

# Eileen Crowley Sullivan '76

## Outstanding Service Award



Eileen Crowley Sullivan wears her heart on her sleeve. When it comes to her alma mater, the Falmouth, Massachusetts, alumna goes all in. Perennially clad in a remarkable collection of Skidmore gear (including her freshman T-shirt), Eileen proudly sports her black College ring and license plate SKID76. Eileen's parents gifted the latter item to their daughter as she embarked on her student-teaching practicum. She has cherished it ever since.

Eileen retired after a distinguished career in higher education. Professor and department chair of physical education at Boston University for over 25 years, she subsequently served as associate dean of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College. More recently, Eileen served as dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services at an online institution. She will tell you that the roots of her success, academically, professionally and personally, were firmly planted at Skidmore. "I truly believe that the College helped me become the person I am today," she says in a warm, lilting tone. For Eileen, that transformational experience has inspired over 40 years of service as an alumna volunteer.

As a physical education major, the mentorship of Professor Emerita Beverly Becker had the greatest impact. "Those first pedagogy classes with her sparked my desire to teach others 'how to teach.'" Eileen also graduated with a firm foundation in educational research methodologies. She spent the January term of her senior year in Washington, D.C., researching her thesis, "Historical Development of the Tennis Racket with Reference to United States Patents 1836-1975," which is still available to read in Skidmore's Athletics Department and the Newport Tennis Hall of Fame. A gifted athlete, Eileen was a member of the tennis and swim teams, as well as the Synchronettes, Skidmore's water ballet team. She also earned ski patrol certification through the ski group. Eileen went on to complete a master's in administration and teaching from the University of Maryland and an Ed.D. in curriculum and teaching from Boston University.

An alumna admissions contact since graduation, she hosted lively summer pizza parties for incoming first-years in the Boston area. She has spent equal time as a class agent and reunion planner. Co-chair of several reunions, she has attended all but one. She celebrates her 45th as social media chair and is already gearing up, along with the entire '76 planning team, for their 50th in 2025. "Reunions have a distinctive place in my heart and soul. I've made so many friends with classmates I hadn't known well in my student days — and my husband Billy enjoys them just as much as I do!"

Lately, Eileen has been busy reinvigorating the Skidmore Cape Cod and the Islands Alumni Group. They have welcomed several faculty speakers and held social hours at popular venues like Eldred's Auction Gallery and the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum. Eileen's personal favorite was arranging an "introduction to curling" event at the Cape Cod Curling Club. Eileen, who loves the sport, points out that there are several other Skidmore alumni who frequent the club's curling sheets.

"As a former Skidmore athlete, I learned there is no 'I' in 'team.' I truly feel we are a team of volunteers, whether we are interviewing prospective candidates, fundraising, planning reunions or hosting regional events. The gift of our time and donations to assist the College in its areas of need has always felt right."

Instead of referring to her volunteer time as "volunteer work," Eileen prefers to say that she loves her Skidmore volunteer "fun."

"I will continue to share the message that Skidmore was my 'perfect fit'; it enabled me to learn and grow into the person I am today. That's why I enjoy when people stop to chat after spotting my 'SKID76' license plate, ring or hat while I'm playing golf or tennis or curling. I love talking about my Skidmore experience and doing what I can for the College."