we will prevail...Thank goodness there's a Commission on Women. Let it last until the work is done."

In addition to her years with us at VCW, Marion's record of community service is remarkable and we wanted to share it here. Marion served as: the first woman President of Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce, where she was named a Life Member for her fundraising efforts since 1980; member of the Vermont Judicial Nominating Board from 1996 to 2002; Business and Professional Women's Woman of the Year in 1980; Calef Memorial Library Trustee (for well over thirty years); member of the Governor's Commission on Healthy Aging since 1995; member on the

Professional Responsibility Board (a state board appointed by the Supreme Court); Trustee for Washington-Electric Co-op since 2002; past President of the Community of Vermont Elders (COVE) and served on the Board since 2001; incorporator of the Northfield Savings Bank. She was co-chair of the Woman's Caucus in the Vermont Legislature and recipient of their Legislator of the Year award in 2000. Marion served on the Vermont Advisory Board to US Civil Rights Commission for many years and was elected as a Justice of the Peace in Washington multiple times.

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Vermont Commission on Women (VCW)

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