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# The Annual Report of Barnstable County

*For the year ending June 30, 2010*



## IN MEMORY OF DIANE THOMPSON, CLERK OF THE ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES



Photo by Steve Baty

*Excerpted From the Barnstable Patriot, 9/17/2010*

**D**iane Thompson of Falmouth, clerk of the Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates for all but two of its 21 years, died Sept. 9 in Boston. She was 61.

“She had sort of liberal instincts, but the fact is she got along with everybody,” said Assembly Speaker Ron Bergstrom, the last in a long line of speakers to rely on Thompson’s guidance and expertise. “She treated all the delegates with respect, as they did her in return. She did a terrific job, and this will be a big loss for us.”

The Worcester native was a noted zoning consultant and advocate of affordable housing. Longtime Assembly member Julia Taylor met her when Thompson worked for Falmouth’s zoning board, on which Taylor served.

“She was utterly superior to anybody I dealt with,” Taylor recalled. “She was able to be nice to people, to make them feel better, along with being extremely good on details.”

[There] were “few, if any, who have a better grasp of the legalities of political process and few, if any, who have less of a grasp of the subtleties of the accepted conventions often required to make the political process work.”

It was in that controversial setting that Thompson began her 19-year tenure as clerk.

“Diane was somewhat reluctant to do it,” Taylor recalled. “There was going to be political trouble.”

“She just had a way about her,” said former speaker Charlotte Striebel. “She could be furious with you, but she’d still be very happy. There was just something about her. She did that job, and she did it beautifully.”

Striebel said Thompson and she “worked very closely together when I was the speaker. I went to the office quite often to work with her, and tried to learn the right way to handle things. She was most gracious in helping me and teaching me what to do.”

In many ways, Bernardo said, “Diane was the essential delegate. She was always concerned about connecting to people, making sure that partisan lines were somehow muffled down to a constructive area

of disagreement so that the greater good came out. Her loyalty to the legislative process and the goal of generating a good product of service for taxpayers was essential to what all delegates or legislators should be. Even though she never ran for office, she was a great model for delegates to follow.”

“So often we’d be considering something and say, ‘This ordinance looks like a good one,’” Bergstrom said. “She’d say, ‘Well, it is, but this ordinance you passed five years ago conflicts and you have to revisit it.’”

Paul Niedzwiecki, executive director of the Cape Cod Commission, said Thompson “was much more than a clerk. She acted often almost as legal counsel.”

Striebel said it will be “hard to find the right person to replace” Thompson. “It’s going to be a huge learning experience on that person’s part.”

“She was the keeper of the flame,” Bergstrom said. “When we have our meeting Wednesday, it will really sink in that she’s gone.” Later in the week, that session was cancelled.

Taylor, her friend and colleague, said the hiring of Thompson was “my greatest contribution to county government.” Then she added, “I never worked with a finer person in public life, or one that I admire more.”

## IN MEMORY OF DAVID SIMSER, BARNSTABLE COUNTY ENTOMOLOGIST

*Brenda J. Boleyn*

*Chairman*

*Cape and Islands Lyme Disease Task Force*

The death of David Simser is a stunning loss (“Regional insect expert dies at 57,” Cape Cod Times, Nov. 28, 2010).

Entomologist, raconteur, humorist, he was beloved by all who knew him. Dave was the core of the county tick program and leader of our Cape and Islands field studies, collaborating with fellow researchers from the universities of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut and the Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

He designed our educational materials, including the now-familiar ID tick cards, and he got the word out to the public. Whatever was needed, Dave got it done. He made a real difference. Thanks to his remarkable achievements, we are in a better place regarding our knowledge of ticks and their habitat. He taught us so much.

As the scourge of tick-borne illnesses continues to grow and spread, the best way for us to honor Dave’s memory is to build upon his accomplishments and continue his work. We must figure out how to do that.

*Excepted from Capeonline.com*

*Mary Ann Bragg*

*November 18, 2010*

A man who loved bugs — really loved bugs — died Friday, November 26, 2010.

Barnstable County Entomologist David Simser, 57, the Cape and Island’s tick and Lyme disease specialist, died of prostate cancer at the McCarthy Care Center hospice facility in Sandwich.

Simser made people laugh. He impressed them with his generous nature and open-door home and his love of dogs.

Simser’s research merited national attention, according to Robert Hillger, senior science adviser for the New England region of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Simser’s research and work covered the emerging study of ticks carrying multiple viruses, not just Lyme disease, a type of infection



called co-infection. Several months ago, Simser received a \$100,000 federal grant to continue that research on the Cape and Islands, part of which involves 50 deer feeding stations. The feeding stations are designed in a way to force the animals to roll against a pesticide that kills ticks before the deer reach the food, said Hillger and William F. Clark, Simser’s boss at the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension.

Simser’s research will help public health professionals nationwide better understand that a tick bite could infect a human with more than one virus, Hillger said Saturday. The two-year, \$100,000 grant has another 18 months of work to go, and follows on two years of research Simser conducted prior to the grant, he said. Hillger pledged to continue Simser’s research.

“I love the guy,” Hillger said of Simser, who had become a close friend.

David Simser received the Environmental Protection Agency’s Bronze Medal for his work and was featured in the award-winning documentary “Under Our Skin”, which delved into the controversy over the medical treatment of people with Lyme disease.